Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Introduction

Ian Kaplan and Ingrid Lewis
Foreword

Inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing their participation in learning, enhancing their learning experiences and outcomes, and reducing exclusion within and from education. Working towards inclusive education calls for significant changes and modifications in teaching and learning content, approaches, processes, structures and strategies, with a common vision of Education for All (EFA). Teachers have an indispensable role to play in this process.

Pre-service teacher education must provide future teachers with the necessary knowledge, competencies and values so that they are able to create and develop inclusive learning environments. However, a recent multi-country review of pre-service teacher education in the Asia-Pacific region, led by UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (UNESCO Bangkok), revealed that pre-service teacher education in many countries in the region still had a long way to go to fully prepare their graduates to effectively address and embrace the diversity of learners.

It is against this background that this UNESCO publication set, *Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Advocacy Guides*, was developed. It includes five booklets: Introduction, Policy, Curriculum, Materials, and Methodology. They are intended to support anyone who wants to engage in advocacy in order to bring about changes and improvements in pre-service teacher education towards more inclusive education. These guides are not prescriptive manuals; rather, they outline ideas for advocates to consider and adapt according to their specific contexts and needs.

It is my hope that this publication set will help improve and strengthen teacher education in Asia and the Pacific towards the development of more inclusive and quality education systems.

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Contents

Who are the advocacy guides for? ................................................................. 1
How should the advocacy guides be used? .................................................. 2
What do these advocacy guides address? ................................................... 2
What is inclusive education? ....................................................................... 4

Benefits of making inclusive education central
to pre-service teacher education ................................................................. 6
What is advocacy? ....................................................................................... 8
Key principles of advocacy ......................................................................... 8
Characteristics of effective advocacy .......................................................... 9
Direct, indirect and capacity-building advocacy .......................................... 10

Who is best placed to do advocacy in particular contexts? ....................... 11
Who are the targets for advocacy? .............................................................. 12
How should we approach advocacy? .......................................................... 13
How can we convey advocacy messages? .................................................. 15
How will you know if your advocacy is working? ....................................... 17
Introduction

‘Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education’ is a series of five advocacy guides. The guides discuss challenges and barriers to inclusive education in different areas of teacher education and offer related strategies and solutions for effective advocacy towards more inclusive practices.

The series begins with this introductory guide. It provides an overview of inclusive teacher education and of what advocacy means in this context. It also provides an introduction to the topics covered in the four other guides in the series. These are ‘Policy’, ‘Curriculum’, ‘Materials’, and ‘Methodology’.

Who are the advocacy guides for?

These advocacy guides are for anyone who wants to do advocacy to bring about improvements in pre-service teacher education towards more inclusive education.

Advocates on this issue might include:

- policy-makers – who may be advocating for greater support and guidance within the government for teacher education reform; and/or advocating for teacher education institutions to embrace new ideas, reform their practices, or implement new policies
- Heads of teacher education institutions – who may want to lobby the government for policy change on teacher education and/or for support in reforming teacher education practices in the institutions; and/or who may want to do ‘internal advocacy’ to encourage more teacher educators to support change in the teacher education system
- teacher educators – who may want to convince their teacher education institution directors (or colleagues) of the need for change; and/or who may want to join in a call for change at government policy level
- international NGO and agency staff – who may want to directly lobby the government for teacher education reform; and/or support other stakeholders to call for and implement changes
- teachers and student teachers – who may want to push for improvements in the pre-service teacher education that they and their future colleagues receive, so as to better prepare them for the realities of increasingly demanding and diverse classes
- learners and their communities – who may want to focus on teacher education as part of their calls for improvements in the way they are educated.
How should the advocacy guides be used?

This publication set is intended as a guide outlining ideas, not as a prescriptive manual. All advocates need to adapt messages, targets and media according to assessments of their own specific context and needs.

Each of the advocacy guides indicates where the reader could consider their own context and makes suggestions for where consultations with other stakeholders would be useful when making key decisions in the advocacy process.

What do these advocacy guides address?

There are five advocacy guides addressing different topics, as follows:

- **Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction** – This introductory guide begins by providing a brief introduction to inclusive education. Readers should not, however, see this introductory guide as their only guide for understanding inclusive education. It is assumed that advocates will either have existing knowledge of inclusive education or will refer to other more comprehensive sources of information to learn about the concept.

  This guide goes on to explain the benefits of integrating awareness and understanding of inclusive education throughout pre-service teacher education. Finally, it provides a practical introductory guide to advocacy.

  The other four advocacy guides look at advocacy to promote change in four key areas of pre-service teacher education:

- **Advocacy Guide 2: Policy** – raising awareness of existing policies for inclusive education and changing/adapting policies at different levels in the education system (e.g. at the ministry, teacher education institution and school levels).

  *Policy* refers mainly to the guiding rules, laws and principles of education at the national level and within teacher education institutions. Policy guides the practices of individuals, groups and institutions on various inclusive education issues.

- **Advocacy Guide 3: Curriculum** – changing the overall organization and sequencing of teacher education.

  *Curriculum* refers to the overall courses of study at pre-service teacher education institutions. A curriculum is a way of organizing and sequencing learning experiences with the aim of achieving specified learning outcomes. It guides what will be learned, and why, and how this learning is facilitated. The curriculum reflects connections between society, politics and schools/teachers, so the development of inclusive curricula reflects
a desire to develop an equitable, non-discriminatory society\(^1\) through attention to the overall structuring of teaching and learning within teacher education.

- **Advocacy Guide 4: Materials** – changing the materials that are used to support teaching and learning within teacher education.

  *Materials* refer to the resources (e.g. textbooks) which are used in pre-service teacher education institutions. Teacher education utilizes a wide range of materials, including those used by teacher educators as an aid to teaching, and those used by student teachers as an aid to learning.

- **Advocacy Guide 5: Methodology** – changing teaching methodology within teacher education institutions.

  *Methodology* refers to the theory and practice of teaching and learning. This addresses how teaching and learning is understood, organized, and conducted. Methodology, then, is the overall framework or approach to teaching which encompasses specific teaching methods. For example, an overall inclusive teaching methodology involves specific approaches to individualized/personalized instruction, and learner-centred teaching.

These four advocacy guides are structured so that they:

- break the issue down into several key challenges;
- analyse the broad situation in the region, and suggest questions that advocates could ask to help them investigate the situation in their specific context; and
- suggest pertinent advocacy goals, and the messages that advocates may want to convey, as well as indicators for deciding whether advocacy on the issue is having any impact.

Tables at the end of each advocacy guide summarize the advocacy messages and suggest potential targets for each message, and then offer space for readers to make notes about how they might convey these messages to each target (drawing on advice provided in the brief guide to advocacy in this introductory guide).

Illustrative case studies are provided wherever possible, and readers are encouraged to use their own investigations within their context to identify local case studies that they can use to back up their advocacy messages.

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What is inclusive education?

“Inclusive education is an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination.”


Inclusive education is a comprehensive process of change across the education system through which the diverse needs of all learners are addressed and responded to, regardless of their social, economic, cultural, linguistic, physical, or other contexts.

**Inclusive education – a process**

Inclusive education is a dynamic process of change and improvement through which the education system, and individual schools, school manages and teachers, address the education needs of all children without discrimination. It is an ongoing process, not a fixed model or goal that can be achieved by following specific instructions over a predetermined period of time.

**Inclusive education cuts across all aspects of education**

Inclusive education orients education policies, practices and cultures to address the challenges of education for all and to welcome the diversity of all learners. It seeks to promote the right of every child, young person and adult, to education. Inclusive education is also concerned with all modalities, levels and areas of education, from pre-school to higher education and lifelong/adult learning, across formal and non-formal education, including academic, vocational and extra-curricular activities.

**Inclusive education addresses barriers and builds on existing positive practices**

Within an inclusive education system, there is a constant effort to identify and address barriers that might prevent learners from accessing education, participating in the learning process, and increasing their capacity (academically and socially). These barriers might relate to attitudes, practices, resources, policies, institutional structures, administrative processes, infrastructure, and/or the environment. Creating an overall inclusive learning environment also requires a culture of reflection and experimentation, one that focuses not just on problem-solving, but on identifying what already works well and building on this – because every school or learning space can always become more inclusive and more responsive to learners’ needs.
Inclusive education is supported by international commitments

Inclusive education, as a concept, is underpinned by the core principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunity. There are a variety of international commitments which address these core principles, and which can be used to support inclusive education advocacy, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA). These international commitments should not be seen as separate or different from inclusive education. They explicitly support inclusive education, and cannot be achieved unless education systems actively strive to include every learner.

Inclusive education encompasses access, quality, retention/completion and outcomes of education

Enrolment, or access to education, on its own is not enough – we need to ensure that learners complete quality primary education and progress to secondary (and higher) levels. To do this we need to address the reasons why children fail to complete their education. Often there are financial or social reasons – for instance, schools are too expensive and families cannot afford the costs associated with school attendance. Some families prefer to withdraw their children from education to help at home, support family occupations, do other work, or because of the perception that their children will have better chances of marriage.

Other factors within the education system that ‘push’ children out of school or discourage their initial enrolment include: poor quality teaching, characterized often by a lack of learner-centred teaching methods; irrelevant, biased or simply inaccessible curriculum and teaching and learning materials; discrimination and exclusion based on disability, gender, ethnicity and language; unwelcoming or inaccessible school environments; narrow and discriminatory forms of assessment; and a lack of transition strategies and support between home and school, between different levels of schooling (e.g. between pre-primary and primary education; primary and secondary education; secondary and further/higher education), and between different programme types (e.g. between formal and non-formal education, between technical and vocational training schools and general academic schools).

Inclusive education requires a rethink of the way we educate and support teachers

Teachers play a significant role in making education more inclusive, through their approach to learners, the methods and materials they use, their ability to welcome diversity and see it as a strength, and their capacity to adapt and respond to challenges and diverse learning needs. Much of the existing teacher education currently focuses on narrow technical skills of teaching. It is therefore vital that teacher education prepares teachers to be
inclusive – not just by teaching them the theory of inclusive education, but by equipping them with the practical skills they need to identify barriers to access, participation and learning, to be reflective, critical thinkers and problem-solvers, and to actively challenge discrimination. Educating teachers for inclusive education means reconceptualizing the roles, attitudes and competencies of student teachers to prepare them to diversify their teaching methods, to redefine the relationship between teachers and students and to empower teachers as co-developers of the curriculum.

**Inclusive education requires the active engagement of all education stakeholders**

Children, parents and families, carers, teachers, community members, representatives of minority groups, civil society, the government and private sector stakeholders all have a role to play in developing inclusive education. Importantly, their unique perspectives on education also mean they need to have a voice in the process of developing teacher education, to help ensure that teachers are educated for inclusive education. Stakeholders need to be consulted about new directions for teacher education, given opportunities even to lead the call for changes in teacher education, and be involved in practice-based teacher education activities. To be meaningful and effective, such forms of engagement must also be supported by an enabling policy framework.

**Benefits of making inclusive education central to pre-service teacher education**

Inclusive education is widely recognized as having numerous social and political benefits, as well as economic benefits. Such benefits work towards creating and sustaining inclusive, cohesive and equitable societies. It follows that inclusive, learner-centred teaching is necessary to realize such benefits to their fullest potential, for all children, young people and adults.

Inclusive education is useful for teachers and other education stakeholders because it addresses the key indicators of realizing quality education for all: presence, participation and achievement. It is therefore important that inclusive education is understood, taken seriously and integrated throughout pre-service teacher education. Initial teacher education is essential in preparing teachers to welcome diversity, offer the highest quality teaching for all and face the many social and educational challenges that exist in classrooms, schools and communities.

Inclusive education supports meaningful teaching and learning for all, and develops teachers’ capacities to address the diverse needs of different learners in diverse cultural
contexts. It also encourages teachers to recognize and value learners’ diversity as a strength rather than a problem to be solved. It supports and empowers teachers to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods to fit the specific contexts and needs of their learners. Further, inclusive education works towards developing a culture of teacher work satisfaction and professionalism, in which teachers are valued by the communities they serve and enjoy their work. In this sense, inclusive education is part of a process of lifelong learning and development.

Inclusive education is often given greater attention at the level of in-service rather than pre-service teacher education, as illustrated by the following research finding relating to teacher education materials:

“Some of the most extensively used inclusive education materials are those supporting in-service education for teachers … Materials to support pre-service teacher education are underrepresented yet of great significance.” (Booth and Dyssegard, 2008, p. 9)

In-service teacher education offers vital opportunities for developing inclusive learning and practices. Indeed, inclusive education should be a focus of in-service teacher education, not only because teachers’ inclusive practices benefit from ongoing professional support, but also because many existing teachers have little or no experience of inclusive education.

However, there are important benefits to more comprehensively incorporating inclusive education into pre-service teacher education as well. For instance:

- Inclusive education can be used as a framework to better align and strengthen the complementary relationship between pre-service and in-service teacher education.
- It is more cost-effective and efficient to educate teachers about inclusive education before they start work than to invest in efforts to change their attitudes/practices later on. However, in-service teacher education will be necessary for updating or supplementing teachers’ learning on inclusive education, sharing of experiences, valuing teachers as lifelong learners, etc.
- Pre-service teacher education for inclusive education increases the likelihood that a greater number of schools and classrooms will become more inclusive, as more teachers will have been prepared for inclusive education (pre-service teacher education has the potential to reach more student teachers, in greater depth, than in-service teacher education).
- If teachers experience inclusive education from day one of their teacher education, they are more likely to see it as their basic duty as a good teacher, not as an extra burden.

2 Booth, T. and Dyssegard, B. 2008. Quality is Not Enough - the contribution of inclusive values to the development of EFA. Copenhagen, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DANIDA.
There are long-term benefits of educating potential future school leaders in inclusive education so that inclusive education is increasingly valued, embedded and developed in schools and society.

What is advocacy?

“Advocacy brings people together from different places, perspectives and interests, throwing into visibility the harsh divides and asymmetries upon which global order operates.” (Fortun, 2001. p. 16)

Advocacy is “a set of organized activities designed to influence the policies and actions of governments, international institutions, the private sector and civil society to achieve positive changes for children’s lives”.

Breaking this down, we can further explain advocacy as:

- a deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions
- making a case in favour of a cause and getting others to support that cause
- seeking to raise awareness among decision-makers and the public at the same time, if possible, so that policy and attitude change reinforce each other
- a tool to help us push for developments, reforms and/or implementation of policies
- a way of supporting or enhancing programme strategies for solving problems or making changes.

Key principles of advocacy

**Advocacy is change-oriented**

Advocacy seeks to bring about clear and specific changes in a particular context and/or for particular stakeholders. It is not a process of complaining about an undesired situation, but of raising awareness about how and why the situation is unfair or unacceptable, and pushing for clearly defined changes that would make the situation fair or acceptable.

**Advocacy is about engaging constructively with those we seek to influence**

Because advocacy seeks to make changes rather than just to voice concerns, we need to have a constructive relationship with those who have the power to bring about our desired changes. Advocacy is therefore built on notions of diplomacy and negotiation, and involves dialogue, not just demands. Effective advocacy emphasizes the positive (as well as

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4 Definition used by Save the Children: www.savethechildren.net/advocacy. (Accessed 10 March 2013.)
pointing out problems) and seeks to be constructive when engaging with decision-makers. Advocates need to highlight promising practices and outline possible ‘ways forward’.

**Advocacy is evidence-based**

We cannot highlight an unacceptable situation and expect our calls for change to be taken seriously unless we have sound evidence to illustrate that situation and back up our analysis of how and why it is unacceptable. For instance, if we want to point out that teachers are currently receiving an inadequate education to effectively address the diverse needs of learners, and advocate for them to receive better programmes and courses on inclusive education, we need evidence that shows what the existing training is like, and a clear analysis of why this is not providing teachers with the skills and knowledge they need. We also need evidence that shows the validity and potential of the alternatives or solutions we are proposing. This might mean, for instance, gathering examples of promising practices that can be used to back up advocacy messages.

**Advocacy is built on partnerships**

In most situations, one person speaking out on their own is unlikely to have the power to effect major change. Advocacy therefore is a collaborative process involving the mobilization of partners – e.g. individuals may come together as a group to call for change; organizations may come together as a consortium or network to pool their evidence base and strengthen their voice in discussion with decision-makers. Collaboration not only enhances the (collective) voice of advocates, but is important for ensuring coherent, consistent messages. Partnerships in advocacy ensure that calls for change are not undermined by multiple/conflicting messages that confuse decision-makers or give them an excuse to discredit the advocates. Collaboration also ensures that different stakeholders’ perspectives are taken into consideration when developing the advocacy objectives, activities and messages.

**Characteristics of effective advocacy**

Advocacy is usually most successful when:

- It is based on a good understanding of ideas and practices that already exist in one’s own context (this includes understanding and valuing existing practices that are supportive of inclusive education), to avoid it being seen as an ‘imported’ model.
- It is based on a solid understanding of the barriers present in a particular context.
- There is a good understanding of any resistance that might be encountered, and where such resistance may come from.
- It involves the development of short-term and long-term goals and plans, which are well thought-out and organized.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: 

- It is based on facts and evidence, not on assumptions and generalizations.
- Case studies are used to illustrate the problems and/or the desired changes.
- Examples of practical experience are available to back up theoretical arguments, and there is a connection with practical programmes with/for stakeholders.
- The group for whom change is sought plays an active role and has a strong voice in the process.
- There is a focus on positive, culturally-sensitive and diplomatic dialogue, not confrontation.
- The group or organization carrying out the advocacy has a good reputation for conveying reliable information and/or running quality programmes.6

Direct, indirect and capacity-building advocacy

Advocacy can take different forms:

- **Direct advocacy** involves actions through which advocates directly lobby decision-makers. In the case of advocacy for educating teachers in inclusive education, this might involve advocates directly engaging in dialogue with education ministers responsible for teachers, or with directors and curriculum developers in teacher education institutions.

