DOWN SYNDROME INTERNATIONAL (DSi)



DSi EDUCATION PROJECT
TOOLKIT 2 – Basic steps to encourage and enable implementation of the guidelines

International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down Syndrome
(Published by DSi, July 2020)

AIM

The aim of this toolkit is to outline basic steps that can be taken to encourage and enable the implementation of the *International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down Syndrome*[1].

At the end of this toolkit, information and references have been provided for each section to give more practical information and detail. Links to easy read information and to information in languages other than English have been provided where possible.

We hope this can be a starting point. It can be adapted according to resources and facilities available.

INTRODUCTION

The value and credibility of the DSi education guidelines has been recognised by Down syndrome and disability organisations in countries around the world.

However, only by sharing the document and advocating for its implementation can it make a positive difference to the education of learners with Down syndrome and contribute to the realisation of their rights.

To maximise the value and the impact of the guidelines:

- they need to reach as many stakeholders as possible;
- those stakeholders need to advocate for positive change; and
- policy makers need to implement corresponding changes to education practice.



The importance to advocate for the adoption of these guidelines and inclusive education more generally is also clear because:

i. it is a human right in line with Article 24 (Education) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, United Nations, 2006)[2,3,4] and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4 - Education) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015)[5,6]. People with Down syndrome and disability have the right to education along with other people. If the right to education is fulfilled, it leads to the realisation of other rights.

ii. advocating in this way, benefits everyone in that:

- it improves learning for all – both those with and without disabilities[7];
- it promotes understanding within communities, reduces prejudice and strengthens social integration; and
- it improves the well-being and quality of life for learners with Down syndrome and disabilities throughout their lives. Opportunities are opened up to allow them the possibility of contributing economically and socially to their communities[7,8].

Advocating for the adoption of the guidelines adds to the growing call by cross disability groups for inclusive education and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4 - Education) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[5,6].

The **UNESCO 2020 GEM Report**[9,10] on inclusion and education and the **International Disability Alliance (IDA) Inclusive Education Report**[11] were published in June 2020, 1 month before DSi's guidelines. Both of these reports:

- call for an inclusive education system where all learners, with and without disabilities, learn together with their peers in schools and classes in their community schools, receiving the support they need in inclusive facilities and
- provide governments and civil society with evidence-based recommendations to realise SDG 4 for all learners.



FIVE BASIC STEPS TO ENABLE IMPLEMENTATION

This section outlines steps to encourage implementation of the guidelines:

1. Tell everyone about them - share and promote the guidelines as widely as possible

The first step is for everyone interested in improving the education of learners with Down syndrome to tell other stakeholders about the guidelines and the information they contain and to advocate for positive change. Other stakeholders will do the same, thereby reinforcing the key messages with a louder, growing voice.

The importance and value of the guidelines and of inclusive education needs to be broadcast. It is not just about sharing the guidelines; it is about changing attitudes and engrained practices and upholding human rights.

- **For individuals** – it is important for self-advocates, advocates and teaching professionals to talk about and share the guidelines with people around them - family, friends, colleagues and with the community as a whole.

- **For organisations** – they can share the guidelines on their websites, social media and with all relevant parties. Sharing information on media platforms is a good way to reach a lot of people very quickly and efficiently. DSi have created a toolkit that provides information about how to create media pages or posts specifically about the guidelines with associated text, images and links.

2. Gain knowledge and understanding

To advocate for positive change, it is important to know what you are talking about and to:

- have an understanding and knowledge of the UNCRPD (in particular Article 24), SDG4 and human rights[2,3,4,5,6,7];

- have a clear concept and definition of inclusive education[7,8];

- understand why inclusive education is important and the benefits to all;

- be able reference accurate, up to date and credible resources relating to inclusive education and people with Down syndrome or intellectual disability – such as the guidelines, the 2020 GEM Report and the IDA Report[1,9,10,11]; and

- gain an overall understanding of the education system in your country and existing structural, educational, and cultural barriers to successful implementation you might face[10].



3. Motivate all education stakeholders to advocate for positive change

Provide self-advocates, their families, carers and advocates and education professionals with support, information, resources and training to motivate them to advocate for positive change and hold education authorities to account[12] (please contact DSi if you would like information about self-advocacy and advocacy training).

Self-advocates have a powerful voice when advocating for their own needs and rights and in implementing appropriate change.

The key thing is that everyone understands the importance and value of the adoption of the DSi guidelines and inclusive education for people with Down syndrome:

- policy makers need to understand this to make appropriate adjustments to national legislation;
- education professionals need to understand this to make effective changes in their establishments;
- families need to understand this to support people with Down syndrome in the right way; and
- people with Down syndrome need to understand this so they can realise their potential and improve their lifetime prospects and quality of life.

