Promoting quality, equitable, and inclusive learning is a foundational tenet of USAID's Education Policy. But access to learning is not enough. The ultimate goal of USAID's education work is to achieve sustained, measurable improvements in learning outcomes and skills for all learners. Children with disabilities are still 49 percent more likely to have never attended school, and 42 percent less likely to achieve basic skills, than their peers without disabilities. To address these inequities, USAID is committed to increasing disability-inclusive education initiatives and equipping staff and partners with resources to make quality education a reality for learners with disabilities. This brief summarizes USAID's efforts to advance disability-inclusive education during the 2022 fiscal year (FY).

Snapshot of FY 2022 Results and Achievements

148,990
children and youth with disabilities were reached across the education continuum.

31,630
educators completed training in disability-inclusive education content.

What is disability-inclusive education? USAID envisions disability-inclusive education as one system where all learners, regardless of disability status, have access to quality educational opportunities alongside their peers, receive the essential supports needed to achieve their learning goals, and are enabled to thrive as contributing members of their communities. Learn more about our approach.

Photo: USAID/Rwanda

This results brief highlight's USAID's disability-inclusive education work in the areas of:

Global Snapshot

USAID partners in **46** countries advanced disability-inclusive education during FY 2022.

Regional Highlights

EUROPE AND EURASIA Seven countries implemented disability-inclusive education activities. The Congressionally-directed **Disability Program** supported activities in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, and Serbia to increase disability-inclusive development by supporting programming in sectors critical to breaking the cycle of poverty among persons with disabilities, such as education. The program complements the Agency's Disability Policy and commitment to include persons with disabilities in all phases of the project life cycle by supporting initiatives led by disabled persons' organizations (DPOs).