- **Indirect advocacy** involves actions that create pressure on decision-makers, for instance, through the use of campaigns or the media. In the case of advocacy for educating teachers in inclusive education, this might involve, for instance, distributing an information campaign to all teacher education institutions, or publishing articles in newspapers reflecting on the current state of teacher education and how/why it needs to be reformed.

- **Capacity-building advocacy** supports civil society and builds people’s skills and confidence to advocate for change themselves rather than relying on outsiders to be the advocates. In the case of advocacy for educating teachers in inclusive education, this might involve building the capacity of teachers’ and students’ associations, community organizations, women’s groups, parents’ groups, school management committees, NGOs, etc. to become involved in teacher education (at the pre-service level through institutions or at the in-service level through their local schools). This involvement might range from calling on education officials to pay serious attention to the need for a change in teaching practice; to actively participating in training sessions, and to offering case studies and practical advice to student teachers to show how the theory of what they are advocating for can become a reality.

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Who is best placed to do advocacy in particular contexts?

The first place to start when thinking about advocacy is with you, the reader! What role can you play in advocacy? It is worthwhile reflecting on this for yourself and your own practice. Further questions you can ask yourself to guide your reflection include:

• What role do you play in promoting inclusive education and what does this mean in terms of where, how, with whom and what you can advocate?

• What specific education issues/messages are most important to you and/or the groups you work with or represent? Why are these important for you and your context? Which of these are advocacy priorities?

• To whom can you turn for support – which individuals, groups and networks can you use to support your advocacy goals?

• What tools, resources and opportunities are available to support your advocacy goals?

We stated above that advocacy is often most successful when it is carried out by groups or organizations that already have a strong reputation for providing information or programme interventions on a particular issue. But that does not mean that advocacy can only be done by professionals working in these fields. Advocacy around teacher education can be (and is) done by anyone, from school students, teachers and parents, through to NGOs, community groups and international campaigning groups, donors (in countries where teacher education receives external funding), and even senior education officials.

Successful advocacy needs a balance of inputs from different people, including:

• people who have first-hand experience of the problems that need to be changed (e.g. the learners affected by poor quality, discriminatory teaching practices and their parents who are dissatisfied with the teaching they see in the local school; and the teachers who feel they are not being properly prepared for the challenges they will face in schools with diverse learners and learning needs);

• those who have professional experience of these issues and ideally have experience of overcoming some of the challenges (e.g. teacher educators or education professionals who already support inclusive education training for teachers; teachers who already implement inclusive practices, etc.);

• those who have experience in advocacy, communications, etc. (e.g. NGOs that work on education and/or equality issues in the country/community).
Who are the targets for advocacy?

There may be many different targets for advocacy, depending on the extent of the problems you are trying to change, the advocacy goals you have set, and the socio-political context you are in. It is important to be realistic, so you need to think not just about whom you want to influence, but also about whom you can feasibly influence, given your current position, capacity, skills, experience, evidence base, etc.

In general, advocacy that seeks to change pre-service teacher education and ensure that teachers are prepared for inclusive education might be targeted at:

• ministry of education personnel or any other appropriate authorities who make national-level policy and funding decisions around teacher education, or about teacher education curricula;
• regional/district/local-level education personnel who make decisions about teacher education in their locality;
• university faculty members, deans, curriculum development committee members who develop teacher education curricula;
• heads of teacher education institutions;
• teacher educators in teacher education institutions;
• governmental or non-governmental bodies that provide teacher education, or support it through the provision of funding, materials, technical advice, etc.;
• head teachers and teachers who (a) have a potential role to play in supporting the development of practical, school-based learning as part of pre-service teacher education (and subsequent ongoing professional development); and (b) could help demand improvements in pre-service teacher education to ensure new teachers arrive better prepared to work in their schools
• school management committee/board members who (a) could support pre-service teacher education practicum; and (b) could help demand improvements in pre-service teacher education to ensure new teachers arrive better prepared to work in their schools;
• student teachers who need to know more about the quality and type of education that would better prepare them for work (so they can support calls for teacher education reform); and not feel frightened of being the ‘first wave’ of students to be educated in a different way.
How should we approach advocacy?

Advocacy needs to be planned and prepared for, like any project/programme. Because it is unlikely that you will achieve all of your advocacy goals at the first attempt, advocacy needs to be based on a reflective cycle. This starts with assessing the situation and understanding the problems, gathering evidence and consulting stakeholders. A period of analysis follows, during which decisions are made about advocacy goals, target audiences, messages and media, timescales, etc. The advocacy actions then take place, after which it is important to reflect on what has happened, and assess any changes in the situation/problems before embarking on more advocacy planning and action.

**Assessing the situation**

This guide will not provide details on situation analyses. However, in assessing the current teacher education situation and the extent to which teachers are being prepared for inclusive education, it is important to collect:

- qualitative and quantitative data (for instance, using interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory research tools that make use of drama, art, photography, mapping, etc., and using quantitative tools such as stakeholder questionnaires or institutional surveys);
- information from various stakeholders’ perspectives, including the voices of those affected by the problem;
- case studies (showing the problem, examples of interventions, and desired outcomes);
- information about relevant policy and legislation; and
- information about any previous/current advocacy work on the same or similar issues.

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7 The advocacy cycle is similar to the action research cycle and other reflective cycles – it highlights the importance of advocacy as being an ongoing, reflective process.
The questions you might investigate, when preparing your advocacy work, will also vary depending on the context, but might include:

- Whether inclusive education capacity has been recognized as part of national teacher professional standards? Whether teacher policies require teachers to develop capacities for inclusive education?
- How many teachers currently receive pre-service teacher education about inclusive education theory and practice? How many teachers currently receive training in inclusive education through in-service courses?
- How diverse is the population of teacher educators and student teachers (in regard to gender, ethnicity, disability, etc.)?
- What is the nature of this teacher education? Short courses or full university modules? Compulsory or optional?
- Is the teacher education itself inclusive? Does it address the diversity of student teachers and teacher educators?
- How much of the training takes place in the lecture room, and how much is practice-based in schools/classrooms?
- How do teachers feel about inclusive education? Are they keen, or nervous about their abilities, reluctant, or overly resistant?
- Are there examples of successful teacher education on inclusive education that you can learn from or showcase?
- Are there teachers, schools or institutions that are willing to support advocacy on inclusive education training for teachers, and perhaps even act as role models in an advocacy campaign?
- What do learners and their parents think about teachers/teaching; and what changes do they think need to be made to the way teachers are prepared for the reality of diverse learners?
- How are teacher educators being prepared and supported to work inclusively with their students?

**Analysis**

During this stage, the objectives for the advocacy are decided. There might be short-term and long-term objectives, or a series of smaller objectives that help you to achieve your over-arching objectives. When prioritizing objectives, it is important that a range of stakeholder views are considered as different people may have different opinions about which of the desired changes are most urgent or important. At this point
you also plan the advocacy actions – a process which also should be participatory. By involving different people in the advocacy planning, you will increase ownership of the process and gain access to more people’s skills, experiences and time for carrying out advocacy actions.

**Action**

Because advocacy actions will depend on the context, the goals, the skills/experiences of the advocates, etc., we cannot outline for you exactly what advocacy actions you need to take in relation to teacher education and inclusive education. However, through the subsequent four advocacy guides, we provide ideas for possible advocacy messages relating to some of the teacher education problems that you may be seeking to address. We also provide ideas for what the changes resulting from successful advocacy might look like.

**How can we convey advocacy messages?**

There are no limits to the ways in which you can convey advocacy messages! However, it is vital that the medium you choose suits the message and the target audience.

You might choose:

- interpersonal methods – meetings, workshops, conferences, telephone calls, round-table discussions, coordinated campaigns (e.g. letter writing, walks, marches, non-violent protests), etc.
- popular or mass media – newspapers, radio, television, local performances, leaflets, posters, journal and newsletter articles, books and book chapters, websites, online social networking, etc.

You also need to think about how you introduce or ‘launch’ your advocacy. Advocacy may fail to make an impact if all your efforts are focused on designing the messages and materials, and if you do not give enough attention to how you will get those messages out to your target audiences. If you want to attract many other people to support the cause, it might be a good idea to organize a high-profile event to launch your advocacy message, or a mass distribution of materials to draw widespread attention to your cause. Or it may be more appropriate to take a more discreet approach, and quietly but firmly make direct contact with your target audience, without putting them in the spotlight publicly.

When you convey advocacy messages, you may refer to international legal instruments that are of relevance to inclusive education. A list of relevant international legal instruments is provided in the following pages.
### Title

**Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)**


- The Convention lays down the fundamental principle of equality of educational opportunities. It prohibits discrimination in education in all its dimensions, and stipulates that quality education be made available and accessible to all.

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**International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)**

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx

- The Covenant provides the right of everyone to education in Article 13, and stipulates that education “shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society”.

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**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)**

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx

- The Covenant calls for respect for “the liberty of parents” to “ensure religious and moral education” for their children “in conformity with their own convictions” in Article 18.

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**International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)**

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx

- The Convention stipulates, in Article 7, the adoption of “measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information” to combat “prejudices which lead to racial discrimination”.

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**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)**

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx

- The Convention affirms the equal rights of women and men and stipulates the adoption of measures to eliminate discrimination in the field of education in Article 10.

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**Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989)**


- The Convention calls for ensuring the involvement of indigenous and tribal peoples in the development and implementation of education programmes in Article 27, and that children belonging to these communities are “taught to read and write in their own indigenous language” in Article 28.
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx | The Convention affirms the right of every child to education in Article 28, and stipulates that “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration” in all actions. |
|---|---|
| International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990)  
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CMW.aspx | The Convention affirms the right of each child of a migrant worker to education “on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned” in Article 30, and also calls for their education to be provided in the “mother tongue” of the child in Article 45. |
| Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)  
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx | The Convention affirms, in Article 24, the right of persons with disability to education, and calls for ensuring an inclusive education system. |

How will you know if your advocacy is working?

As with any project/programme work, you need to know whether you are achieving results from your advocacy work. So when planning advocacy and setting objectives, you need to consider what indicators you will set for measuring the advocacy process and the results, and how these could be measured. This indicator setting and measuring process also needs to be done in a participatory way with stakeholders.
Advocacy process indicators might help you to measure, for instance, how many leaflets have been distributed, how many people listened to a debate broadcast on the radio, whether some proposed meetings or debates took place and who attended/participated.

Advocacy impact indicators might attempt to measure changes in attitudes or practices among target groups (quantitatively via questionnaires, or qualitatively via focus groups and interviews). Impact might also be measured through monitoring the behaviour of the target groups through existing mechanisms (for instance, reviewing the minutes of government debates to see if any issues that pertain to inclusive education are being raised by ministry personnel, how often and what they are saying).

It is, however, important to remember that it is difficult to attribute change to any single specific advocacy intervention. Changes are likely to have been brought about as a result of multiple messages over a period of time from different advocates, rather than suddenly as a result of one advocacy initiative. It can therefore be challenging to set impact indicators for your advocacy work that will accurately attribute an impact solely to your efforts.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education is a series of 5 Advocacy Guides

**Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction**
This introduction puts the advocacy guides in context and offers a background to their development. It introduces inclusive teacher education and addresses what makes effective advocacy, who can do it and how it can be done. This introduction also provides an overview of the guidebooks on policy, curriculum, materials, and methodology.

**Advocacy Guide 2: Policy**
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teacher education policies. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development, and implementation of inclusive policies.

**Advocacy Guide 3: Curriculum**
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of pre-service teacher education curricula. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive curricula.

**Advocacy Guide 4: Materials**
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching/learning materials used in teacher education. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching/learning materials.

**Advocacy Guide 5: Methodology**
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching methodologies used at teacher education institutions. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching methodologies.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Policy
Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................... 1
  What is meant by policy? .................................................................................... 1
  Why is policy an important advocacy issue? ...................................................... 1
  Why is advocacy important for policy-making? .................................................. 2
  How can policies be analysed? ......................................................................... 2

Challenge 1: Awareness and understandings of inclusive education .............. 6
  Analysing the situation ...................................................................................... 6
  Advocacy goals ................................................................................................. 8

Challenge 2: Coordination and collaboration .................................................... 12
  Analysing the situation ...................................................................................... 12
  Advocacy goals ................................................................................................. 13

Challenge 3: Policy implementation ................................................................. 16
  Analysing the situation ...................................................................................... 16
  Advocacy goals ................................................................................................. 17

Challenge 4: Socio-economic Policy ................................................................. 21
  Analysing the situation ...................................................................................... 21
  Advocacy goals ................................................................................................. 23

How to tell if the advocacy is having a positive effect .................................... 24

Appendix ............................................................................................................. 25
Introduction

This advocacy guide on ‘Policy’ is the second in a series of five guides devoted to ‘Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education’. It can be used on its own or in combination with the four other advocacy guides which are: ‘Introduction’, ‘Curriculum’, ‘Materials’, and ‘Methodology’.

This guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teacher education policies. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development, and implementation of inclusive policies.

What is meant by policy?

The term ‘policy’ broadly refers to the rules, laws and principles that guide the practices of individuals, groups and institutions on various issues, e.g. inclusive education. Often, international and national policies set out overarching principles and commitments which guide more specific rules and procedures. Putting policy into practice, (in other words, the processes of bringing about the intended effects of policy in reality), is referred to as ‘policy implementation’ in this advocacy guide.

Thinking about a policy involves more than just thinking about the texts that describe rules, laws, and principles – it also involves thinking about the discussions, debates, and interactions among people, through which the meanings of the concepts and ideas that make up the policy are shaped. A policy should not be considered static, rigid or fixed in stone; rather it should be understood as part of a dynamic process.

Although this advocacy guide focuses on education policy issues and inclusive education specifically, it is necessary to always keep in mind that an education policy is not a stand-alone area of action, but is part of the broader dynamics and processes of economic and social policy-making. The development of inclusive education is intimately intertwined with inclusive social and economic development. Together, they form the essential basis of inclusive societies.

Why is policy an important advocacy issue?

Developing and implementing policies is not just the remit of government ministries. Policies which have impacts on inclusive education can be formulated at regional, national, state, provincial and local levels – including at the level of individual teacher education.

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Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Policy

institutions and schools. As education and related social and economic policies have direct impacts on the practices of all education stakeholders and affect their lives, the success of any efforts to promote inclusive education depends on clear and meaningful policies for guidance, support and protection.

The issue of responsibility here is critical – all professionals must be aware of and accept responsibility for their contribution to inclusive education at all levels. Policies have a clear role in promoting such awareness and supporting professionals effectively to enact these responsibilities.

Why is advocacy important for policy-making?

Although in theory, inclusive education may seem relatively straightforward and easy to implement, in practice, striving to make education more inclusive in schools and teacher education institutions is challenging. That is because the impact of any policy development and implementation is dependent on the extent and the quality of relationships between education stakeholders. For any policy related to inclusive education to yield intended effects, there is a need for meaningful and sustained collaboration between policy-makers and other key stakeholders including: teacher educators, student teachers, teachers, learners, parents/families, and community and religious leaders. Therefore, in order for inclusive education policies to be put into practice effectively and to have meaningful impacts on learners and learning, the policies must be clear, comprehensive and relevant to the realities of the stakeholders they affect.

Policy-makers at all levels need guidance and support in developing and implementing education policies that lead to intended outcomes; in this case, education that is more inclusive. Advocacy is a key means of offering this guidance and support. It creates opportunities for different education stakeholders to have a voice in shaping the policies which affect them. By so doing, it facilitates the development of effective policies that can be put into practice.

How can policies be analysed?

Policy analysis is not an area of work reserved only for policy-makers and researchers, but is something which a range of education stakeholders should be engaged in. It is important that the personnel in government ministries, teacher educators and student teachers, teachers and other members of school communities look at and make sense of existing policies in order to inform advocacy.

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The first step of policy analysis is to assess what policies exist in your specific context. This could be done through a survey or similar tool.

**Surveying Policies**

‘(A survey) could be used to assess many types of policies that organizations might have. In addition, a survey could be used over time to see if policies have changed for individual organizations or at a population level. Indicators of improved policies could include the number of organizations that have adopted policies around a particular issue and/or the number of policies that conform to elements of effective policy that have been identified based on a review of research.

Survey items could address:

1. Whether an organization has an officially adopted policy about a particular issue
2. The elements of the policy
3. How the policy is attended to and/or enforced
4. Perceived effectiveness of the policy

In the process of analysis, it is necessary to examine the various aspects of the policy being considered. Table 1 contains a suggested framework of the aspects to examine, with corresponding questions to consider, in the process of policy analysis for inclusive education. It is particularly geared towards analysing national policies, but can be adapted to look at local level policies as well, including those within teacher education institutions.