4. Develop a clear and achievable promotion and implementation strategy[12] that includes a plan and who is involved with desired timescales and targets.

Work out:

- Who you need to talk to – for example schools, educational professionals, education authorities or policy makers.
- How and when you are going to do this.

- Who is going to talk to them –self-advocates/other advocates/professionals.
- Have achievable targets – for example raising awareness and understanding or talking to schools or policy makers.
- Follow up with everyone you have contacted and check things are happening.
- Monitor your progress.
- Keep it up – attitudes and systems change won't change overnight but each small step is a step in the right direction.



5. Monitor and assess impact

It is important to record the details of any promotion and implementation intervention, however big or small - the type of intervention, who was involved, who was the audience, how many people it reached, and any short term or long term outcomes.

Examples of short-term outcomes might be changes in teaching practice at schools or commitments to bring about change.

Examples of longer-term outcomes or impacts may be changes in attitudes of education stakeholders or changes to education systems over time.

In this way, it will be possible to:

- monitor the impact and report the success of interventions in the promotion of quality education for learners with Down syndrome your region or country;
- understand how you can build on success and what further work should be prioritised;

- share your learnings with other organisations so that they can understand what and how to make a difference and to encourage more action and adoption of good practices.

Please also share this information with DSi, so we can inform our international network and encourage positive change globally and so that we can work out how best to support DSi member organisations now and in the future.

REFERENCES AND INFORMATION

1. What are the *International Guidelines for Learners with Down Syndrome*?

The International Guidelines for Learners with Down Syndrome are an accurate, up-to-date, evidence-informed, global consensus document to provide information and recommendations of key relevance and importance for the provision of best practice education for learners with Down syndrome of all ages around the world.

The document comprises three separate Guidelines, each with its own set of recommendations:

- Guidelines for Leading (Section 3)
- Guidelines for Teaching (Section 4)
- Guidelines for Learning (Section 5)

In Section 2, key considerations specific to the education of people with Down syndrome are outlined and recommendations provided.

At the end of each section, are a list of recommendations distilled from the contents of the section.

The guidelines were written by established experts in the field. In addition, DSi invited international stakeholders to provide input in order to make the information the guidelines contain as globally useful and relevant as possible. International stakeholders included representatives from DSi national member organisations, other international and national disability or education establishments (including a representative from each of UNICEF, UNESCO and Inclusion International), education professionals, experts and researchers.

Since publication, the credibility and value of the guidelines has been recognised by the global Down syndrome community and beyond.

They are being used in countries across the world to promote and implement quality, best practice education for learners with Down syndrome of all ages.

2. What is the UN CRPD?

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) was adopted on 13 December 2006 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument and comprises 50 Articles. It reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It provides an internationally recognised standard for disabled people's human rights. Governments that sign up to and ratify the UN CRPD must work to this standard, which safeguards the human rights of all disabled people.

- **Full versions**
  English
  Available in over 20 languages

- **Easy read versions**
  - Easy-read version of the CRPD – English (available in Dutch, Finnish, Hungarian and Portuguese)
  - It's about Ability! An explanation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNICEF)

- **Frequently Asked Questions about the UN CRPD**
  FAQ

- Understanding the UN CRPD – by Humanity and Inclusion
  Comprendre le CDPH – by Humanity and Inclusion

3. What is Article 24 of the UN CRPD?

The UNCRPD includes Article 24: A Right to Inclusive Education. This guarantees all people with disabilities a right to participate in all forms of mainstream education with appropriate support.

In September 2016 the UN CRPD Committee published a General Comment on Article 24 setting out how governments can move towards greater inclusion.

4. Which countries have ratified the UN CRPD?

Ratifications and Signatures of the CRPD
Map of Signatures and Ratifications

5. What is the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit — officially came into force. Over the next 15 years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

The Sustainable Development Goals:

- were designed to create national and international strategies for change and to hold all countries accountable for their commitment to improvement in each goal area;
- are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet;

- recognise that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals, which will require quality, accessible and timely data collection. Regional follow-up and review will be based on national-level analyses and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level.

Historic UN Summit – September 2015
17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Disability inclusive goals infographic

- Easy read versions
  The Sustainable Development Goals in Plan Language – from Inclusion International
  Easy read guide to the SDGs – from United Nations

6. What is the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4 - Education)?

To "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

Education enables upward socio-economic mobility and is a key to escaping poverty. Although major progress has been made in the past decade, there is still a huge amount to be done. This problem has been compounded in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic which might jeopardise hard won gains made in improving global education.