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA Five countries implemented disability-inclusive education activities. The **Middle East Education Research, Training, and Support (MEERS)** mechanism conducted disability-inclusive education research. Staff at the Middle East and North Africa Bureau facilitated workshops for Missions that addressed equity, accessibility, and inclusivity of education for learners with disabilities and incorporating UDL principles.
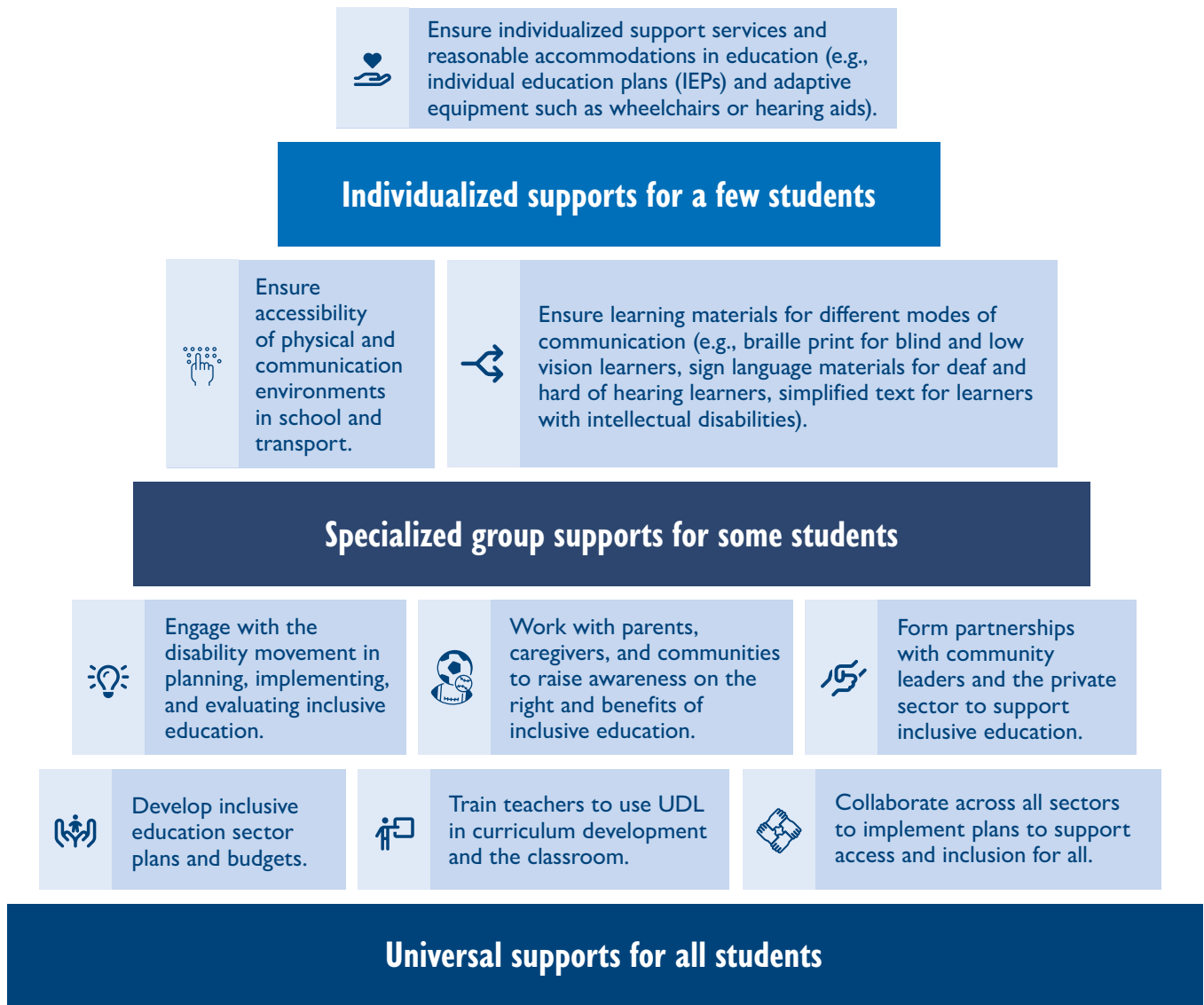
ASIA Twelve countries implemented disability-inclusive education activities. Through the **Gabay** activity in the Philippines, USAID tripled the enrollment of children with sensory disabilities in its project sites. Using equipment provided by USAID, teachers developed and delivered more than 5,000 learning materials—in braille and in Filipino Sign Language—for children who are deaf, blind, and deafblind. This included an innovative Filipino Sign Language dictionary accessible in print and electronic format that can be used by teachers, parents, and students in school and at home.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN Four countries implemented disability-inclusive education activities. In Haiti, the **Community Driven Development (CDD)** activity worked with targeted municipalities and local civil society organizations to reduce the isolation of persons with disabilities by encouraging them to utilize their educational, economic, social, and cultural rights. This activity aims to renovate 19 schools (and five hospitals) by rehabilitating their water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, so they can make use of these facilities on an equal basis with others in the community.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA Eighteen countries implemented disability-inclusive education activities. The Africa Regional Bureau focused on diagnostics and analytics, technical assistance, program management, and knowledge dissemination and continues to engage national statistical offices, ministries of education, researchers, DPOs, and other stakeholders interested in collecting data in support of inclusive disability education.

USAID's Disability-Inclusive Education Approach

At the education systems level, USAID takes a **Twin-Track** approach to disability-inclusive education. We encourage the provision of universal support for all learners with disabilities in an inclusive, general education setting, alongside specialized and individualized support to address the specific learning needs of some learners with disabilities. When different levels of support are provided at the school or classroom level, this approach is often referred to as a **Multi-Tiered System of Support** (MTSS). Universal, specialized, and individualized supports may be components of a single activity in a general education setting. However, USAID recognizes that in many contexts, specialized and individualized supports are sometimes provided as separate activities, or in non-inclusive settings, as countries work toward the progressive realization of full inclusion for learners with disabilities.