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4 Adapted from EENET Newsletter No. 12. August 2008. ‘How inclusive are national education policies and plans?’ EENET.
## Table 1

| A) Definitions of inclusive education | • Do your policies present clear explanations of inclusive education?  
|                                       | • Do they tackle the confusion between ‘special/special needs’ education and ‘inclusive’ education? |
| B) Quality education                  | • Are your policies based on a strong understanding of the reciprocal relationship between improvements in access to learning for all and improvements in the quality of education?  
|                                       | • Do they recognize that improvements in access must be matched with improvements in quality if enrolment growth is to be maintained and drop-out rates reduced?  
|                                       | • Do they recognize that quality education is about learning broadly, and not just in the classroom? |
| C) Holistic approach                  | • Do your policies view inclusive education as a way to change the whole education system so that every learner is included in better quality education?  
|                                       | • Do the policies present a vision of a unified system in which formal, non-formal, and mainstream provisions work together? |
| D) Resource allocation               | • Do your policies encourage every area of education to budget for enhancing inclusiveness, rather than sidelining issues of inclusion and exclusion with a separate budget? |
### E) Existing resources and capacities

- Do your policies seek to recognize, nurture and develop ideas and practices that already exist locally? Or, do they assume that all inclusive practices must be started ‘from scratch’ or all inclusive methods imported from elsewhere?
- Do they support the development of existing national, regional and local community resources?

### F) Monitoring and assessment

- Do your policies support comprehensive research into children and young people’s access to and progress through education?
- Do your policies include a framework for monitoring and assessing the inclusiveness of your education system overall?

### G) Participatory data collection

- Are your policies built firmly on (and supportive of) education research done through participatory processes with children and adults across the community?

### H) Teacher education

- Do your policies push for genuine reforms to pre- and in-service teacher education in line with inclusive education theory and practice?
- Do they present inclusive education as a standard way of working for every teacher?
- Do they tackle the sensitive issue of well-established teacher education institutions teaching out-of-date approaches and with little experience in inclusive education?

### I) Flexible curriculum development

- Do your policies encourage curriculum reforms built on stakeholders’ inputs?
- Do they support local flexibility in curriculum development?

### J) Inclusive education as a rights issue

- Do your policies actively promote inclusive education as a human rights issue and use human rights as a justification for inclusive policies?
In the following sections of this advocacy guide, we will look at specific policy challenges in relation to inclusive education in the context of pre-service teacher education, alongside possible advocacy strategies and solutions. As we consider policy challenges and advocacy strategies to address them, one important point to keep in mind is that policies are not neutral. They are informed by the social, cultural and political perspectives of the people who create them. Likewise, we too bring our socio-cultural and political understandings into the process of policy analysis. Therefore, when we seek to examine and analyse policy challenges, it is necessary to be aware of and take into account the various perspectives that shape the policy, as well as our own perspectives that shape the analysis.

Challenge 1

Awareness and understandings of inclusive education

Analysing the situation

The insufficient awareness of existing policies among education stakeholders

In some national education systems, teacher education institutions or schools, policies relevant to inclusive education are virtually non-existent. However, the main challenge here may not be about the actual non-existence of a relevant policy, because a broad set of inclusive education policies and policy guidelines do exist at different levels – internationally, regionally, nationally and at provincial and local levels. Rather, the challenge may be more about education stakeholders’ insufficient awareness of existing policies.

The lack of a comprehensive policy framework which supports inclusive education

Although various policies which address different aspects of inclusive education may exist, they are often seen as discrete and may be disconnected from one another and therefore not linked under a broad framework of inclusive education. The lack of an overarching inclusive policy framework hinders policy implementation and makes it difficult for inclusive education to be addressed cohesively and comprehensively.
The problem of policies not being understood or supported by the people they impact

Sometimes, those policies which do address inclusive education are not always well understood or supported by education stakeholders such as teacher educators, teachers, and parents/families. Stakeholders’ insufficient understanding and support often stems from the fact that they were not involved in the processes of developing, reviewing and making sense of such policies. Their non-involvement in the process of policy development results not only in a poor understanding of the policies but also their weak involvement in the policy implementation process. Such a situation creates a risk that policies will be implemented poorly, or will be passively, or even actively, resisted.

Discrepancies between inclusive education concepts as they are defined in international, national, and local policies

Although many international, regional, national and local policies address aspects of inclusive education, their concepts of inclusive education do not always correspond with one another; they may even be contradictory. Furthermore, clear and comprehensive definitions of inclusive education concepts that are in line with international standards are often absent from national, provincial/district and local level policies. This situation makes it difficult for education systems in general, and teacher education institutions in particular, to develop a clear and cohesive strategy towards implementing inclusive education.

Discrepancies between national laws and policies and teacher education policies and practices

Policies and practices at the level of teacher education institutions do not always reflect national laws and policies, both in regard to the management of such institutions and to the teaching they promote. This threatens inclusive education within teacher education institutions and makes it difficult to prepare teachers to take a standardized approach in schools and classrooms.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context before embarking on advocacy

- Are you aware of existing policies (internationally, regionally, nationally, locally) which support inclusive education? How can you find these and analyse them?
- Are you aware of the legislation which needs to underpin inclusive education policy to ensure implementation? Does such legislation exist in your context? If not, how could you be involved in developing relevant legislation?
• How can you support the education stakeholders you work with to better understand existing inclusive education policies and to use these to develop locally relevant policies for your context?
• How can you support bringing existing policies in your context (e.g. the ministry of education, or your teacher education institution) in line with international standards on inclusive education? Who needs to be involved in this process? How can they be meaningfully involved?

Advocacy goals

Policy advocacy message 1
“There is a need for better awareness of existing policies on inclusive education and for better alignment between policies at international, national and local levels.”

Policy advocacy message 2
“Ministries of education and teacher education institutions need to review and align policies – and develop new policies when necessary – to support a comprehensive approach to inclusive education in and through teacher education.”

Advocacy messages 1 and 2 have been grouped together here to emphasize the importance of linking processes of policy awareness-raising and policy review with processes of policy alignment, adaptation and development. In order to address policy gaps, and to better align policies across levels, as well as to develop new policies, it is important for stakeholders to be aware of and understand existing policies relevant to inclusive education.

The responsibility for policy awareness, alignment and development should be a shared one. That is, ministries of education need to ensure that they take the responsibility for reviewing, aligning and developing national policy related to inclusive education. Such policy review and development should involve a range of different stakeholders from within and outside of government ministries. As mentioned previously, inclusive education is a cross-cutting policy issue, and teacher education policies for inclusive education would benefit from the involvement of various ministerial departments.

The involvement of representatives from state and provincial education offices, teacher education institutions and schools are essential in this process. Building solid relationships based on mutual trust between teacher education institutions and ministries of education is important in working towards policy alignment for a holistic approach to inclusive education. Teacher education institutions also need to review and develop their specific
policies on inclusive education. This process should actively involve student teachers and teacher educators as well as teacher education management personnel. Comprehensive and meaningful inclusive education policy development and implementation are dependent on shared awareness of the scope and nature of challenges in teacher education institutions, schools and communities.

Proper time and space need to be set aside for policy review and development. This could be done, for example:

- through national and provincial forums, conferences and workshops which provide opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders to review and develop an inclusive education policy;
- within teacher education institutions in which education policy can be a subject of teaching and student teachers can be supported to critically read, analyse and discuss policies and related policy documents.

Whether within government ministries or teacher education institutions, policy review and development must be an ongoing process and responsive to change, not a ‘one off’ occurrence. Better policy awareness, development and implementation depend on periodic reflection, adaptation and change and then further reflection.

Accessible policy documentation is key in this process. If policy documentation is accessible at all levels, specific policies can be reviewed and, if need be, aligned with existing national and international policy frameworks. A key part of making policies accessible is ensuring that inclusive education concepts are clearly and thoroughly defined in all policy documents. In order to enhance accessibility, policy instruments, frameworks and guidelines need to be available in national and local languages and in braille so they can be read, understood and critically analysed by relevant stakeholders.

Programmes of educational research and the related systems of monitoring and evaluation are necessary to provide in-depth understandings of the challenges in inclusive education. They need to reflect diverse perspectives and involve a broad range of education stakeholders, and take into account both quantitative and qualitative measures. Robust systems of data collection and analysis focused on key issues are important in this regard. Research should be action-oriented; that is not just done for the sake of it, but directed towards meaningful changes. Action research is central to the philosophy of inclusive education and is a key way of evaluating policies and practices at every level. Action research is discussed more thoroughly in the Advocacy Guide 5 on Methodology.

Research can also be used to gauge the impact of advocacy as well as other aspects of education. For example, an indicator of effective advocacy would be the extent to which different teacher education institutions share similar concepts, pedagogical approaches
and practices on inclusive education. Such data could be collected through comparative research across teacher education institutions, using such methods as observations, surveys and interviews with teacher educators and student teachers.

**Policy advocacy message 3**

“The processes of policy review, alignment and development need to address issues of inclusive education specific to teacher education.”

Clear, comprehensive policies on inclusive education related to teacher education need to be aligned with broader inclusive education policy objectives, but they also need to address issues specific to the context of teacher education.

Such issues include:

- inequalities in the recruitment of student teachers and teacher educators (e.g. disproportionately low number of women, people from ethnic/linguistic minority backgrounds, indigenous peoples, people from remote areas, and people with disabilities);
- support for promoting inclusive teaching and learning methodologies and continuous formative and authentic assessment;
- collaborative working and critical friendships between peers of teacher educators, student teachers, and between teacher education institutions and schools/school communities;
- a culture of teacher professionalism which develops teachers’ confidence and capacity to support diverse learners and teach inclusively, including opportunities for in-service professional development.
Example from Lao PDR

Analysing and reforming a national policy

The 2008 UNESCO conference in Geneva on inclusive education led to a process of major education policy revision in Lao PDR. During this process, a comprehensive policy on inclusive education was developed alongside an education constitutional law to support putting the policy into practice.

The policy development process is ongoing and currently, Lao PDR is reforming its policy on teacher education to ensure teachers have the necessary education and skills to support the country’s focus on improving the quality and inclusiveness of education. Practically, one aspect of this policy reform focuses on simplifying and standardizing the process of developing and recruiting teachers. In the past, there were multiple possible pathways into the teaching profession. This meant that not all prospective teachers were required to have gone through a full teacher education qualification programme. Although this made it easier for some people to become teachers, it also resulted in many poorly qualified teachers entering schools and classrooms. The policy reform process involved a more standardized approach to teacher development and recruitment which aimed to ensure that prospective teachers receive comprehensive and high quality teacher education before they become teachers. The reform in teacher qualification went hand in hand with the decentralization of teacher recruitment, which made it more responsive to local needs, and more relevant and sustainable.

Central to Lao PDR’s approach to policy development is a focus on policy review. Recently, the new national education policy was reviewed and discussed as part of a three-day workshop on inclusive education. This workshop involved education officers from different provinces, members of the Ministry of Education and Sports and representatives from teacher education institutions. Participants were supported to use a policy analysis framework (Table 1) as a guideline. During this process of policy analysis, participants from provincial education offices and teacher education institutions were able to better understand the national policy and ask policy-makers from the Ministry of Education and Sports specific questions about the education policy and policy implementation. Participants were also able to begin the process of developing policy implementation strategies for their own contexts.

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Challenge 2

Coordination and collaboration

**Analysing the situation**

*Insufficient coordination and collaboration within and between government ministries*

Inclusive education requires coordination between all areas of education provision. Ministries of education which do not have a shared, collaborative approach to addressing inclusive education in policy and practice will be far less effective in supporting schools and communities for inclusive education. A lack of or weak collaboration can cause fragmentation and result in confusion and contradictory policies and practices.

In some ministries of education, a specific department is tasked with the overall responsibility for inclusive education. Although it can be useful to have a department within a ministry of education which has a particular focus on inclusive education, there is a risk that in such cases, inclusive education can be viewed as a separate, discrete area of education which is the sole responsibility of one ministerial department and not of others. Such a situation can actually work against collaborative practice, and may inhibit shared responsibility for inclusive education across the whole ministry of education.

Additionally, a lack of or weak collaboration between ministries of education and other governmental ministries (e.g. ministries that deal with health, social welfare, orphans, migrant workers, persons with disabilities, women, etc.) lessens the potential for a unified approach to addressing the cross-cutting issues that are not specifically education related, such as poverty, disability, migration, poor health, the exclusion of ethnic minorities, etc.

*Insufficient coordination between different non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, government ministries, and teacher education institutions*

In an ideal world, all ministries, teacher education institutions and organizations involved in education share a common understanding of inclusive education and are able to work together in a coordinated fashion. The reality for most countries is that different departments within education ministries, different non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, and different teacher education institutions often have competing ideas
and agendas about what education policies are important and how to implement them. This lack of or weak coordination can lead to fragmentation, competition for time and resources, mixed and sometimes contradictory messages, redundant programmes and other inefficiencies, resulting in less than optimal teacher education and ultimately less actual inclusive education in schools.

Such weak coordination is linked to the problem of the lack of or insufficient consultation with a broad range of education stakeholders in the development of an education policy. This issue is discussed further under ‘Challenge 3 – Policy Implementation’.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context before embarking on advocacy

• How can government ministries be supported to take a shared and well coordinated approach (within and between ministries) to supporting an inclusive education policy and its implementation?
• How can you support collaboration and cooperation over an inclusive education policy and its implementation between your institution (e.g. government ministry, non-governmental organization, teacher education institution) and other institutional stakeholders? Where and from whom can you get support within and outside of your institution to engage in this process?

Advocacy goals

Policy advocacy message 4

“Education ministries need clear strategies in which the responsibility for inclusive education is distributed across ministerial departments with the involvement of other ministries beyond education.”

Ministries of education in which inclusive education is understood and supported in all departments have a greater chance of effectively supporting inclusive education. When ministerial departments (e.g. pre-service teacher education, primary, secondary and higher education, curriculum development, education research, etc.) actively work together to define and achieve inclusive education goals, the actual inclusion of all in education and learning is far more likely to be realized than without such a collaborative approach. The process of policy review and development as discussed in Challenge 1 can be useful in bringing different ministries and different departments within the education ministry together and in fostering closer working relationships.

Although a greater sense of shared responsibility for inclusive education between different ministerial departments is a key goal, it is also important that a clear and robust
monitoring system is in place to make sure each department genuinely takes ownership of inclusive education and is accountable for its responsibilities.

Ministries of education need to ensure that inclusive education is neither spread too thinly across multiple ministerial departments, nor entrenched in only one department. To be meaningful and effective, collaborative work on inclusive education policy issues within and between government ministries needs to be developed based on an agreed plan of action with specific targets and clear lines of accountability.

**Policy advocacy message 5**

“An effective approach to inclusive education depends on strong and sustained coordination between ministries of education, teacher education institutions and non-governmental/inter-governmental organizations.”

Greater efforts should be made towards communication and coordination for inclusive education among government ministries, teacher education institutions and non-governmental/inter-governmental organizations. This should include working together to develop shared visions and strategies, shared systems of monitoring and evaluation and coordinating approaches to organizing, and funding and implementing inclusive education programmes in teacher education institutions.

In order to support such collaborative work, policy-makers from ministries of education should spend time in teacher education institutions to develop strong working relationships with the managers and teacher educators and to better understand the needs and challenges in teacher education, to work towards developing meaningful policies to address them. Conversely, staff and students from teacher education institutions can be supported to work in ministries of education to understand the challenges they face, and work with them directly to develop relevant inclusive education policies (e.g. through policy forums, workshops and conferences).

Developing a robust inclusive education system is not just dependent on the relationship between government ministries and teacher education institutions. Non-governmental organizations, such as those working in non-formal education, often have extensive and specialized experiences of inclusive education training and practices which would be valuable for ministries of education and teacher education institutions to take account of in developing and promoting inclusive education. The development of national and local policies which support alliances between non-governmental organizations with experiences of inclusive education training and practices and teacher education institutions has potential benefits for all and works holistically towards a more inclusive education system.
Example from Bangladesh

Learning from non-formal education\(^6\)

In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Education is learning from promising inclusive practices in the non-formal education sector. This offers the potential for stronger collaboration between the formal and non-formal education sectors in the country.

Some non-formal education programmes in Bangladesh have experiences in providing children who have traditionally had limited access to formal education with inclusive non-formal education. For example, recent research\(^7\) has highlighted the Dhaka Ahsania Mission’s UNIQUE project on multigrade teaching as being an example of especially promising practice in non-formal education. Generally in a multigrade classroom, a single teacher teaches learners from different curriculum grades at the same time, and the UNIQUE project works to bring out-of-school and disadvantaged children into mainstream education through multigrade teaching. The project uses flexible curriculum and training materials, and has been noted for its attention to multicultural and multilingual issues.

Teachers in non-formal programmes, such as the UNIQUE project, have access to specific training in inclusive approaches to teaching and learning which is not always available in teacher education institutions in the formal education sector. The Ministry of Education in Bangladesh is now working more closely with non-governmental organizations to align non-formal education with formal education, build on the non-formal sector’s experiences in inclusive education training for teachers, scale this training up and offer it to more teachers in formal pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

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Challenge 3

Policy implementation

Analysing the situation

Gaps between policy-makers and policy implementers

When there are gaps between education policy-makers and policy implementers, the policy risks not reflecting the reality on the ground in teacher education institutions, schools and communities. Also in such situations, those responsible for policy implementation may lack thorough understandings and ownership of the policies they are meant to implement. One result of such a disconnect between policy-makers and implementers is that the policy may not be clear or relevant enough to local contexts and the implementation may not bring about the expected changes in teacher education institutions, schools and communities. Gaps between policy-makers and policy implementers often occur when the policy is developed in isolation from practice.

