Education for People with Disability: Learnings from Inclusive Education in Lao PDR and a Longitudinal Study of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Australia

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The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Federal, State, or Territory Governments; Department of Industry; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Australian AID; or National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

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More than one billion people with disability – 15% of the world’s population (WHO and The World Bank 2011)

- Almost two-thirds in Asia-Pacific (UNESCAP 2012)

Disability is ‘complex’ and ‘contested’ (WHO and The World Bank 2011)

Social and economic exclusion of people with disability

- Health status, access to education and training, employment, social relationships, valued social roles …
- Shift from the ‘medical model’ to ‘social model’ (Oliver 1983)
  - Shift from individual deficits to social and environmental barriers

- International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (WHO 2001)
  - Intersection of health conditions, environmental factors, and personal factors

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN General Assembly 2006)
  - Civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights
  - Post–2015 Development Agenda

- Incheon Strategy
Lao PDR Inclusive Education Project (Save the Children, 1993–2009)


Laotian context

- Landlocked country with population of 5.6 million
- ‘Least Developed Country’
- Substantial human development progress since 1980
  - Life expectancy, education, gross national income (UNDP 2013)
- Challenges (UNICEF 2013)
  - One–third of the population without access to clean drinking water
  - More than one–third without proper sanitation facilities
  - More than one–third live on less than US$1.25/day
  - 11% of children involved in child labour (ibid)
Disability in Lao PDR

- Disability prevalence
  - 2005 Population and Household Census 1.3% (Messerli et al., 2008)
  - 2003 World Health Survey 8.0% (WHO and The World Bank 2011)
  - Secondary analysis of World Health Survey: Low 3.1%, high 12.7% (Mitra et al. 2011)

- The Census identified people with disability according to five categories (Messerli et al., 2008):
  - ‘Arm or Leg Handicapped’
  - ‘Deaf or Dumb’
  - ‘Visually Impaired’
  - ‘Other Disabilities’
  - ‘Multiple Disabilities’
Inclusive education project

- 16 year project to improve access to schools for children with special needs: disability, girls, ethnic minorities, and low socioeconomic background (Grimes 2009, Grimes et al., 2011)
- One special school for people with disability in 1992, 539 inclusive schools in 2009 (ibid)
- Other countries have viewed Lao PDR as a model for inclusive education (Takamine, 2003)
“The overall finding of the IE evaluation, was that children with mild and moderate disabilities are mostly being successfully included in their local schools; their attendance is good and grade repetition has dropped significantly” (Grimes, 2009:97)

- Most teachers observed as ‘motivated and enthusiastic’
- Move from ‘teacher centred’ to ‘child centred’
- Additional attention for children with disability
- Children with disability seated together with children without disability
- Use of resources (e.g. stones, chopsticks, pictures, and flash cards)
- Working with parents to provide support at home
Evaluation carried out in the last year of the project (with most data collected retrospectively – relying on teachers’ and principals’ recollection)

- Inadequate teacher training
- Poor record and evaluation practices
- Lack of supportive resources
- Varied uptake of inclusive practices
- Variation in effectiveness and ‘enthusiasm’ of teachers (particularly in urban centres)
National Policy on Inclusive Education

Recognises
- No common understanding of inclusive education
- Lack of definitions, roles, and responsibilities

Objectives
- Acquire equitable access to quality education as a right
- Reduce barriers to education and within the education system
- Improve quality of education and enhance stakeholder engagement
National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education

- Pre-primary school readiness programs
- Increase enrolment and reduce drop-out
- Increase access to TVET (50,000 students)
- Increase access to higher education
- Increase literacy
- Resources to facilitate education needs of people with different learning needs
- ‘30% of children with mild disabilities are enrolled in Grades 1–9’ by 2015
Australian context

- High Human Development Country (UNDP 2013)
- Population of 23 million, of which 4.2 million or 18.5% have a disability (ABS 2013)
- People with disability and their families are economically disadvantaged which becomes a social determinant of related outcomes such as poor health
  - Over a quarter of people with disability in Australia live below the 50% median income poverty line (ACOSS 2013)
  - Increasing disability employment by a third can lead to a $43 billion increase in GDP over a decade ($12 billion increase for 2011) (Deloitte Access Economics 2011)
  - Estimates of economic benefits of increased disability participation in, and completion of, VET range from $12 to $18.8 billion (National VET Equity Advisory Council 2011; Australian National Training Authority 2000)
Inclusive education in Australia