Ensure individualized support services and reasonable accommodations in education (e.g., individual education plans (IEPs) and adaptive equipment such as wheelchairs or hearing aids).

Individualized supports for a few students

Ensure accessibility of physical and communication environments in school and transport.

Ensure learning materials for different modes of communication (e.g., braille print for blind and low vision learners, sign language materials for deaf and hard of hearing learners, simplified text for learners with intellectual disabilities).

Specialized group supports for some students

Engage with the disability movement in planning, implementing, and evaluating inclusive education.

Work with parents, caregivers, and communities to raise awareness on the right and benefits of inclusive education.

Form partnerships with community leaders and the private sector to support inclusive education.

Develop inclusive education sector plans and budgets.

Train teachers to use UDL in curriculum development and the classroom.

Collaborate across all sectors to implement plans to support access and inclusion for all.

Universal supports for all students

For this brief, we highlight six thematic areas that offer a snapshot of USAID's disability-inclusive education programming around the world. Read on to learn more about activities in the areas of UDL, teacher training, accessible teaching and learning materials, pre-primary education, youth workforce development and higher education, and education systems strengthening.

Universal Design for Learning

Utilizing UDL principles ensures that educational opportunities are as accessible and inclusive for all learners as possible. USAID is committed to incorporating the principles of UDL in all new USAID education programs.

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USAID Missions and operating units reported efforts to incorporate the principles of UDL across a variety of activities.

Photo: USAID Malawi

MALAWI **Reading for All Malawi (REFAM)** trained 90 itinerant special needs education teachers on the UDL approach. A follow-up review, as part of the USAID-sponsored Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE), found that 67 percent of head teachers interviewed reported that they observed positive changes in student learning outcomes, and 60 percent observed that teachers who had been trained in UDL principles were using new teaching strategies.

Photo: Creative for USAID

MOROCCO The **National Project for Reading (NPR)** developed instructional materials and a teacher resource guide on differentiated instruction, enabling teachers to more effectively tailor instruction to meet individual student needs. USAID also expanded its memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education and a local DPO to upgrade an existing inclusive education teacher training module according to UDL principles.

Photo: Chando Mapoma

ZAMBIA In FY 2022, **Let's Read** distributed more than 1.2 million teaching and learning materials to all target schools in five provinces. These materials incorporated features of UDL and interactive audio instruction to make learning more accessible to children with various learning needs. The materials expand equitable access to quality learning opportunities for all children. Let's Read also deployed a handbook to guide teachers in instruction for children who are deaf or hard of hearing, piloted at three special schools across Southern Province.

Teacher Training and Support

From pre-primary through higher education, USAID provides educators worldwide with the resources and training they need to help their students achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

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USAID Missions and operating units reported efforts to train teachers in disability-inclusive education, representing all five geographic regions where USAID works.

Photo: UNICEF Cambodia/2022/ Kemal Gaitnazarov

CAMBODIA Through the **Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF),** USAID facilitated Special Education Department collaboration with the National Institute of Education (NIE) to develop the Inclusive Education Teacher Training Manual. The finalized manual, which the Ministry of Education approved, will be integrated into NIE's current teacher training program. The manual will improve awareness of inclusive education and children living with disabilities, focusing on the inclusive pedagogical skills necessary for upper secondary teachers to support children with disabilities to learn more effectively. Also through the CDPF, the National Institute for Special Education completed a pre-service teacher training package on intellectual disabilities and autism.
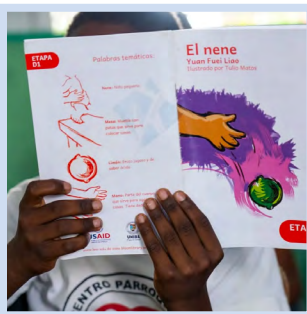