The need for policies to recognize and support the participation of local communities in education in schools

When policies are not supportive of the active participation of local communities in teacher education and education in schools, there is a risk of missing out on the tremendous wealth of knowledge, skills and experiences which local communities can bring to education. Furthermore, if local community members, e.g. parents/families, community and religious groups, do not understand and support inclusive education, there is little chance of successfully supporting education for all learners.

Marginalized people and communities (e.g. people living in poverty, people with disabilities, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous peoples, migrant workers, people living in remote areas, women, etc.) are often excluded from, or underrepresented within teacher education institutions, and policies to support members of such groups entering the teaching profession are often non-existent, weak, and/or poorly implemented.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context before embarking on advocacy

- How can policy-makers in and outside of your institutional context be supported to develop a policy on inclusive education which is relevant and implementable?
• How can local communities (e.g. parents/families, community and religious leaders) be engaged in the process of developing and implementing inclusive education policies at the relevant local level?

• How can teacher education institutions be supported to tap into the knowledge, skills and experiences of local communities in developing inclusive teaching and learning?

**Advocacy goals**

**Policy advocacy message 6**

“Policy-makers and policy implementers need to work together to develop shared understandings of the issues and challenges in inclusive education policy implementation and develop clear strategies for addressing these.”

Policies related specifically to teacher education are implemented not only in teacher education institutions, but also at different levels of the education system, including the levels of state, provincial and district education offices, which have responsibilities for teacher education and teacher recruitment/placement. As policy-makers and policy implementers need to work closely together for successful policy implementation, it is important that representatives from all the different levels are involved in developing inclusive education policies and policy implementation strategies. For example, district education officers can be involved in developing a national policy on recruiting students with disabilities into teacher education institutions, or in developing specific recruitment strategies to implement such policies in their districts.

**Policy advocacy message 7**

“Education policies should support the active participation of local education stakeholders in education, including teacher education.”

As mentioned previously, the involvement of local stakeholders is critical for the success of inclusive education policies. Their involvement helps ensure that education is relevant and responsive to the needs and concerns – and also the strengths – of local communities. Policies need to recognize local communities as assets and resources so that education systems can make use of and be supported by the valuable knowledge, skills and experience that local communities have to offer.

Teachers and school managers need to facilitate the involvement of local community members, such as parents/families, in the process of teaching and learning and management of their schools. This is discussed more in the Advocacy Guide 5 on
Methodology. Such processes also benefit from being more formally framed in a policy. For example, schools can be held accountable for building stronger links with their communities and seeking ways to involve community members more directly in learning that takes place in schools. This can be mandated by a policy.

Policies can also play a role in supporting better relationships between local communities and teacher education institutions. For example, schools in areas where there are teacher education institutions can be more actively involved in reciprocal relationships with such institutions.

This could be done through:

• policies which support student teachers to do practicum work in local schools;
• policies which support student teachers and teacher educators to volunteer time in local schools;
• policies which support in-service teachers in local schools to receive additional training and qualifications from teacher education institutions; and
• policies which support in-service teachers and school management staff in local schools to give guest lectures or otherwise share their knowledge and skills in pre-service teacher education institutions.

Work also needs to be done to enhance the diversity of the student body of teacher education institutions. This should involve implementing policies to support students from marginalized groups and communities to enter and complete teacher education and ultimately to join the teaching profession. For example, teacher education institutions in conjunction with district level education offices can work with organizations that support people with disabilities and with ethnic minority communities to encourage and support them to become teachers.
Example from India

Community involvement in education

In Rajasthan, Northwest India, a programme has been developed to foster active community engagement in making education more inclusive. The programme, named Lok Jumbish, is a non-governmental initiative launched in 1992. Its main objectives are to develop, demonstrate, catalyse and transform mainstream education in the locality, and to ensure that every child has access to basic education. The starting point was the recognition that the real problem is not the supply of education alone, but under-utilized capacities as indicated in low enrolment and participation rates. Even after fifty years of independence, very few literate men and women are found among the poor in the villages in this area.

At the very beginning, the programme recognized the need to not only involve the community, but also the ‘teaching community’. Respecting the teacher and supporting her/him through training, motivation and encouragement was flagged as a very important area of focus. The motto was to learn by doing and move gradually by reviewing processes continuously. This hinged on the ability of the project to be vigilant and maintain open channels of communication and dialogue. From the start, there was also a need for clarity on who constituted the community. The programme workers were explicitly asked to involve those who had been left out of educational processes. This was to be done through debate on the challenges of education and the education of their children.

There was also a recognition that community participation cannot ‘happen’ unless the programme can develop and refine techniques to enable genuine participation. As a result, in the first two years of Lok Jumbish, a great deal of time and effort went into fine-tuning techniques for school mapping. Similarly, the composition of the village education committee and the core programme group was also decided in the early years.

Ultimately, Lok Jumbish developed a village education register, a retention register (grade by grade) and also the concept of a building maintenance and school environment forum called the ‘Bhavan Nirman Samiti’.

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Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Policy

The above process went hand in hand with some tenets – which were followed in Lok Jumbish – namely:

- Engage the community in analysing the information generated, and in exploring ways and means to make education available to all children;
- Empower the disempowered to participate;
- Work specifically to help women gain information, knowledge and the confidence to participate in a larger forum;
- Make demands on the community with regard to their commitment to sending and maintaining their children’s participation in schools and to participating in improving the school environment (e.g. buildings, trees, and water);
- Respond sensitively to the demands made by the community for more teachers, buildings, etc.; and
- Make government officials, teachers and others accountable to the community.

Finally, although this project is not explicitly focused on education policy, it demonstrates how local communities can be involved in analysing education systems and participating in making them more inclusive.

Policy advocacy message 8

“Local education stakeholders need to be involved in the processes of understanding, adapting and developing education policies.”

There are clear benefits to involving local education stakeholders directly in making sense of policies which do exist, in adapting these policies if necessary and in helping to develop new policies. If stakeholders, including teacher educators, student teachers, district education officers, supervisors, head teachers, teachers, parents and families, and children, actually understand and feel they have a voice in the policies that affect their lives, such policies are much more likely to be valued, supported and implemented. Furthermore, actually involving stakeholders at the local level in developing policies is a good strategy for making such policies as relevant and meaningful as possible.
Challenge 4

Socio-economic Policy

Analysing the situation

The mismatch between ‘market driven’ approaches to education policies and genuinely inclusive education

A ‘market driven’ approach to education views education chiefly as operating in a market-like arena where gains are made through competition. Further, a ‘market driven’ approach tends to value education solely for its potential economic benefits and neglect its social benefits. Evidence suggests that ‘market-driven’ education policies often have unexpected consequences on equity in education at the expense of education’s social functions. Understanding education as a basic human right takes seriously the idea of education as a public good, and education which is ‘market driven’ works against inclusive education.

‘Market driven’ approaches to education can work against inclusive education in a number of ways by:

- Promoting ‘free market’ competition over collaborative approaches between teacher education institutions, schools, teachers, etc. (e.g. performance related pay for teachers based on narrow, summative, assessment criteria can devalue inclusive education, create unnecessary competition, demotivate teachers and encourage a narrow focus on technical/instrumental aspects of teaching and learning);
- Measuring learning using narrow assessment criteria, and in particular, overreliance on standardised testing (which typically does not account for the learning of those students who do not test well) – this is discussed more thoroughly in Advocacy Guide 5 on Methodology;

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Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Policy

- Viewing education as primarily a means of achieving economic gains, rather than valuing and promoting education’s potential social benefits;

- Failing to recognise the value (and transformative potential) of education for those learners who do not obviously bring economic benefits to society (e.g. because they are not seen as being destined for highly skilled/highly paid employment, or are not seen as obviously having a future role in contributing to a nation’s economy).

Additionally, education policy cannot be considered in isolation from other policy areas including economic policy. Economic policy which results in the underfunding of education and other social services (such as health) works against social and educational inclusion. Although inclusive education is not dependent on material and financial resources alone (poorly financially resourced schools and communities can be highly inclusive), governments which place a low priority on educational funding often struggle to support the high quality teacher education and teaching and learning environments which best support presence, participation and achievement in education for all learners.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context before embarking on advocacy

- What is the impact of socio-economic policies on education? Are there policies that enhance excessive accountability, competition and individualism at the cost of collaboration, cohesion and inclusion in education?

- What is your country’s current approach to funding for inclusive education and for teacher education specifically? Does education funding reflect political concerns which work against social and educational inclusion?

- How can policy makers in and outside of your institutional context be supported to develop education (and related economic) policies which are more holistic than a purely ‘market driven’ approach to education and which fit practically and ideologically with the underlying principles of inclusive education?

- How can you challenge unfair and un-inclusive education (and related economic) policies? What networks of support can you access to support you in this process?
Advocacy goals

Policy advocacy message 9

“National education policies should be rooted in the idea of education as a public good and should not be designed from an overly ‘market driven’ approach. Governance and funding (at national, provincial and local level) should reflect this.”

Inclusive education is built on the idea that education is a basic human right, hence a public good. Education policies and related economic policies should support this idea in order to develop comprehensive and holistic inclusive education systems.

National and provincial policy makers, teacher education institutions, teachers and schools should all be encouraged and supported to work collaboratively to promote this idea and address the challenges of inclusive education – policy at all levels should promote such collaborative approaches. Collaboration here, can also involve teacher education institutions, working together with teachers’ unions (in countries where such unions exist), and education oriented inter-governmental (e.g. UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, etc.) and non-governmental organizations to promote inclusive education.

Proper funding for education is important, as is more specific funding for inclusive teacher education in regard to:

- supporting teacher education institutions to be more inclusive in their recruitment of and support for students with disabilities, from ethnic and linguistic minorities, from difficult to reach rural areas, etc. Funding schemes designed for specific groups of disadvantaged people (e.g. people with disabilities, the poor, ethnic minorities, people living in remote areas, etc.) are known to enhance social and educational inclusion in general;
- supporting collaboration between promising non-formal teacher education programmes and formal pre-service teacher education institutions;
- promoting a culture of teacher professionalism, which involves access to ongoing professional development opportunities and better pay.
How to tell if the advocacy is having a positive effect

Advocacy Guide 1 highlighted that when planning advocacy you will also develop indicators to help you monitor the process and the impact of your work. The indicators you will create will depend on the details of your advocacy objectives. Indicators, like plans, should be developed through a participatory process that involves a range of stakeholders.

The following list suggests some potential indicators. Advocacy that calls for improvements in policy, so as to better prepare government ministries, provincial and district level education authorities, teacher education institutions and schools for inclusive education, could be considered effective if:

- International, national and local level inclusive education policies are aligned and stakeholders in government ministries, provincial and district education offices, teacher education institutions and schools are aware of these policies and their implications for practice.
- Ministries of education and teacher education institutions work together on policies which ensure teacher education is inclusive.
- Education (and related) policy review and development processes specifically address inclusive education in and through teacher education.
- Ministries of education and other relevant government ministries (e.g. health and social services) can demonstrate a shared vision and understanding of inclusive education and collaborative, inter-departmental approaches to inclusive education, both in regard to policy documentation and practice.
- The process of reviewing, developing, and implementing inclusive education policy involves coordination between government ministries, teacher education institutions, provincial and district education offices, and non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations.
- Policy-makers and policy implementers have developed shared understandings of the issues and challenges facing policy implementation as well as clear strategies for addressing these.
- Different teacher education institutions can demonstrate that they share similar concepts, pedagogical approaches and practices on inclusive education. Such data can be collected through comparative research across teacher education
institutions, using such methods as observations, surveys and interviews with teacher educators and student teachers.

- Education policies support the active involvement of local stakeholders (e.g. school communities) in education, including teacher education.
- Local education stakeholders are involved in the process of understanding, adapting and developing education policies.
- There is an understanding that overly ‘market driven’ approaches to education which see education solely in economic terms works against actual social and educational inclusion.
- Education is well resourced and financed at all levels within the education system.

Appendix

In this table we suggest possible targets for each of the advocacy messages mentioned in the above challenges. There is also space for you to enter ideas about which advocacy methods and media you could use to convey these messages in your context. You should aim to develop these ideas through a process of consultation with colleagues and other stakeholders. Further advice on advocacy, and on methods/media, can be found in Advocacy Guide 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “There is a need for awareness of existing policies on inclusive education and for better alignment between policies at international, national and local levels.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Local/provincial education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Teacher educators  
• Student teachers  
• Community and non-governmental organizations | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Ministries of education and teacher education institutions need to review and align policies – and develop new policies when necessary – to support a comprehensive approach to inclusive education in and through teacher education.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Teacher educators | |
| “The processes of policy review, alignment and development need to address issues of inclusive education specific to teacher education.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Teacher educators | |
| “Education ministries need clear strategies in which the responsibility for inclusive education is distributed across ministerial departments with the involvement of other ministries beyond education.” | • Personnel of relevant ministries (e.g. health, social welfare, women, finance) | |
| “An effective approach to inclusive education depends on strong and sustained coordination between ministries of education, teacher education institutions and non-governmental/inter-governmental organizations.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff from non-governmental/inter-governmental organizations | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Policy-makers and policy implementers need to work together to develop shared understandings of the issues and challenges in inclusive education policy implementation and develop clear strategies for addressing these.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions  
• Staff from non-governmental/inter-governmental organizations | |
| “Education policies should support the active participation of local education stakeholders in education, including teacher education.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions  
• Local education stakeholders including members of school communities | |
| “Local education stakeholders need to be involved in the processes of understanding, adapting and developing education policies.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Teacher educators | |
| “National education policies should be rooted in the idea of education as a public good and should not be designed from an overly ‘market driven’ approach. Governance and funding (at national, provincial and local level) should reflect this.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Provincial and local level education authorities  
• Heads of teacher education institutions | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1*
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education is a series of 5 Advocacy Guides

Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction
This introduction puts the advocacy guides in context and offers a background to their development. It introduces inclusive teacher education and addresses what makes effective advocacy, who can do it and how it can be done. This introduction also provides an overview of the guidebooks on policy, curriculum, materials, and methodology.

Advocacy Guide 2: Policy
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teacher education policies. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development, and implementation of inclusive policies.

Advocacy Guide 3: Curriculum
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of pre-service teacher education curricula. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive curricula.

Advocacy Guide 4: Materials
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching/learning materials used in teacher education. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching/learning materials.

Advocacy Guide 5: Methodology
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching methodologies used at teacher education institutions. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching methodologies.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Curriculum
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Curriculum

Ian Kaplan and Ingrid Lewis
Introduction

This advocacy guide on ‘Curriculum’ is the third in a series of five guides devoted to ‘Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education’. It can be used on its own or in combination with the four other advocacy guides which are: ‘Introduction’, ‘Policy’, ‘Materials’, and ‘Methodology’.

This guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of pre-service teacher education curricula. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive curricula.

What do we mean by curriculum?

In the context of this advocacy guide we are talking about the curriculum for educating pre-service teachers, rather than the curriculum used by teachers in schools for educating children.

The curriculum is a way of organizing and sequencing learning experiences with the aim of achieving specified learning outcomes. It guides what will be learned, and why, and how, this learning is facilitated. The curriculum reflects connections between society, politics and schools/teachers, so the development of inclusive curricula reflects a desire to develop an equitable, non-discriminatory society.1

This advocacy guide will discuss inclusive teacher education in relation to the curriculum. It will look at:

- Inclusive curriculum – ensuring that the content and methods used in teacher education courses convey clear messages about inclusive education, use inclusive, learner-centred approaches, and are flexible and responsive to learners’ needs and experiences
- Inclusive approaches to curriculum development – ensuring that the process of developing teacher education curricula is inclusive and participatory and takes account of diverse stakeholder perspectives (e.g. teachers, students, teacher educators, parents and carers who are male and female, with and without disabilities, from majority and minority language groups, from rural and urban locations, and so on).

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Why is the pre-service teacher education curriculum an important advocacy issue?

The curriculum followed in teacher education – especially during pre-service programmes – shapes teachers’ attitudes, knowledge and competencies, and influences their subsequent work with their own students. If we want to promote inclusive education, therefore, it is vital that teachers are learning about, experiencing and practising inclusive approaches to teaching and learning from day one of (and throughout) their professional development.

In many countries, investments are made in in-service teacher education programmes to ‘upgrade’ teachers’ competencies and knowledge, and influence their attitudes towards inclusive education. Such ongoing professional development will always be needed, both to support teachers who have not accessed inclusive pre-service teacher education, and to facilitate commitment to continuous improvement towards inclusive education among all teachers. However, there needs to be a balance between pre-service and in-service teacher education, so that there is an effective mix of initial learning via a core teacher education curriculum, and further learning through supplementary (in-service) curricula. Advocating for inclusive education to be incorporated into the pre-service teacher education curriculum in your country or teacher education institution is, therefore, an essential part of moving forward with inclusive education.