SDG 4
Why education matters infographic

7. What is inclusive education (extracted from DSi's *International Guidelines for the education of Learners with Down Syndrome*)

A recent UNESCO International Forum on Inclusion and Equity in Education (UNESCO, 2019) defined Inclusion as: *a transformative process that ensures full participation and access to quality learning opportunities for all children, young people and adults, respecting and valuing diversity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination in and through education*.

The term inclusion represents a commitment to making preschools, schools, and other education settings, places in which everyone is valued and belongs, and diversity is seen as enriching. Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed in their local educational setting and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of that context. Inclusive schooling means all are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools and taught in age-appropriate, regular classes engaging in all aspects of the student life of the school, and all receive support appropriate to their needs. (Extracted from DSi's International Guidelines for the education of Learners with Down Syndrome).

Frequently asked questions about inclusive education – from Inclusion International
Myths and misconceptions – from Inclusion International

8. Evidence for inclusive education and associated benefits

Please see the reference below and DSi's International Guidelines for the education of Learners with Down Syndrome for further information and references

A summary of the evidence on inclusive education - Instituto Alana, Hehir, T., Grindal, T., Freeman, B., Lamoreau, R., Borquaye, Y., & Burke, S. (2016)

9. UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report: Inclusion and education: all means all

In June 2020, UNESCO released the 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, supporting DSi's position that inclusive education is the foundation of a good quality education system that enables every child, youth and adult to learn and fulfill their potential.

The GEM Report was commissioned in 2015 by 160 Governments at the World Education Forum, to monitor and report progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Education.

In previous years, the GEM Reports have focused on migration and displacement, accountability and the environment. This year's focus on inclusion places the current exclusion of learners with disabilities at the top of the global education agenda. The report notes that "those with a sensory, physical or intellectual disability are 2.5 times more likely to have never been in school as their peers without disabilities".

The report recognises the existing misconceptions around the meaning of inclusive education and calls on education actors to widen their understanding of inclusive education to include **all** learners, regardless of their disabilities, cultural or socio-economic backgrounds, race or gender.

The report's recommendations include the need to:

- target financing to those left behind;
- engage in meaningful consultation with parents and
- apply Universal Design for Learning that recognises diversity and responds to various learners' needs.

UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report: Inclusion and education: all means all
English version
Arabic version
Easy read version – key messages and recommendations

In 2020, the GEM Report is launching 2 special **regional reports** produced in collaboration with regional partners. The reports will offer a deep dive into inclusion and education in Latin America and the Caribbean (launched in October 2020) and Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (in December 2020).

10. Countries' laws and policies on inclusion and education

The online platform, Profiles Enhancing Education Reviews (PEER) prepared by the GEM Report team, describes countries' laws and policies on inclusion and education.

11. International Disability Alliance (IDA) Inclusive Education Report: "What an inclusive, equitable, quality education means to us"

Launched in June 2020, this report was informed by consensus and a cross-disability perspective from the disability rights movement on how Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education can be achieved in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) - especially respecting Article 24 on the rights of all learners with disabilities.

The report aims to inform education sector stakeholders on the priorities agreed by the disability rights movement, and to equip disability activists and their allies with essential messages and recommendations to unify and strengthen advocacy towards effective and accelerated reforms of the education sector.

The IDA Inclusive Education report:

- includes recommendations of good practices that can be supported by good policies and legislation, leading to truly inclusive education systems;
- lays down the minimum conditions required for inclusion of all children and youth – including children and youth with disabilities in education;
- puts forward measures required to build an inclusive education system geared towards providing quality education to all children and youth equitably;
- provides recommendations to governments and civil society that IDA deems essential and urgent for the implementation of inclusive education for all learners, including children and youth with disabilities

More information from the IDA website and downloadable versions in English

12. Resources – Inclusive Education/Advocacy

Implementing Inclusive Education – prepared for the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) (2018)

A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education - UNESCO (2017)

On the Road to Inclusion – UNICEF/UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning (2019)

Advancing Inclusive Education - Keys to transformational change in public education systems – from Inclusive Education Canada and Centre for Inclusive Futures (UK) (2017)

Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia – from the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education (ACIE) (2020)

European Commission Advocacy and Training Toolkit: Inclusive Education – from the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme

Toolkit for Educators - from All Means All, Australia

Inclusion Toolkit for Parents - from All Means All, Australia

Resources on inclusion in education – from UNESCO

Useful resources – from Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education (Australia)

Resources on inclusive education – from Enabling Education Network (EENET), United Kingdom

By working together to promote and implement the guidelines and by monitoring outcomes and impact, we hope to enable an increasing number of learners with Down syndrome across the world to have their right to quality, inclusive education upheld, to fulfil their potential and to open up future opportunities in life.

PLEASE CONTACT helen.powell@ds-int.org IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INFORMATION IN THIS TOOLKIT.