Photo: USAID/Dominican Republic

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC The **Read Program's Gender Equality, Inclusion, and Safe School/School Violence Prevention (GISS)** activity supported 13,282 primary school students with disabilities to improve learning outcomes. The activity trained school counselors to work with teachers and students using inclusion strategies for students with disabilities, particularly in reading. The activity performed diagnostic screenings to identify children with reading difficulties and helped teachers develop strategies to address their needs. These strategies include assigning a partner to help a student with activities, giving a student more time to complete a task, or seating a student closer to the front of the class to ensure focus and attention. School counselors monitored the process with the teacher, student, and family.
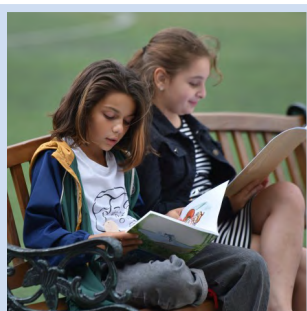

Photo: USAID/Georgia

GEORGIA The **Basic Education** activity developed online training courses for teachers and trainers on the foundations of inclusive education, content development, and procedures for teaching students with disabilities. The program piloted the Multi-Tiered Support System approach in 15 public schools and delivered teacher training on using the system and developing equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Accessible Teaching and Learning Materials

Accessible teaching and learning materials are a critical component of an inclusive learning environment. USAID activities around the world are developing new materials and teaching methods to ensure that students with disabilities can make the most of their educational opportunities.

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USAID Missions and operating units reported efforts to develop accessible teaching and learning materials.

Photo: Rana Husseini/The Jordan Times

JORDAN Through the **Accelerating Access Initiative 2.0**, USAID worked with the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MOE) to develop curricula, accessible learning materials, and teaching strategies for inclusive education. Together, the MOE and USAID developed specifications for braille Arabic language and reading workbooks for grades 1–3 which were distributed to 300 students with visual disabilities in specialized schools. The schools received adaptive computer systems and special manipulatives to enhance student learning opportunities. They also developed a national remedial education campaign with videos that include sign language interpretation to reach learners who are deaf or hard of hearing.
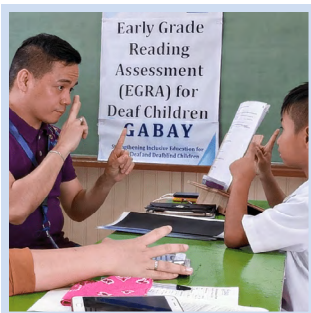

Photo: Resources for the Blind

PHILIPPINES The **Gabay** activity tripled the enrollment of children who are deaf, blind, or deafblind. Teachers at inclusive education centers developed and delivered more than 5,000 accessible learning materials in braille and Filipino Sign Language, using equipment provided by USAID. The activity developed a Filipino Sign Language dictionary, available in both print and electronic formats, for use by teachers, parents, and students. As a result of the program, Filipino Sign Language training for teachers is now mandated nationwide and funded by the national Department of Education. Additionally, the Province of Batangas enacted an ordinance to adopt and fund the Gabay activity as an ongoing provincial program.

Photo: Rustam Mailov for USAID

TAJIKISTAN The **Learn Together Activity (LTA)** supported the Tajik government to increase access to learning materials for blind and visually impaired children, which had been out of print since the collapse of the Soviet Union. LTA printed 9,200 large-font books for learners in grades 1–4. The activity also equipped the NGO Mehrbakhsh with braille printing equipment and supplies to increase access to books for children with visual disabilities. An additional 7,450 textbooks in braille and large font were printed and provided to 410 primary grade students with disabilities. Almost 130 primary teachers were trained in using braille to improve access to learning for vulnerable students. USAID continues to develop disability-accessible supplementary learning materials such as audio books, e-books with sign language, and mobile reading and math applications.

Pre-primary Education

Quality pre-primary learning opportunities are essential for children with disabilities. Such opportunities support the immediate developmental needs of children with disabilities, enable them to interact with their peers without disabilities, and set them on a positive trajectory to thrive in school and beyond.

4

USAID Missions and operating units reported efforts to provide pre-primary education to children with disabilities. Pre-primary education is a new area of emphasis for USAID.