However, we need to do more than just call for inclusive education in pre-service teacher education curricula. A range of curriculum-related challenges need to be addressed. In the following sections of this booklet we will look at some of these key challenges, identified through recent research.2

These include:

- inclusive education being treated as a separate component, rather than as an integral part of the core teacher education curriculum;
- inclusive education curriculum components focusing narrowly on disability and special needs, rather than on a more complete interpretation of inclusive education;
- inclusive education being delivered via theory-dominated curricula, rather than through more effective practice-based curricula;

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2 For instance: (i) Forgacs, R. 2012. Strengthening Teacher Education to Achieve EFA by 2015: How are student teachers prepared to adopt inclusive attitudes and practices when they start teaching? Synthesis and analysis of the reviews of pre-service teacher education systems in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam (2008-2011). Bangkok, UNESCO; and (ii) The Enabling Education Network (EENET) has been supporting World of Inclusion to carry out a mapping of teacher education in relation to children with disabilities as part of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Rights, Education, and Protection (REAP) project which aims to enhance education and child protection systems so that they are sensitive, responsive and inclusive of children with disabilities. This mapping process has revealed many issues relevant to advocacy around inclusive education in pre-service teacher education.
• lack of inclusive education expertise among curriculum developers and teacher educators, which hinders the potential for integrating inclusive education throughout core teacher education curricula; and
• problems of bias, stereotypes and discrimination within the content and structure of the teacher education curriculum.

As with any advocacy work, you will need to investigate exactly which challenges exist in your own unique context and therefore what changes you need to push for. The information we provide here is a guide to advocacy on inclusive teacher education curricula, not a prescription.

Challenge 1

Making inclusive education an integral part of pre-service teacher education curricula

Analysing the situation

Inclusive education is too often treated as a stand-alone topic

In many contexts, teachers do not automatically learn about inclusive education during their pre-service programmes – it is not part of the teacher education core curriculum. Where teacher education institutions do offer training on inclusive education, it is often provided as a stand-alone course/module (which may refer more to ‘special needs education’ or ‘education for children with disabilities’ – see also Challenge 2). As such it may be an optional course and/or a course that does not contribute significantly to the overall grade/mark students receive, resulting in many students opting not to take the course.

This situation reinforces entrenched beliefs that inclusive education is a separate, specialist issue within education, rather than something that every teacher needs to know about and take action on. As a result, when teachers start working in schools or other education settings, they are often not fully prepared (or may be unwilling) to welcome diversity and address the challenges that a diverse class of learners may present. Their students may be diverse in terms of their age, ethnicity and language, ability, gender, socio-economic status, etc.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Curriculum

Pre-service curriculum weaknesses lead to reliance on in-service teacher education for inclusive education

Because the core curriculum of pre-service teacher education programmes in many countries does not cover inclusive education in a comprehensive way, in-service teacher education often seeks to fill gaps in teachers’ knowledge, skills, commitment and confidence with regard to inclusive education. Relying heavily on such a ‘catch-up’ approach is likely to be less efficient and effective than incorporating inclusive education into initial teacher education.

It costs more to provide in-service courses (both in terms of the cost of the training and the costs to schools when staff are taken away from core duties to attend courses). Because of the cost and logistical implications, such programmes are usually not available to every teacher in a given country. While ‘cascade’ training is popular, because of its ability to reach larger numbers of teachers at relatively low cost, there is growing evidence that relying heavily on this sort of in-service teacher education alone is not an effective way to educate teachers about inclusive education.

An in-service teacher education programme on inclusive education, consisting of a week-long course, was provided by Catholic Relief Services and Viet Nam’s Ministry of Education and Training. By 2008 the programme had trained 2.8 per cent of more than 944,000 serving teachers. This represents a large number of teachers trained (over 26,000), but the example clearly shows the scale of the challenge of reaching all teachers through in-service provision, and thus the importance of ‘spreading the load’ by ensuring that all teachers also learn about inclusive education at the pre-service stage.

In-service training on inclusive education may be met with resistance from teachers, in a way that may not happen when introducing concepts of inclusive education through the core pre-service teacher education curriculum. Experienced teachers may feel they know their jobs and resent any implication that they have significant gaps in their competence. They may not welcome the ‘new’ expectation that they will teach students from difficult circumstances or with disabilities. They may also be concerned that they will be asked to take on what they perceive to be extra duties once they embrace inclusive education.

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3 This takes various forms. Trainers at one level may be taught to pass on the training to others at a lower level. In other cascade systems, small numbers of teachers receive training and are expected to pass this on to multiple colleagues.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context

- Are there stand-alone courses/modules on inclusive education within teacher education programmes? What do such courses usually include? Or are approaches to inclusive education integrated throughout all courses/modules?
- Is it compulsory for student teachers to take courses/modules on inclusive education?
- Do inclusive education courses/modules contribute equal scores/credits as other courses within student teachers’ overall grades/marks?
- How much of your country’s teacher education on inclusive education is done through pre-service programmes, and how much through in-service courses? How many teachers/student teachers are being reached through each approach?
- Have in-service programmes on inclusive education been evaluated? For instance, do you know to what extent the programmes have been well-received by teachers; and the nature and extent of improvements to teaching and learning made as a result? What about pre-service teacher education?

Advocacy goals

Curriculum advocacy message 1

“All pre-service teacher education institutions, universities or colleges need to educate all prospective teachers about inclusive education.”

Understanding and responding to diversity in education should not be an optional learning objective for a minority of student teachers, e.g. those who perhaps have an existing interest in inclusive education, special needs, disability or other marginalized groups. Instead, inclusive education needs to be recognized as an essential learning objective for all student teachers, regardless of which level they will teach at, which subject(s) they will teach, or where in the country they are likely to be deployed. Pre-service teacher education curricula therefore need to be revised or developed so that all student teachers are aware of, and supported towards, inclusive education learning goals.

Some student teachers may already believe in inclusion and equality in society and just need support to translate their principles into action. Others will find the idea of including all children and young people, especially those whom society traditionally marginalizes, to be a totally new (and potentially confusing or frightening) concept. Pre-service teacher education curricula need to be revised or developed to be responsive to the range of beliefs and experiences among all student teachers – helping them to reflect on and change attitudes where necessary, and then move on to building practical skills and confidence.
Curriculum advocacy message 2

“Every course or module in teacher education needs to actively promote and demonstrate equality, inclusion and human rights.”

To educate all student teachers about inclusive education requires more than just an expansion of existing stand-alone inclusive education courses/modules. Even making such courses compulsory for student teachers is not enough. Inclusive education ultimately needs to be seen as an integral part of education – which means in turn that inclusive education needs to be woven into every element of teacher education.

Every course or module needs to promote messages for equality and inclusion, and demonstrate inclusive teaching and learning in practice. Every course needs to encourage student teachers to reflect on how each subject or situation can be made inclusive for every learner, regardless of their background. If teachers hear such messages routinely throughout their initial training, and if they see their tutors demonstrating inclusive practice, there is a greater chance that inclusive practice becomes the norm, not the exception. Pre-service teacher education on inclusive education is therefore likely to meet with less resistance or scepticism, and result in more flexible and creative teachers entering the profession.

Inevitably, to achieve such an ‘embedded’ approach to inclusive education throughout the teacher education curriculum will require radical and large-scale revision of teacher education programmes in many countries. It will also necessitate a big push towards building the capacity of those who design teacher education curricula, and those who deliver the curricula.

Achieving the levels of reform needed in the development and delivery of teacher education curricula cannot happen in one easy step. Breaking down ‘curriculum advocacy message 2’ into a series of smaller, shorter-term, achievable goals will be necessary in most contexts. It is also important to remember that advocacy goals do not exist in isolation. There are strong links, for instance, between this advocacy goal and the goals outlined in Challenge 4 (relating to building the capacity of curriculum developers and teacher educators). The development of strategic, holistic advocacy plans for teacher education curriculum reform is therefore essential.
Challenge 2

Moving from special needs education to a broader paradigm of inclusive education

Analysing the situation

Superficial changes

Ministries of education and teacher education institutions may increasingly offer ‘inclusive education’ courses as part of the pre-service curriculum, but often these would be more accurately described as courses in ‘special needs education’, or ‘education for learners with disabilities’. The courses/curricula may have changed name, but often they do not embrace the holistic view of inclusive education for all learners that we outlined in Advocacy Guide 1. UNESCO Bangkok’s recent review of teacher education highlighted in general a “lack of ‘inclusive education’ as an overarching concept in pre-service teacher education curricula.” In certain countries, ‘inclusive education’ in the [teacher education] curriculum refers to specific topics in relation to ‘children with special needs’ or ‘children with developmental retardation’.

In particular, issues of gender equality and multilingual education are noticeably absent from the curricula of inclusive education programmes in many countries. For instance, in some countries, gender is not included in the curriculum of teacher education institutions, or is only addressed in a specific course, rather than integrated more widely in the curriculum.

In some cases neither the name of the course/module nor the content has changed. The review indicated that in some countries, ‘special education’ courses with a clear focus on “deficit remediation” are offered to teachers, but none that are about (or even purport to be about) inclusive education.

Teacher education institutions are by no means alone in perpetuating a narrow disability/special needs interpretation of inclusive education within their teacher education curricula. Such interpretations remain widespread within government and NGO education

5 Forgacs, 2012, p. 29.
6 Ibid., p. 30.
8 Forgacs, 2012, p. 32.
9 Ibid., p. 30.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Curriculum

initiatives, policies and guidance documents. Inclusive education evolved from the disability rights movement, and it is vital that it retains a clear focus on supporting learners with disabilities. However, it is also important for education decision-makers and practitioners to understand inclusive education as a process of change that supports all learners, not just those with disabilities, and for this to be reflected in the curricula.

A review of government policies/strategies (including those discussing curricula) in four countries in Africa and Asia noted: “The documents indicate common confusions between inclusive, integrated and special education, as well as misunderstandings about inclusive education being primarily a programme for the education of disabled children.”

Resistance to curriculum changes

The way in which teacher education about special needs is handled often reinforces a perception that it is a separate, specialist focus, not intended for every teacher:

“Modules or units on special education in initial teacher education serve to ‘reinforce the sense of separation that characterizes special education and leads to the belief that such children are the responsibility only of those who have undertaken specialist courses.’”

Issues of power can play a role in perpetuating this situation. Some teacher education institutions may specialize in preparing teachers for special schools and for teaching children with disabilities. A move towards inclusive education – with every institution preparing every teacher for the challenge of working with all children (including those with disabilities or ‘special needs’) – may not always be welcome, and may even be perceived as a direct threat to established specialist teacher education institutions/courses and their staff. If these specialist institutions already have a powerful voice in influencing teacher education decisions in their country, it can be particularly challenging to counter their pro-special education argument and bring them on board with delivering inclusive education programmes to all student teachers.

Even in teacher education institutions that do offer ‘inclusive education’ courses, teacher educators may resist the suggestion that their course curricula need to be revised in line with a broader interpretation of inclusive education (to take on board gender equality, language issues and human rights for all marginalized groups). They may feel comfortable with the disability/special needs focused courses, and be nervous of branching out.


Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context

- Do courses/modules that are called ‘inclusive education’ convey a broad interpretation of inclusive education for all learners? Or are they primarily still special needs/disability focused courses?
- Is there cooperation between institutions/teacher educators who specialize in special needs/disability and those whose remit is general teacher education? Or is there competition and suspicion between them?
- Do teacher educators, and those in charge of teacher education institutions, have a positive attitude towards change, or is there resistance to any suggestions that their courses need to be improved, changed or replaced?

Advocacy goals

Curriculum advocacy message 3

“Teacher education curriculum developers/teacher educators need to improve their understanding of the special needs and inclusive education paradigms.”

Misunderstandings about inclusive education are pervasive and persistent, and will continue to be so as long as student teachers are receiving inaccurate or mixed messages about inclusive education and the education of learners with disabilities or special needs.

Teacher educators (and those who develop the curricula they work with) therefore need to be involved in an ongoing process of sharpening their understanding of inclusive education.

This might require:
- involvement in more (and better quality) education research, feeding a stream of new experiences more effectively into the curricula of teacher education courses; and
- regular and more stringent ‘upgrading’ of teacher educators’ knowledge and skills, so that they can more effectively adapt and deliver curricula focused on inclusive education for their student teachers.

Curriculum advocacy message 4

“Teacher education institutions need to develop a commitment to innovation and change within their own institution, and develop curricula which reflect these commitments.”

Teacher education has the potential to take a lead in bringing innovation to education, and equipping the next generation of teachers with new ideas and skills. However, this
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Curriculum

requires a commitment to change within the teacher education institutions themselves, and for a culture of innovation to be reflected in the curricula they offer to student teachers. Openness to change needs to be encouraged and resistance to change needs to be effectively (yet sensitively) addressed.

This might require:

- investment in alternative learning opportunities for teacher educators, to enable them to keep their curricula fresh and innovative;
- improved opportunities for teacher educators to learn from other institutions/countries and to engage in international debates on how to cover inclusive education within teacher education;
- facilitating teacher educators to gain more first-hand experience of working with people with disabilities and diverse groups of people, and thus more confidence with delivering advice and support to their student teachers; and
- greater recognition of, and mechanisms for sharing, teacher educators’ research, curriculum or pedagogy innovations, etc.

Curriculum advocacy message 5

“Governments need to develop standards for teacher education which require all teacher education institutions to develop/use curricula that educate every teacher about inclusive education.”

Governments need to take a strong and committed stance in ensuring that curricula in all teacher education institutions prepare all student teachers for inclusive education, through a mixture of embedded messages and dedicated courses. Specialist courses that enable students to ‘dig deeper’ into education issues for children with disabilities, children from ethnolinguistic minorities, etc., may still exist within the curriculum, but the bottom line should be that inclusive education is delivered as part of the core teacher education curricula for every student teacher.

Governments may need a great deal of encouragement, support and capacity building in order to be able to take such a strong stance. As with many advocacy goals, therefore, we may need to break it down into smaller steps. For instance, we might first need to advocate for ministry of education personnel to engage in a professional development programme around inclusive education so that they are able to give informed advice on inclusive education for curriculum development and make informed judgements about the standards they expect from teacher education institutions.
Challenge 3

Maintaining balance between theory and practice

Analysing the situation

Courses are dominated by theoretical learning

Too often, the teacher education curriculum relating to inclusive education is heavily theoretical. It is of course vital for teachers to grasp the theory behind a concept. Inclusive education is not a simple concept, and time can usefully be spent analysing and reflecting on what it means, how it differs from ‘special education’ and other education approaches, and so on.

However, the concept of inclusive education often only fully makes sense once we see it ‘in action’. Yet across the region (and globally) teacher education curricula rarely give student teachers an opportunity to experience inclusive education, or practise learner-centred, inclusive and active approaches to teaching and learning, before they embark on teaching a diverse group of learners.

As noted in a report from UNESCO Bangkok’s review of teacher education: “[teacher education curricula] seem to be mainly content-focused rather than aiming at building also the competencies of teachers”.12 This was reiterated by participants at UNESCO’s regional expert meeting (‘Inclusive Education through Quality Teacher Education in Asia-Pacific’ in July 2012). For instance, in certain countries it was noted that, “… there is a tendency to pay too much attention to theory in [teacher education on] inclusive education. Therefore there is a gap between what new teachers have learned in the curriculum and what they are facing in the classroom”.13

An issue with the use of education and related social theory in teacher education, globally, is that often student teachers are not supported to understand and critically evaluate theory in relation to their own lives and contexts.

Student teachers lack support in practical problem-solving

Because inclusive education is not a simple, fixed product but an ongoing process of change and improvement, those who implement it do not necessarily need to be inclusive education experts who know how to do everything up front. Instead they need to be proficient at identifying and solving unique problems when they arise, and recognizing promising practices that can be built on.

Problem-solving is not something that can be taught only through lectures and by reading books – it is a skill that needs to be developed and fine-tuned through practice. Teacher education curricula, especially on inclusive education, but also in general, often do not provide student teachers with enough practical opportunities for observation and hands-on experience. Practice-based learning may be considered peripheral to the main (theory-based) teacher education curriculum, and may not contribute significantly to student teachers’ credits or final marks (often determined by written examinations).

Initial programmes may also not offer student teachers sufficient practical guidance on how to identify and support individual children’s learning needs and strengths. There may be specialist courses on the technicalities of identifying and supporting learners with disabilities (perhaps taken only by student teachers who specifically wish to work in ‘special needs’ education or special schools); but limited attention paid to preparing teachers to identify and address individual learning needs among a diverse, mainstream group of learners.

Effective problem-solving is dependent upon student teachers’ ability to think critically and reflectively about the social and education contexts they live and work in and their own roles and practices within such contexts.

The curriculum does not practise what it preaches

One of the best ways to learn about inclusive education is to experience it! Unfortunately, student teachers are often told about inclusive education using teaching approaches that are far from inclusive (e.g. through teacher-centred lectures). The teacher education curriculum may contain adequate messages about inclusive education, but the means for delivering this curriculum content are not inclusive or learner-centred. The curriculum may be designed so that teacher educators are not encouraged or given space to demonstrate inclusive teaching and learning approaches, or to facilitate hands-on learning among their student teachers. Where curricula do give space for demonstration and practice-based learning, there is still a significant chance that teacher educators will lack the experience and skills needed to deliver the curriculum in an active, inclusive way, in part because they are often disconnected from the reality of ‘education on the ground’.
Further, the mechanisms for assessing student teachers’ progress through the curriculum may be limited to exams, written papers, etc. Not only does this conflict with the inclusive principles being taught, but it may do little more than measure ability to reproduce theoretical arguments without assessing the students’ abilities to teach inclusively.