- Ratified Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in 2008
- Other legislative frameworks (Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education 2005)
- Inclusive education more prominent
  - Needs based
  - Support (in-class and financial)
  - Access and accessibility
  - Individual education plan and individual planning
- HOWEVER, lack of consistency and definition of ‘inclusion’ (Forlin et al. 2013)
TVET In Australia

- Previous research suggests that work-based training is an effective and beneficial vocational pathway for people with disability

- The project particularly developed two previous studies carried out with EDGE Employment Solutions in WA that indicated the benefits of specialist support programs and good graduate outcomes for people with disability (Lewis, Thoresen and Cocks 2011a, 2011b)

- Build an evidence base that examines economic and social outcomes achieved by apprenticeship and traineeship graduates
Many people with disability have non-vocational transitions from school

- ‘Alternatives to Employment’
- ‘Day Services’
- ‘Sheltered Workshops’ (Australian Disability Enterprises)

Majority of people with disability who undertake VET are enrolled in lower level (Cert I or II) courses – sometimes part of ‘day services’

Administrative data show consistently low apprenticeship, traineeship, and VET participation and completion rates for people with disabilities
Education and VET

- People with disability made up 1.2%–2.3% of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements between 1998–2011 (1.6% in 2011) (NCVER 2013)

- People with disability made up 4.9%–6.4% of VET students between 2002–2012 (6.4% in 2012) (ibid)

- 46% of apprentices and trainees complete their courses compared with 51% of those without a disability (Ball & John, 2005)

- 66% of students with a disability pass their course requirements compared to 73% of students without disability (NCVER 2013)

- Annual growth rate of VET students with disability, 4.3%, was 2.5 times that of the growth rate of VET students without disability (1.4%) (NCVER 2013)
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Method

- Longitudinal cohort study of apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with disability (three waves)
- 403 people with disability (DG) who completed an apprenticeship or traineeship between 2009–2011 recruited through Disability Employment Services, Group Training Organisations, Registered Training Organisations (TAFEs), and State Training Authorities
- Comparison group (CG) (matched on A/T level, gender, and age) recruited through Group Training Organisations (n=86)
- Reasonable match to apprenticeship and traineeship graduates with disability in Australia with two exceptions
  - Underrepresentation of participants from the State of Victoria
  - Overrepresentation of participants with Intellectual or Learning disability
Barriers and facilitators affecting course completion

- Open ended questions in first wave survey
- Analysed thematically with NVivo (qualitative data analysis)
- Disability group reported total of 844 barriers ($\bar{x} = 2.5$) and 1,061 facilitators ($\bar{x} = 2.8$)
- Comparison group reported total of 161 barriers ($\bar{x} = 2.3$) and 209 facilitators ($\bar{x} = 2.6$)
Barriers

Disability group
83% reported at least one barrier

- Lack of resources (49%)
- Impact of disability, health, and injury (46%)
- Employment factors (32%)
- Training and education factors (30%)
- Negative motivations, experience, and networks (20%)
- No barriers (9%)

Comparison group
80% reported at least one barrier

- Lack of resources (62%)
- Impact of disability, health, and injury (6%)
- Employment factors (17%)
- Training and education factors (32%)
- Negative motivations, experience, and networks (26%)
- No barriers (17%)
Facilitators

Disability group
94% reported at least one facilitator

- Positive motivations, experience, and networks (71%)
- Employment factors (52%)
- Training and education factors (51%)
- Receiving resources (36%)
- Addressing disability, health and injury (6%)
- No facilitators (1%)

Comparison group
93% reported at least one facilitator

- Positive motivations, experience, and networks (58%)
- Employment factors (70%)
- Training and education factors (42%)
- Receiving resources (41%)
Education for People with Disability

- Education is a basic human right
- Inclusive Education (rather than special education) recognises that it is the lack of supports and environmental barriers that exclude people with disability
- Aligned to Normalization, Social Role Valorisation, Social Model of Disability, and UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Teachers need both technical and attitudinal skills to implement inclusive education and training
Thank you

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References