Photo: World Vision Rwanda

RWANDA The **Uburezi Iwacu (Homes and Community)** activity provided support to at-risk children starting with the pre-primary age group. It created 732 parent peer support networks, reaching 20,774 parents and caregivers of children with disabilities to support their well-being, language development, literacy skills, and social and emotional learning. The activity supported children with disabilities at the pre-primary level through close collaboration with local early childhood development centers. The activity trained more than 5,000 volunteers on topics such as implementing reading clubs, community engagement for literacy, child protection, safeguarding, and positive parenting. The activity also assessed 660 children, from pre-primary through grade 4, for disabilities, and referred those who needed further interventions for medical or rehabilitation services.

Photo: USAID Tanzania

TANZANIA The **Jifunze Uelewe (JU or Learn to Understand)** activity worked with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and other ministries to improve literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional skills for all pre-primary through grade 4 learners in 3,171 public schools in five target regions. JU trained a cohort of expert teachers and administrators to institutionalize phonics-based literacy and numeracy instruction. The activity trained 23,091 early grade educators, including pre-primary teachers, on pre-primary teaching methods, formative assessment, mathematics teaching methods, and UDL. The activity also provides a variety of inclusive, accessible teaching and learning materials, as well as resource kits for learners with vision and hearing disabilities.

Photo: DISTINCT project

VIETNAM The **DISTINCT (Disabilities Integration Services and Therapies Network for Capacity and Treatment)** project aimed to improve the quality of life of children with disabilities under six years old and their families by implementing a comprehensive model of Early Childhood Disability Detection and Intervention (ECDDI). DISTINCT worked cross-sectorally, within health and education, to strengthen capacity of key personnel in ECDDI, implement the ECDDI model in project locations, enhance community awareness about childhood disabilities and ECDDI, and replicate the ECDDI model provincially and nationally.

Youth Workforce Development and Higher Education

Positive youth development (PYD) empowers youth, especially those with disabilities, to reach their full potential. PYD builds skills, assets, and competencies, fosters healthy relationships, strengthens the learning environment, and transforms education systems. Higher education further advances development with its reach across sectors, communities, and systems.

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USAID Missions and operating units reported efforts to support youth and higher education learners with disabilities, representing all five geographic regions where USAID works.

Photo: USAID/DRC IYDA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO In FY 2022, the **Integrated Youth Development Activity (IYDA)** expanded its partnership pool, targeting organizations with mandates to support traditionally underserved youth populations, including those living with disabilities. In total, IYDA supported approximately 50 community-based organizations to integrate gender equality and social inclusion into interventions. These specific social inclusion investments have enabled more than 289 marginalized and traditionally disadvantaged youth to have great access to core services, including education, vocational training, and job opportunities. This resulted in reductions in social disparities as well as non-exacerbation of gender differences.

Photo: USAID Egypt

EGYPT The **Local Scholarships for Public Universities (LSP Public)** activity supported five Egyptian public universities to establish and operate disability service centers. The disability centers provide counseling, advocacy services, and adaptive education technology. The centers also promote awareness about disability rights, train professors in inclusive pedagogy techniques, and ensure that reasonable accommodations are implemented for youth with disabilities. LSP Public's first five disability centers served approximately 4,300 students in FY 2022, with plans to establish centers at 15 additional public universities. LSP Public also hosted its second national inclusive higher education conference and delivered a virtual "Inclusive Higher Education" webinar on how to establish a disability center at a higher education facility.

Photo: Teki Paper Bags

ETHIOPIA The **Fighting Plastic Bags in Ethiopian Sign Language (TEKI)** activity created seven sustainable jobs for young women who are deaf and supported more than 27 women who are deaf who are already employed at a paper bag factory. TEKI is a unique multi-year activity implemented in cooperation with a local private social enterprise. The business produces environmentally-friendly paper bags as an alternative to plastic bag pollution. The activity offers a two-month training program that provides coaching, interpretation services, and soft skills development to new employees with disabilities.