(We will look in more detail at the issues of teacher education methodology in Advocacy Guide 5).

**Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context**

- How much time (or what percentage of their time) do student teachers spend in lectures, observing other teachers/each other, or practising teaching with mock classes or real classes?
- Are practical sessions in classrooms/schools an integral and compulsory part of the curriculum?
- How is practice-based learning assessed, and does it carry equal weight in the curriculum as the theory-based learning assessment?
- How much of the curriculum is focused on reflective practice and problem-solving, as opposed to more traditional learning of facts?
- How does the curriculum promote the development of problem-solving among student teachers?

**Advocacy goals**

**Curriculum advocacy message 6**

“The teacher education curriculum needs to place greater emphasis on practice-based learning.”

*Inclusive education* – like many aspects of good teaching – cannot be taught effectively through theory-based approaches alone.

The teacher education curriculum therefore needs to be designed and delivered so that it enables student teachers to:

- observe and discuss with experienced teachers and reflect on issues of inclusion and exclusion raised by the observations and discussions. Special effort may be needed to find experienced teachers who have promising practices to demonstrate and useful stories of experience to share. These teachers may in turn need some initial help with reflecting on what experiences to share or what approaches to demonstrate;
• carry out extensive teaching practice, with a specific focus on responding to the needs of a diverse group of learners, and developing problem-solving skills. Where challenges exist in offering relevant teaching practice, the curriculum needs to build in simulated practical experiences, video-based learning, and opportunities to learn key skills in other settings (for instance, learning to work with people with disabilities through a creative arts project – see the example from Cambodia on the next page);

• observe each other during teaching practicum, and provide critical reflections on what was inclusive/what could be more inclusive; and

• engage in action research projects on issues of inclusion and exclusion, helping the student teachers to gain practical skills that will be useful when they start work, while also feeding into any research requirements for their course.

**Curriculum advocacy message 7**

“The teacher education curriculum needs to support student teachers to understand the connections between inclusive education theory and the reality of teaching.”

Curricula need to have a stronger focus on supporting student teachers to see and understand the connections between the theory of inclusive education and the reality of what happens in schools/classrooms and communities. It is not sufficient to have isolated theory sessions and practical sessions – the two types of learning need to complement each other. Student teachers need to understand and witness how a theory manifests in reality, and be able to analyse their practical experiences in relation to the theories they have learned about.

Finally, the teaching and facilitation approaches that teacher educators use to deliver the curriculum need to be inclusive and learner-centred. We will look at this in more detail in *Advocacy Guide 5*. 
Example from Cambodia

*Creative partnerships to bring practical elements into pre-service teacher education*

This collaboration between an NGO, Epic Arts, and a teacher training college in Kampot, Cambodia aimed to help student teachers gain a better understanding of disability, interact with students with disabilities and gain some empathy for their experiences. It also gave them a chance to learn games and activities that could be used in class to include all learners.

The college became aware of Epic Arts as the organization was producing a play about disability for the local community. The deputy director of the college, a VSO volunteer education advisor placed at the college, and the Epic Arts staff got together to work on an initiative for student teachers.

It was not easy for the college or the NGO to find time for the activity, due to existing heavy workloads. But they managed to arrange for the first and second year student teachers to attend a half-day session to gain experience of working with learners with disabilities that they could later draw on when making decisions in the classroom.

Pre- and post-training questionnaires enabled student teachers to compare their attitudes and learning and the changes that took place after this short session of practical activities with learners with disabilities. They noted a new realization that learners with disabilities often face social problems (e.g. bullying) rather than educational problems. They also came up with new ideas for how learners with disabilities could participate in classes, and said it was easier to think of these ideas once they had worked with these students and learned from them.

Plans were drawn up for this collaboration to continue, enabling all first year student teachers to gain practical and creative experience of working with learners with disabilities. Student teachers also asked to learn sign language so the college and Epic Arts agreed to arrange for a sign language teacher to provide evening lessons at the college.14

**Example from Mozambique**

*Supporting students to connect theoretical learning with the reality of their school community*

The Pedagogical University in the Inhambane Province of Mozambique was piloting a course on inclusive education, led by a VSO volunteer teacher educator. The students chosen to take part in the pilot course were first year student teachers of English. The course was designed to help them learn about inclusive education by experiencing it for themselves, so the teacher educator used participatory, active learning techniques throughout.

The first few sessions of the course focused on raising awareness and children’s rights. The student teachers quickly started to think about and discuss their own communities and the attitudes of the people. Most of them came from small villages where everyone knew each other, and they all seemed to know children who weren’t in school. These were children with disabilities, girls who were home-based carers, children whose parents didn’t think education was important, etc. The student teachers suddenly realized this was a big problem and it was something they had never really thought about before. They began asking themselves why.

The student teachers decided to investigate further and to find out what barriers to education these children were facing and what strategies could be used to overcome them. So a plan for carrying out some action research activities was incorporated into the course.

They decided to implement awareness raising activities, first in their own university and then in the surrounding schools. Their idea was to raise awareness and at the same time find out what the barriers were. They started a programme of cascade training to sensitize groups of people with disabilities in the area along with other NGOs and stakeholders. Parents meetings were held in each community and information was given out about children’s rights and inclusive education. However, during the first review stage of the action research process the student teachers realized that the children and parents/carers had not been involved from the initial planning stage and consequently did not have enough voice in the activities. The omission of church involvement was also identified as something that needed to be amended.

The student teachers realized they had been trying to run before they could walk – their ideas were excellent but their planning needed more thought. The whole process began
again, but this time with community meetings where everyone contributed ideas – the
aim was to build up a support network to raise awareness throughout the province.

Ongoing feedback was given to the university in the form of student teacher/staff
meetings where ideas and strategies were shared. The awareness-raising activities,
which were constantly being reviewed by the student teachers, eventually led to the
facilitation of an inclusive education conference, to which student teachers from a
sister university in Maputo were invited.

The pilot had not initially been planned with this significant focus on action research,
but the teacher educator noticed the small seed of interest among the student teachers.
She therefore flexibly restructured the course to enable them to use their interests to
develop action research skills, whilst at the same time learning how inclusive education
theory linked to the reality of their local schools/communities, and enabling the
community to engage more in educational improvements too.

As a result of this innovative pilot, the course is now incorporated into the Teacher
Training Programme at the Sagrada Familia University, and the inclusive education
conference is part of the university’s annual work plan.

“Everyone on the course talked in class about our different attitudes and our change
of behaviour. The class was very open and we could discuss how things are in our
communities; how children are hidden away, etc.

We talked about how we could help to change things – open people’s eyes – so they
can help with inclusion. We all know it’s very important to involve the community.”
(Joana Carolina Jaime – Student Teacher).\footnote{Case study provided to EENET by Diane Mills.}
Challenge 4

Building capacity and expertise in curricula development and delivery

Analysing the situation

Teacher education curriculum developers may lack expertise

Designing a teacher education curriculum that prepares student teachers for inclusive education and offers an effective balance of theory and practice requires a high degree of familiarity with, and practical experience of, inclusive education among curriculum developers. Government-level curriculum development bodies and/or in individual teacher education institutions, however, often do not have this balance of theoretical knowledge and practical experience on inclusive education. There may be a body of expertise on special needs education, and the development of specific (separate) curricula on teaching learners with disabilities; but this may not have evolved into expertise in how to integrate a full range of inclusive education issues throughout the entire teacher education curriculum.

Participatory and inclusive processes for curriculum development may not exist

There is often a lack of diverse representation from men and women, with and without disabilities, from different ethnic, linguistic and religious groups within curriculum development teams, at national or institutional levels. Without such representation, it can be challenging for curriculum development teams to accurately address inclusive education issues and provide teacher educators and student teachers with locally relevant information and learning opportunities. It may also be easier for inclusive education issues to be forgotten.

In addition to weaknesses in the composition of curriculum development teams, these teams often still do not routinely consult education stakeholders as part of the process of developing or revising teacher education curricula. Stakeholder consultations can be important for designing contextually relevant teacher education curricula that address the education issues facing the learner groups with whom the student teachers will eventually work. Such consultations can be particularly important when the curriculum design process is centralized and there is not much scope for localized adaptations by teacher educators at a later date.
**Teacher educators who deliver the curriculum may lack expertise**

The absence of a centrally developed inclusive teacher education curriculum need not be a major barrier, if the staff within teacher education institutions have the capacity to adapt curricula and weave inclusion messages and experiences throughout their work. Unfortunately, teacher educators do not always have this capacity – perhaps because they lack first-hand experience of (and confidence in) inclusive education, or because they have not been widely exposed to new ideas in education and often ‘teach as they were taught’.

**Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context**

- Who develops the curricula that guide teacher education? What practical experience do they have in inclusive education?
- Is there a team/department of curriculum developers and do they represent diverse groups from across your country? Who is not represented in the curriculum development team/department?
- Is there a process for seeking stakeholder inputs into teacher education curricula, and if so, who is involved and how?
- Are teacher educators allowed to adapt the curricula to suit student teachers’ learning needs and to introduce new ideas; and do they have the skills/confidence to do this?
- What sort of reference resources are available in your country for those seeking more information on curriculum development and adaptation?

**Advocacy goals**

**Curriculum advocacy message 8**

“Teacher education curriculum developers with existing knowledge and practical experience of inclusive education need to be selected. There also needs to be ongoing training provided to curriculum developers, and they need to be encouraged to consult stakeholders throughout the curriculum development process.”

Those who develop teacher education curricula – at a national or institutional level – need to be ‘ahead of the game’. They need to understand inclusive education from the perspective of broad systemic change and individual learner support. They also need to know how to integrate inclusion, equality and rights issues throughout all teacher education, and they need to be innovative. Teacher educators should be constantly investigating new developments in teacher education and inclusive education, and reflecting on how to adapt appropriate new ideas to improve their own teacher education curriculum.
Key personnel issues therefore include:

- selecting suitably experienced, knowledgeable and creative personnel for curriculum development teams/departments;
- creating curriculum development teams/departments comprising diverse membership (men, women, with and without disabilities, from different linguistic and other backgrounds, and from rural and urban contexts);
- reviewing the composition and performance of curriculum development teams/departments on a regular basis, and actively searching for personnel to fill any identified skills/experience gaps; and
- ensuring there is an education programme for curriculum developers, addressing inclusive education (with exposure visits to inclusive education settings, not just learning through theory); and inclusive/participatory teaching and learning methods.

Key process issues include:

- ensuring that curriculum development teams understand the importance and relevance of seeking stakeholder views with regard to teaching and teacher education, and have the necessary skills for facilitating such consultations;
- developing accessible mechanisms through which stakeholder views can be heard (e.g. through representative advisory panels or focus groups); and
- monitoring of teacher education curriculum developers by the government/ministry of education to ensure that they are seeking, respecting and using stakeholder perspectives in their work.

**Curriculum advocacy message 9**

“The selection process for new teacher educators needs to include requirements for inclusive education knowledge and experience. Ongoing professional development for inclusive education is also needed for all existing and new teacher educators.”

Teacher educators need to be able to understand, deliver in an inclusive way, and adapt an inclusive teacher education curriculum. Therefore, teacher educators ideally need to be recruited/selected at least in part for their understanding of (or capacity to learn about and commitment to) the principles of inclusion, equality and rights. Recruitment processes also need to consider candidates’ ability to innovate, so that they can respond spontaneously to their students’ learning needs (for instance, by creating new ways to support student teachers to turn theory into practice, which may not be directly prescribed in the teacher education curriculum).
As with the teacher education curriculum developers, there also needs to be an ongoing professional development programme for teacher educators, so that they understand the concept of inclusive education, are regularly exposed to first-hand experiences with inclusive education settings, and also tap into national and global debates on inclusive teacher education. Inclusive education should be seen as a vital aspect of lifelong learning and professional development.

**Example from Viet Nam**

*Ensuring that teacher educators are able to train effectively on inclusive education*

Having made a policy commitment to inclusive education, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Viet Nam worked with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to develop a national curriculum so that all student teachers in universities and colleges would receive a quality training that prepared them for teaching in inclusive settings. However, a lack of suitably experienced teacher educators held back progress in this initiative. Further work was therefore developed to improve the attitudes, knowledge and practical skills of teacher educators, so that they could deliver the training curriculum, using appropriate pedagogy.

Forty-seven teacher educators from eight cities/provinces, along with MOET and CRS personnel, received 40 hours of training. The training introduced them to the curriculum they would need to follow, but importantly gave them opportunities for personal reflection, for debates and to practice the pedagogical skills needed for teaching an inclusive curriculum. These teacher educators would then become resource experts to support colleagues in their own and other teacher education institutions.

Even though this intensive training enabled teacher educators to develop a more positive attitude towards inclusive education and some skills for supporting their own student teachers, the teacher educators still identified areas where they felt they would need more help in future, particularly with regard to children with disabilities. Further training was therefore planned.

This example highlights the importance of building capacity at all levels in the teacher education system. There is little point in having a teacher education programme on inclusive education if those who train the student teachers are not skilled, experienced and confident in inclusive education, participatory/active pedagogy, etc.16

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Example from Nepal

Involving diverse stakeholders in curriculum development

In 1996, the Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University introduced a three-year Bachelor of Education degree. Since then, teachers and other experts have been brought together in a participatory process to develop the teacher education curriculum. In 2009 this process was further strengthened with a needs analysis involving different stakeholders. This sought insights into possible content for inclusive education in the teacher education curriculum. The Faculty of Education also for the first time organized workshops during which teachers could develop curriculum material to be used in their courses. This overall approach resulted in increased ownership by the teachers and increased classroom teaching.

Based on the needs assessment, the Faculty of Education revised the curriculum for teacher education and this has been inspirational for other faculties. The pre-service teacher education curriculum has been changed to address cross-cutting issues (diversity, ethnicity, disadvantaged groups, multilingual education, social justice, rights-based education and inclusion).17

Challenge 5

Challenging biases, inequality, discriminatory practices and stereotypes

Analysing the situation

Student teachers learn about the principles and the reality of inclusive education not just through explicit messages, but through the overall tone of the course they are studying – i.e. whether the teacher education curriculum generally challenges stereotypes and promotes equality.

Teacher education curricula (like many school curricula) are not always free from bias. For instance, the reading materials prescribed in the curriculum may perpetuate gender stereotypes in the case studies, examples or images used, or may reflect bias towards the country’s majority language or ethnic group. (We will look in more detail at teacher education materials in Advocacy Guide 4).

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Curriculum content, activities and structure may favour some student teachers over others. For example, there may be content that is less accessible/easy to understand for student teachers from minority language groups; or curriculum activities that are exclusive of student teachers with sensory or physical impairments, or that male student teachers feel more comfortable with male student teachers than female student teachers. The schedule of learning required by the teacher education curriculum may also exclude some candidates from becoming student teachers. For instance, intensive full-time study may not be possible for poorer candidates who have to continue working to earn money, or for mothers who struggle to arrange childcare; while prolonged study over many years may not suit other student teachers who, for financial or social reasons, need to be able to start their working career as soon as possible.

In general, teacher education curricula – as well as missing vital opportunities to integrate explicit inclusive education messages throughout – fail to tackle the entrenched discrimination that is found in the wider society.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context

- Do student teachers and teacher educators represent the wider national and regional population?
- Overall, is the teacher education curriculum responsive to issues such as gender equality, disability, language, ethnicity, religion and poverty? If not, what evidence of discrimination is there?
- Does the curriculum get reviewed by people who know about equality and non-discrimination?
- Are teacher educators trained and supported to recognize and deal with any discrimination that may still exist in the curriculum?
- Are teacher educators given opportunities to confront and reflect on their own attitudes and values?

Advocacy goals

Curriculum advocacy message 10

“Teacher education curricula need to be critically reviewed and, where necessary, revised – with input from diverse stakeholders – so that they explicitly tackle discrimination.”

All teacher education curricula need to be developed and revised so that they explicitly promote equality and tackle stereotypes and discrimination. This means reviewing and revising content, materials, case studies and example, images, training activities, structure
and scheduling, and removing or changing any elements that do not comply with high anti-discrimination standards.

All teacher education curricula need to be developed by with those who represent the people and the communities in areas where the curriculum will be used, and have input from experts in gender equality, minority language issues, ethnicity, disability rights and access, and so on. There may need to be extensive periods of review and/or multiple revisions over a period of time, to ensure that all elements of bias are removed from the curricula and all opportunities for promoting an anti-discrimination approach among student teachers are maximized.

**Curriculum advocacy message 11**

“Teacher educators need to learn to recognize and challenge any discrimination that persists in the curricula they use.”

Even revised or newly developed teacher education curricula may not be perfect or fully suited to each specific situation in which they are used. Teacher educators therefore need to be skilled so that they can recognize any discriminatory messages, activities, etc., that may remain within the teacher education curriculum, and respond positively to remove or change them. They also need to be able to actively highlight any such challenges in the teacher education curriculum and use them to educate student teachers about preventing discrimination.

**How to tell if the advocacy is having a positive effect**

As we mentioned in *Advocacy Guide 1*, when planning advocacy you will develop indicators to help you monitor the process and the impact of your work. The exact indicators you will create will depend on the details of your advocacy objectives. Importantly – as with your plan – indicators should be developed through a participatory process that involves a range of stakeholders.

However, the following list suggests some potential indicators. Advocacy that calls for changes to the teacher education curriculum, so as to better prepare teachers for inclusive education, could be considered effective if:

- Ministry of education officials engage in dialogue about the importance of improving the way all teachers learn about inclusive education.
- Ministries of education develop and implement national guidance and standards for teacher education which call for: (a) inclusive education to be an integral part
of all teacher education; (b) any additional separate inclusive education courses
to more accurately reflect a broad interpretation of the concept (as a twin-track
process of systemic change alongside supporting individual learners’ needs; and
(c) for courses that focus very specifically on learners with disabilities, or learners
from other marginalized groups, to be more accurately named (i.e. not given the
title of inclusive education).

- Ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions develop and
  implement clear recruitment specifications for teacher educators and for
  curriculum developers. These specifications should ensure that the appointed
  teacher educators and curriculum developers represent the diversity of the
  country’s population, and understand, respect and can implement teacher
  education with a strong focus on inclusion, equality and rights.

- A well-planned programme of training and practical exposure is developed for
  existing and new teacher educators and curriculum developers, to ensure their
  continuing professional development for inclusive education.

- Teacher education institutions initiate a process of reviewing their existing courses
  (a) to establish the extent to which separate ‘inclusive education’ courses are
  actually about addressing equality, inclusion and rights as opposed to special
  needs or disability; and (b) to establish the extent to which the full range of
  teacher education courses tackle issues of inclusion, equality and rights.

- Teacher education institutions take decisive action following such a review,
  to revise their courses and/or develop new courses which integrate inclusion,
  rights and equality throughout.

- Directors and educators within teacher education institutions explicitly acknowledge
  their responsibility for ensuring that all teachers learn about inclusive education, not
  just those who choose to take an optional/extra course in the subject.

- Teacher education institutions increase/improve the amount and quality of
  research they carry out related to inclusive education; and/or develop stronger
  links with other researchers whose work can feed into an ongoing process of
  reviewing and improving teacher education curricula.

- Student teachers confirm that they are learning about inclusive education
  through more than just separate and/or theoretical courses/modules.

- Student teachers spend a much higher proportion of their time engaged in practical
  and observation activities, rather than in purely theoretical learning activities.

- Student teachers are (a) able to explain the theory of inclusive education as it
  relates to real-life examples; and (b) more skilled at thinking reflectively about the
  inclusiveness of their own experiences and practices.
• Student teachers are confident and skilled to actively challenge any discrimination they encounter during their training and subsequent work within education settings.

• All curricula used for educating teachers (for any grades, subjects, schools) are responsive to issues such as gender equality, disability, language, ethnicity, religion, and poverty, and have a strong focus on equality and rights for all groups in society.

• All curricula used to educate teachers actively demonstrate or model ‘inclusive education in action’, through insisting on the use of participatory, active, learner-centred teaching and learning methods.

Appendix

In this table we suggest possible targets for each of the advocacy messages mentioned in the five challenges. There is also space for you to enter ideas about which advocacy methods and media you could use to convey these messages to key targets in your context. You should aim to develop these ideas through a process of consultation with colleagues and other stakeholders. Further advice on advocacy, and on methods/media, can be found in Advocacy Guide 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “All pre-service teacher education institutions, universities or colleges need to educate all prospective teachers.” | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions, universities and research institutions who are responsible for developing curricula  
• Student teachers, who can demand their right to a quality education, which includes being prepared/supported to teach in diverse, inclusive settings | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
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<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
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</table>
| “Every course or module in teacher education needs actively to promote and demonstrate equality, inclusion and human rights.” | - Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
- Heads of teacher education institutions  
- Staff in teacher education institutions, universities and research institutions who are responsible for developing curricula  
- Educators who deliver courses to student teachers  
- Student teachers, who can demand their right to a quality education, which includes being prepared/supported to teach in diverse, inclusive settings | |
| “Teacher education curriculum developers/teacher educators need to improve their understanding of the special needs and inclusive education paradigms.” | - Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets, and who can influence/support the professional development of teacher education curriculum developers/teacher educators  
- Heads of teacher education institutions who can influence/support the professional development of teacher education curriculum developers/teacher educators  
- Educators who develop and deliver courses to student teachers  
- Staff in teacher education institutions who can demand appropriate professional development  
- Researchers working on inclusive education who could be supporting teacher educators to better understand inclusive education | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1*
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
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<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Teacher education institutions need to develop a commitment to innovation and change within their own institution, and develop curricula which reflect these commitments.” | • Heads of teacher education institutions who can influence the ‘culture of learning’ within their institution  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for developing teacher education curricula, and who can demand more opportunities to learn, innovate and share | |
| “Governments need to develop standards for teacher education which require all teacher education institutions to develop/use curricula that educate every teacher about inclusive education.” | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
• Local/regional ministry of education personnel who would be responsible for monitoring teacher education standards  
• Donors or NGOs who are in a position to support the necessary government capacity development | |
| “The teacher education curriculum needs to place greater emphasis on practice-based learning.” | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for developing and delivering curricula  
• Staff in schools where practical teacher education could take place  
• NGOs who may be able to facilitate or help to fund practical work for student teachers in schools  
• Student teachers, who can demand opportunities for practical learning opportunities | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "The teacher education curriculum needs to support student teachers to understand the connections between inclusive education theory and the reality of teaching." | • Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for developing and delivering curricula  
• Researchers working on inclusive education who could be supporting teacher educators to better understand the interconnections between the research/theory and practice | |
| "Teacher education curriculum developers with existing knowledge and practical experience of inclusive education need to be selected. There also needs to be ongoing training provided to curriculum developers, and they need to be encouraged to consult stakeholders throughout the curriculum development process." | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• National/local/regional government personnel who may make curriculum developer recruitment decisions  
• Teachers and other ‘grassroots’ education stakeholders who can demand that their perspectives are considered in the teacher education curriculum development process | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
### Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *“The selection process for new teacher educators needs to include requirements for inclusive education knowledge and experience. Ongoing professional development for inclusive education is also needed for all existing and new teacher educators.”* | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• National/local/regional government personnel or administrators of teacher education institutions who may make teacher educator recruitment decisions  
• Teacher educators who are either experienced in inclusive education and have the potential to help educate their peers; or who do not have inclusive education experience and need to recognize their own need for professional development in this area | |
| *“Teacher education curricula need to be critically reviewed and, where necessary, revised – with input from diverse stakeholders – so that they explicitly tackle discrimination.”* | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Representatives from civil society groups who could advise and support equality monitoring in curriculum development | |
| *“Teacher educators need to learn to recognize and challenge any discrimination that persists in the curricula they use.”* | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policies, programmes and budgets  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Personnel responsible for educating and supporting the teacher educators | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1*
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education is a series of 5 Advocacy Guides

Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction
This introduction puts the advocacy guides in context and offers a background to their development. It introduces inclusive teacher education and addresses what makes effective advocacy, who can do it and how it can be done. This introduction also provides an overview of the guidebooks on policy, curriculum, materials, and methodology.

Advocacy Guide 2: Policy
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teacher education policies. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development, and implementation of inclusive policies.

Advocacy Guide 3: Curriculum
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of pre-service teacher education curricula. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive curricula.

Advocacy Guide 4: Materials
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching/learning materials used in teacher education. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching/learning materials.

Advocacy Guide 5: Methodology
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching methodologies used at teacher education institutions. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching methodologies.

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Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Materials
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Materials

Ian Kaplan and Ingrid Lewis
## Contents

**Introduction** .......................................................................................................................... 1  
  What do we mean by teacher education materials? ................................................................. 1  
  Why are teacher education materials an important advocacy issue? ............................... 2  

**Challenge 1: Appropriate materials** ..................................................................................... 2  
  Analysing the situation ........................................................................................................... 2  
  Advocacy goals ...................................................................................................................... 5  

**Challenge 2: Materials with a practical focus** ...................................................................... 7  
  Analysing the situation ........................................................................................................... 7  
  Advocacy goals ...................................................................................................................... 8  

**Challenge 3: Flexibility in developing and using materials** .............................................. 10  
  Analysing the situation ......................................................................................................... 10  
  Advocacy goals .................................................................................................................... 11  

**Challenge 4: Avoiding exclusion materials** ........................................................................ 13  
  Assessing the situation ......................................................................................................... 13  
  Advocacy goals .................................................................................................................... 16  

**How to tell if the advocacy is having a positive effect** ...................................................... 17  

**Appendix** ............................................................................................................................ 19
Introduction

This advocacy guide on ‘Materials’ is the fourth in a series of five guides devoted to ‘Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education’. It can be used on its own or in combination with the four other advocacy guides which are: ‘Introduction’, ‘Policy’, ‘Curriculum’, and ‘Methodology’.

This guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching and learning materials used in teacher education. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching and learning materials.

What do we mean by teacher education materials?

Teacher education materials cover a wide range of materials, including those used by teacher educators as an aid to teaching, and those used by student teachers as an aid to learning. Within this advocacy guide, we are looking specifically at the teaching and learning materials that are used during teacher education, as opposed to the materials that are used by teachers and children at the school level.

Examples of teacher education materials include:

- Textbooks
- Workbooks, handouts, checklists, etc.
- Reference materials
- Posters and other display materials
- Models and other visual and tactile representations
- Video and audio materials
- Computer software.

Teacher education materials should closely complement the curriculum, and help teacher educators to deliver it. Despite their close links, however, the teacher education curriculum and teacher education materials are not exactly the same thing. The curriculum is a way of organizing and sequencing learning experiences, with the aim of achieving specified learning outcomes. It guides what will be learned, and why, and how this learning is facilitated. The materials support this process, although it is possible to have a situation in which the materials used do not match or reinforce the overall curriculum.
Why are teacher education materials an important advocacy issue?

In any teaching and learning situation, materials are important. For student teachers, materials offer valuable insights into key theoretical concepts, and should convey practical, real-life experiences that help to put the theories into context.

In an ideal situation, teacher educators are supporting the development of new teachers who think critically and independently, and who read materials but are also able to draw their own conclusions about the relevance and applicability of what they are reading. Even when student teachers are confident at critiquing what they read, however, it is still important that teacher education materials are student-friendly, high quality, contextually relevant and accessible.

Therefore, alongside any efforts to reform teacher education curricula to prepare teachers for inclusive education, there needs to be matching revision of the materials used in teacher education programmes.

Challenge 1

Appropriate materials

Analysing the situation

There is an overall shortage of materials on inclusive education

Many contexts lack teaching and learning materials generally – for schools and for teacher education institutions. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that there is a lack of teaching and learning materials about inclusive education in many teacher education institutions. However – as we saw with the issue of curricula in Advocacy Guide 3 – an effective approach does not necessarily require separate courses (and therefore separate materials) about inclusive education, but rather requires us to ensure that inclusive education is an integral and cross-cutting message across all textbooks and teacher education materials.
UNESCO Bangkok’s recent review of teacher education highlighted that this is often not happening. For instance, in some countries, an analysis of teacher education textbooks and related materials indicated that inclusive education and inclusive education concepts were not mentioned, or otherwise addressed.\(^1\) Core teacher education materials are frequently missing the opportunity to convey messages of equality and inclusion.

**Materials often do not reflect a broad understanding of inclusive education**

Where inclusive education materials are available (either as separate resources or embedded in core materials), they may not explore inclusive education comprehensively as a broad issue, but rather focus more narrowly on disability or ‘special needs’. This again reflects approaches found in many teacher education curricula.

For instance, in one country that was recently researched, it was noted that: “…handouts are mainly used as training materials and these emphasize the challenges faced [by] children with special needs, but they do not take a broader approach to IE [inclusive education]”.\(^2\)

This may be because funding has not been dedicated for regular reviewing and updating of teacher education materials, or because the importance of such updating processes has not been acknowledged and included in the strategies and budgets of ministries and/or teacher education institutions. It may also reflect a lack of continued professional development among those responsible for planning or developing teacher education materials – they remain unaware of the need for change, or uncertain about how to make the changes.

**Materials are often not relevant to local contexts**

A number of teacher education materials originate outside particular student teachers’ contexts. For instance, books published in Europe, the United States of America or Australia may be used across Asia. While these may contain excellent inclusive education messages, they may also convey ideas that student teachers will struggle to implement in their own situation, especially where there are significant differences in resourcing, culture, etc. This can lead to student teachers feeling that inclusive education is an imported approach that does not suit their country; or to them investing a lot of effort in learning and trying to implement practices that do not suit their specific situation.

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 34.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Materials

Teacher education materials from other countries and regions can be useful for offering comparisons between different ideas and approaches. However, often teacher educators and/or student teachers are not given the advice and support they need to interpret and adapt these ideas or examples from other contexts so that they suit their own situation.

Further, imported materials may remain in English, or at best have been translated into a majority national language, but are unlikely to have been translated into minority languages, limiting their accessibility to all student teachers.

Even locally produced teacher education materials may not be relevant to the context in which they are used. Developers of teacher education materials (like curriculum developers) do not necessarily represent the diversity of people in their country, in terms of gender, disability, ethnicity, language, and rural/urban backgrounds. Those preparing teacher education materials, therefore, may (unconsciously) reflect and perpetuate within their materials the common cultural biases or stereotypical views about disadvantaged groups that persist in society.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context

• In general, do teacher education institutions and student teachers have access to teaching and learning materials in sufficient quantities? Is there a well-stocked library, and/or affordable books for purchase in the institution’s bookshops?
• How many teacher education materials (a) have a specific focus on inclusive education; and (b) mention inclusive education whilst discussing other matters?
• Is there congruence between curriculum and materials?
• Do those teacher education materials that cover inclusive education convey a comprehensive view of the concept, or do they focus only on disability and special needs? Do they encourage all student teachers to think about special needs and disability issues, and other issues of diversity and discrimination, or are such materials intended only for student teachers on specialist courses?
• Are there teacher education materials that specifically discuss the challenges of (a) teaching children of different age groups, (b) ensuring that all children are included in learning in large classes, (c) removing gender biases from teaching methods, and (d) teaching in multilingual classrooms and in the mother tongue? Do teacher education materials also offer practical guidance on these issues?
• How many or which teacher education materials that cover inclusive education are published locally/nationally, and how many or which are published beyond your region?
• Where do the non-local materials come from? How are they identified and selected?
• Have non-local materials been reviewed for contextual relevance before being added to the list of approved/recommended teacher education materials; and/or have teacher educators been given guidance on how to adapt them to suit the local context?
• How many teacher education materials that cover inclusive education (specifically or through embedded messages) are published in local or national languages?
• Are people from different groups in society (men, women, with and without disabilities, from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and from rural and urban areas) involved in developing and designing teacher education materials on inclusive education? Are they involved as the authors of materials and/or the artists who illustrate such materials? Or are they involved via stakeholder consultation processes? Or both?

Advocacy goals

In any situation, we could call for more resources and more teaching and learning materials to be available. In relation to advocacy for inclusive teacher education and inclusion, it is important to be clear about the type and quality of teacher education materials that are needed – it is not just a quantity issue.

Teacher education materials advocacy message 1

“Inclusive education should be addressed through specific teacher education materials and by embedding the issue into all teacher education materials.”

Student teachers and teacher educators need access to a wide range of materials on inclusive education – both through materials that are dedicated to inclusive education, and through core and subject-specific teacher education materials that have inclusive education messages embedded in them (e.g. inclusive education issues raised in teacher education materials focusing on mathematics, science, history, etc.).

These materials need to offer a comprehensive interpretation of inclusive education; supporting student teachers to understand the importance of whole-school changes as well as helping them to gain skills and confidence in responding to specific individual learning needs. Teacher education materials also need to more clearly and accurately indicate whether they are educating student teachers about inclusive education, or whether they are focusing only on a particular group, such as learners with disabilities.
Teacher education materials advocacy message 2

“Teacher education materials need to be developed at the national/regional level, and contain contextually relevant and up-to-date information and examples on inclusive education. Imported teacher education materials need to be used more innovatively and critically.”

Teacher educators and student teachers need access to more inclusive education materials that are contextually relevant. More materials need to be developed in-country and regionally, featuring local case studies and examples to which the teacher educator and student teachers can relate. Further, more teacher education materials are needed in local and national languages – not just through basic translations of imported materials, but by having materials that are written specifically for use in those languages.

Teacher education materials imported from other countries should be selected for their ability to offer additional insights, new developments, global perspectives and comparisons, but they should not form the bulk of student teachers’ reading. There should also be greater guidance given to teacher educators and their students regarding how to interpret and adapt non-local materials. In particular, teacher educators need support to develop the skills and confidence to be critical, selective and creative in the use of teacher education materials. For instance, when using books published in other countries they need to be skilled at supporting student teachers to reflect on when and how to adapt ideas to their own context; they need to be able to find local case studies to supplement or replace foreign examples, and so on.

These points have personnel capacity implications, leading to a further advocacy message.

Teacher education materials advocacy message 3

“Staff responsible for selecting and/or developing teacher education materials need ongoing professional development inputs, and need to share experiences within and between countries. Teacher education material development teams also need to represent the diversity of their country.”