Education Systems Strengthening

Sustaining development outcomes depends on the sustainability of the local system—its built-in durability and adaptability that allows actors and their interrelationships to accommodate shocks and respond to changing circumstances. USAID works to support local education systems by partnering with Ministries of Education, regional and local education actors, and other education organizations.

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USAID Missions and operating units reported efforts to support systems strengthening for disability-inclusive education at regional and national levels.

Photo: MOESCS

ARMENIA The **Strengthening of Inclusive Education System** activity supported ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport (MOESCS) to make all schools inclusive by 2025 under the government's Child Welfare Reform. The MOESCS made small-scale infrastructure renovations to 27 schools and 3 Pedagogical-Psychological Support Centers to provide inclusive education and services to children with disabilities. The MOESCS also allocated resources to rehabilitate up to another 130 schools. In FY 2022, 2,400 children received inclusive education services based on their identified needs. The MOESCS delivered in-service training to more than 2,500 secondary school teachers and teacher assistants on inclusive teaching skills. By 2030, the MOESCS aims to create a universally inclusive, quality learner-centered educational environment.

Photo: USAID Bosnia & Herzegovina

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA The **Inspire Human Rights** activity supports seven Service Centers for Families of Persons/Children with Disabilities. These centers provided more than 60,000 counseling, crisis and sibling support, diagnostic, education, and rehabilitation services for 1,250 individuals and families of persons with disabilities. The centers raised public awareness about disability and worked with the regional Ministry of Education to amend the professional development requirements of school staff to better meet the learning needs of children with disabilities. The service centers collectively advocated for the adoption of the Law on Status of Parents and Caregivers to provide coverage for around-the-clock care through government benefits. Additionally, the activity cooperated with the Sumero Alliance to work on the deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities.

Photo: USAID Yemen Gateway/Save the Children

YEMEN The **Gateway to Education** activity worked with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education to conduct service mapping, identifying service providers that specialize in diagnostic testing and assistive device support to children in need of special services. The activity used the Washington Group Question tool in both formal schools and non-formal education centers to identify children with mobility, hearing and visual impairments, and other potential disabilities to refer them for further assessment. USAID worked with the Ministry of Education, Governorate and District education offices, Community Education Committees, and Parent/Caregiver Councils to build their capacities to support children with disabilities and their families.

Additional Resources

Learn more about USAID's commitment to advancing disability inclusive education:

Resources on Education Links

General Inclusive Education Resources

Disability Inclusive Pre-Primary Education Landscape Review

Global Report on Children with Developmental Disabilities

New USAID Commitments to Disability Inclusive Education at the 2022 Global Disability Summit

Seen, Counted, Included: Using Data to Shed Light on the Well-being of Children with Disabilities

Disability Inclusive Education Program Examples

Accessible to All: Creating Learning Materials for Children with Disabilities in Cambodia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tajikistan

All Children Reading-Cambodia

ACR GCD Catalyzes Localization to Strengthen Deaf Education in Malawi

DELITES: A Multi-Country Study on Language and Literacy Development for Deaf Learners

Inclusive Education for Visually Impaired Primary School Children in Mali

Learning from the Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education

Rwanda Program Highlight from Uburezi Iwacu

Inclusive Education Program Tools

Approaches to Increasing Employment and Quality of Employment Among Youth with Disabilities

Best Practices in Generating Data on Learners with Disabilities

Disability Identification Tool Selection Guide

Disability Inclusive Education Online Learning Module

Equity, Inclusion, and Social-Emotional Learning

Financing Disability-Inclusive Education

Guidance for Promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Educational Materials

How-to Note: Collecting Data on Disability Prevalence in Education Programs

How-to Note: Disability Inclusive Education

Including Children with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Universal Design for Learning to Help All Children Read

Using ICT to Implement Universal Design for Learning

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