Staff within ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions, who are responsible for selecting or designing teacher education materials, need to be well informed about inclusive education. Inclusive education experience, knowledge and skills should, ideally, be recruitment criteria for new personnel. There also needs to be continuous professional development for existing and new developers of teacher education materials, so that they stay up-to-date with inclusive education debates and practice. Linked to this, it is also important that material developers are not working in
isolation. They need to be linked in with other teacher education material and curriculum developers regionally and globally, and have opportunities to share ideas and examples of their work.

Challenge 2

Materials with a practical focus

Analysing the situation

Documenting and sharing of practical experiences remains challenging

Teacher education materials (like teacher education curricula) are often heavily theoretical. They may contain few case studies, and/or have insufficient focus on advising student teachers how to turn theory into practical action.

In some ways this is part of a vicious cycle. Globally there is a lack of well-documented case studies about ‘how to do’ inclusive education. Those who might be best placed to document practical experiences of inclusive education – the teachers, learners, parents, etc. – often lack the skills, confidence, time or support to do so. Without such case studies, and supportive, accessible mechanisms for documenting them, student teachers and teachers often struggle to ‘visualize’ the theory, implement new ideas, and share these ideas with others, with the result that there remains a lack of innovative stories for use in teacher education.

Teacher education material developers may lack practical experience

The lack of practical focus in teacher education materials may reflect a lack of practical experience of inclusive education among the material developers (who may include text writers, illustration artists or photographers, and even filmmakers). They may understand and be able to present clearly the theoretical aspects of inclusive education, but lack extensive practical experience to draw on when explaining how to implement inclusive education. Meanwhile, those who do have practical experience of inclusive education (teachers, head teachers, parents, learners, representatives of minority groups, etc.) rarely participate in the process of planning, creating or reviewing teacher education materials.

3 Organizations like the Enabling Education Network (EENET) are working to support more education stakeholders to record and share their practical inclusive education experiences: www.eenet.org.uk.
Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context

- Who is responsible for planning, writing, editing and reviewing teaching and learning materials for use in teacher education? How are they identified and selected? Are they representative of the diversity found in the country?
- How much or what type of practical experience do teacher education material developers have in inclusive education?
- What systems exist to help material developers find and use contextually relevant, practical examples of inclusive education from their own country and from other countries where promising practices are happening?
- What is the process for identifying, reviewing and selecting externally prepared materials, and ensuring they contain a relevant practical focus?
- Do education stakeholders have a role in the development of teacher education materials on inclusive education? If so, how do they contribute their experiences to planning, writing, designing or reviewing processes?

Advocacy goals

Teacher education materials advocacy message 4

“Teacher education materials need to be informed by and include more examples of real-life practice in inclusive education in different education settings.”

As we saw in Advocacy Guide 3, teacher education curricula need to enable student teachers to have plenty of hands-on experience if they are to understand inclusive education and gain the skills and confidence to implement it in real-life education settings. This practical aspect of teacher education is also vital when student teachers are preparing for work in schools that use multigrade teaching approaches, where they will need to be able to respond to the learning needs of different age groups. Consequently, the materials used to support student teachers’ preparations also need a practical focus.

Teaching and learning materials for teacher education need to:

a) offer examples of practice and case studies so that student teachers can see how other people have tackled real-life challenges in different education settings, and can reflect on how such ideas could be adapted to work in their own contexts;

b) support student teachers in their own practical activities, by providing guidance, checklists, etc.

To achieve this, there needs to be a growing body of examples of inclusive education in action, which teacher education material developers and teacher educators can draw on.
when preparing materials. This in turn requires more support for education stakeholders to document and share their practical experiences. There are many examples of inclusive education projects that have documented their experiences (and, alas, many that have not). But there is a need for more joined-up action, so that more schools or education projects record their inclusive education experiences, and these documented experiences feed more directly and routinely into teacher education initiatives. Alongside text based case studies, sound recording, photography, and video are vital, engaging and increasingly accessible means of documenting and sharing experience.

Teacher education materials advocacy message 5

“Stakeholders need to play a stronger role in informing and reviewing the inclusive education related content in teacher education materials.”

Stakeholders need to be more directly engaged in the process of developing teacher education materials (we saw in Advocacy Guide 3 that they also need to be involved in curriculum development processes). Teachers, parents, learners, representatives from marginalized groups, etc., should all be consulted during the process of planning, writing and designing teacher education materials. In-service teachers can give their opinions on the practical use of the materials, while other stakeholders can share ideas for what they think teachers need to know or do, and any positive or negative examples from their experience that could guide teachers in what to do or avoid.

Example from Zambia

Teachers develop materials for use in educating other teachers

This example illustrates a collaborative effort to enable education stakeholders to reflect on, document and publish their practical experiences of developing inclusive education. A cluster of schools in Mpika district of Zambia were involved in an action research project initiated by the Enabling Education Network (EENET). The project sought to pilot ways for in-service teachers to become more reflective practitioners, and be able to better understand and document their practices (and the changes they were making to their practices) more effectively. The project teachers were already involved in initiatives to make their schools more inclusive and to improve the quality of teaching and learning, but their experiences were not being captured for a wider audience and were thus not really benefiting other teachers or student teachers.

Through a series of action research activities (workshops, interviews, focus groups, etc.), facilitated by external and local facilitators, the teachers began developing case studies detailing the investigations they had made and the actions they had taken to
address challenges of inclusion and exclusion. Their local action research facilitator sent a large collection of handwritten case studies to EENET for publishing. Initially, most of the case studies seemed unsuitable for publishing. However, through a process of dialogue with the teachers, via their local facilitator, ambiguities in the accounts were clarified and missing information was provided.

The case studies were published in a book called *Researching our Experience.* The participating teachers subsequently asked all new teachers joining their schools to read the book, so that they could share the school community’s experiences so far.

**Challenge 3**

**Flexibility in developing and using materials**

**Analysing the situation**

As we saw above, materials used for educating student teachers about inclusive education are often not up-to-date, practical or informed by real-life experiences. They may not help student teachers to understand, respond to and welcome the diversity of learners they meet in an education setting. The materials may also originally have been developed for use in other countries.

A further problem – which may reflect the state of teaching and learning materials across all levels of the education system – is that teacher education materials can be too rigid and prescriptive. Teacher education materials, as with textbooks used to teach children, often present fixed messages and prescribe set activities. It may be difficult (or sometimes even forbidden) for teacher educators to deviate from or adapt the authorized materials. In many countries, rigid examination systems also mean that teacher educators have little flexibility in terms of introducing materials that are not prescribed in the curriculum.

This lack of flexibility may make it harder for teacher educators to be innovative with materials or adapt non-local materials to their context and their student teachers’ needs. Inflexible materials may also make it more difficult for teacher educators to use participatory, active, student-centred teaching and learning methods – especially if the teacher educators lack experience or skills in teaching in a flexible and responsive way.

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There are fundamental contradictions in many teacher education systems – student teachers are expected to learn about inclusive education, while the materials (and curriculum and teaching methodologies) they are exposed to during their pre-service teacher education are often far from inclusive.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context

• Have the materials used in teacher education for inclusive education been reviewed recently to assess how easy they are for teacher educators to use and adapt?
• Are teacher educators allowed to make their own decisions about which materials to use, when and how (within the boundaries of achieving certain curriculum learning objectives)? Or are there restrictions placed on teacher educators’ use of materials?
• Do teacher educators have the skills and experience to make effective decisions about adapting the content of, and how they use, teacher education materials?

Advocacy goals

Teacher education materials advocacy message 6

“Teacher educators need to be given the freedom and skills to select, adapt and use teacher education materials in a flexible way.”

Inclusive education – as we saw in Advocacy Guide 1 – is a process of change, problem-solving and experimentation. To educate teachers to implement inclusive education effectively, therefore, we need a curriculum that facilitates and demonstrates flexible approaches to teaching and learning (see Advocacy Guide 3). This, in turn, needs to be supported by materials that can be adapted to suit local contexts and student teachers’ specific learning needs.

Not all teacher education materials on inclusive education will be perfect. Not every government or teacher education institution will have the resources to initiate a rapid, large-scale revision of all their teacher education materials so that they do address inclusive education appropriately. Therefore, it is vital that teacher educators have the skills and freedom to find and try out new materials, to develop their own materials, or to make significant adaptations to existing materials. They also need to have support (from each other and/or from experienced advisers), so that they can share their experiences of finding, making and adapting teacher education materials (this is discussed further in Advocacy Guide 5 - Methodology).

In many contexts, giving teacher educators this freedom and equipping them with the necessary skills and support will require significant policy changes, for instance to move away from a centrally dictated, fixed teacher education curriculum and set of materials.
Teacher education materials advocacy message 7

“Teacher education materials need to reflect inclusive practice by enabling teacher educators to model inclusive practice in their own work with student teachers.”

Teaching and learning materials for use in teacher education need to be designed so that they:

- actively promote independent and critical thinking by student teachers (and teacher educators);
- give teacher educators opportunities to be selective, and to adapt or replace activities, case studies, etc.;
- enable teacher educators to use varied techniques such as peer learning, self-study, collaborative team projects, etc.; and
- guide and support teacher educators to use innovative approaches for meeting diverse learning needs, with which they may have limited familiarity.

This inevitably needs to be linked with work to give teacher educators enhanced education and support with revising their methodological approaches (see Advocacy Guide 5).

Teacher education materials advocacy message 8

“Teacher education materials need to be planned, written, designed and reviewed by people who have first-hand experience of active learning approaches and adapting materials.”

Those who select and develop teacher education materials need to understand active, student-centred, participatory approaches to teaching and learning, and how the quality and content of available materials can help or hinder the use of such approaches. Material developers need to have practical skills and experience of teaching in a flexible and responsive way, so they can give teacher educators practical advice and guidance through the teacher education materials.
Challenge 4

Avoiding exclusive materials

Assessing the situation

As we saw in Advocacy Guide 3, the teacher education curriculum (and the materials used to teach the curriculum) can fail to challenge stereotypes and discrimination within teacher education and among teachers. Teacher education materials can perpetuate the stereotypes and discrimination common in society, and can go so far as to exclude certain student teachers from the learning process, because of the messages conveyed, or the language and format used.

Poor recognition of ethnolinguistic diversity in teacher education materials

Across the Asia and Pacific region, there is a growing focus on mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) and supporting mother tongue education in schools (see the text box on the next page for more information about MTB-MLE). However, teacher education curricula and materials may still fail to acknowledge the importance of linguistic diversity and thus may not educate student teachers to implement methodologies that use the languages of the learner. There remains a general lack of focus on language and culture within pre-service teacher education materials. This limits student teachers’ opportunities to develop skills for using both local and national languages in the classroom.

Often there are few teacher education materials available in minority languages. For instance, UNESCO Bangkok’s review of teacher education found that in one country, “… [teacher education] textbooks are not available in the languages of the minority groups”, and in another country “… there is very limited availability and use of materials produced in languages other than (the majority language) in most TTCs [teacher training colleges]”. Where minority language materials do exist, they may be direct translations of existing materials, rather than books that have been translated and adapted to the local context, or books that have been created specifically for use in that language.

Student teachers from minority language groups may find themselves excluded from the learning process due to a lack of materials in their own language, and due to the lack of recognition of language and ethnic diversity across the teacher education curriculum and materials. Teacher education materials, for instance, may fail to fairly represent people.

5 Forgacs, 2012, p. 36.
from ethnic minority groups, or may even perpetuate negative stereotypes. Related to this, teacher education materials may also fail to represent equally people from rural and urban areas.

**Mother tongue-based multilingual education**

Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) is a structured programme of language learning and cognitive development that begins in the learners’ first or home language. It helps learners build fluency and confidence in the official school language – and additional languages, as required – and encourages them to use both their own and the official language to achieve a quality education.

Appropriate and effective MTB-MLE is based in the child’s own known environment and systematically creates bridges to the wider world. Ideally, this requires teachers who share the language and culture of the children and who have the flexibility to adopt learner-centred approaches to curriculum design and delivery. When teachers are professionally trained and have access to quality materials in both the students’ home language and the official language, the process and pace of language education can be flexible. However, experiences in Asia and the Pacific have shown that when teachers lack professional training, when there are few teaching and learning materials and when the students have little exposure to the new language outside of school, it is best to proceed more slowly, so that neither students nor teachers are overwhelmed.

**Teacher education materials may be inaccessible and/or promote negative stereotypes around disability**

Even when teacher education programmes include courses and/or embedded messages about inclusive education and education for learners with disabilities, the programmes may exclude student teachers with disabilities if the materials that are used or available are inaccessible. For instance, UNESCO Bangkok’s review of teacher education in selected Asia and Pacific countries found a lack of teacher education materials in alternative formats such as Braille. This is a global problem, reiterated by the following personal account from a Kenyan student teacher:

“As a blind [teacher] trainee, I use Braille, but we lack Braille reading materials and sometimes there is a shortage of Braille paper. There is also a lack of mathematical equipment which makes it impossible for visually impaired students to be examined

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6 Forgacs, 2012, p. 37
in this subject. There are no qualified lecturers in special education, and only one knows Braille, so there can be challenges when it comes to transcribing and marking exams.\footnote{Mwanyalo, P. with Lewis, I. 2012. ‘Striving for better teaching. The EENET interview with Peter Mwanyalo, Kenya’. Enabling Education Review newsletter. Issue 1. December 2012. p. 15.}

The review also found that people with disabilities were not routinely featured in teacher education materials. For instance, in the textbooks reviewed in one country, only 0.35 per cent of people featured had a disability. Further, any people with disabilities featured in the books were often given negative characterizations.\footnote{Forgacs, p. 37.}

Both the lack of accessible teacher education materials, and the negative portrayal of people with disabilities in teacher education materials, can perpetuate a stereotypical view that people with disabilities are not a positive part of regular life and/or are not expected to become teachers.

**Teacher education materials may promote negative stereotypes around gender**

We saw in *Advocacy Guide 3* that teacher education curricula often perpetuate gender discrimination. This is also reflected in the materials used in teacher education, which may fail to cover gender issues comprehensively, may portray female and male characters in stereotypical roles, and may largely be written by men.

UNESCO Bangkok’s review found that in one country, “… there are very few [teacher education] materials that promote gender equality and some illustrations show an imbalance between men and women. There are no specific [teacher education] resources on gender mainstreaming”.\footnote{Ibid., p. 35.}

The general lack of gender equality within teacher education materials, and the persistence of gender stereotypes will not help in encouraging student teachers to become more gender-responsive teachers, and may contribute to at least some women feeling isolated within, or discouraged from continuing, teacher education.

**Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context**

- How many or which teacher education materials are available in minority languages in your country? Are these readily available to any student teachers who need them? Are student teachers learning how to teach in their mother tongue/minority language as well as in the majority/national language?
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Materials

- How many or which teacher education materials feature minority ethnic/linguistic groups, people with disabilities, people from rural and urban areas, and from poor or better-off background, etc.? Are the characters portrayed fairly, as equal citizens and/or in positions of responsibility, etc.?
- Are men and women/boys and girls equally portrayed in teacher education materials, and given a balance of powerful and less powerful roles?
- Who provides input into the development of teacher education materials? Are there mechanisms for ensuring that material developers come from diverse backgrounds and/or consult stakeholders from different groups in society?

Advocacy goals

Teacher education materials advocacy message 9

“Teacher education materials need to be accessible to and inclusive of all student teachers.”

It is no good striving for inclusive education within schools if the education that student teachers receive is not also inclusive. It is therefore vital that the materials used in teacher education demonstrate ‘inclusive education in action’.

Teacher education material developers need to understand approaches for developing materials in local languages, both in terms of creating suitable new materials in those languages and effectively translating and adapting materials from other languages. Teacher education materials also need to be critically reviewed by stakeholders (teachers, student teachers, community members, etc.) from different linguistic groups.

Efforts are needed to make teacher education materials accessible to student teachers with disabilities. This means following the principles of ‘universal design’. This might mean, for instance creating audio, large print or Braille format materials; using book bindings that allow a book to stay open on the table rather than having to be held open; adding subtitles to video materials; developing or advising teacher educators on how to create tactile materials, and so on. Stakeholders with disabilities, including student teachers and in-service teachers, need to be consulted about format options for teacher education materials, to ensure that limited resources are used most effectively. Non-governmental organizations and disabled people’s organizations also need to be consulted, for advice on formats and on funding the production of alternative format teacher education materials.
Teacher education materials advocacy message 10

“Teacher education materials need to convey non-discriminatory messages, actively challenge stereotypes, and encourage all student teachers to feel valued and included, regardless of their background.”

As previously mentioned, diverse stakeholders need to be consulted about teacher education material development. Material development teams need to have members who represent diverse groups in their country, and need to be trained in identifying and tackling discrimination in teacher education materials. All consulted stakeholders and material developers need to be facilitated to speak out about examples of stereotypes and discrimination they find in the materials, and know that their views will be respected and taken seriously.

All teacher education materials, whether specifically about inclusive education or not, need to be reviewed/audited to identify instances of stereotypes and discrimination, and instances where stereotypes and discrimination have been actively challenged. Materials then need to be revised to remove the former and expand on the latter.

Given that comprehensive revision of all teacher education materials is expensive and time-consuming, it will likely happen slowly. In the meantime, teacher educators need to be educated in how to identify and actively challenge examples of stereotypes and discrimination within the materials they use – turning a negative example into a useful learning opportunity or discussion point for their student teachers. This reflective process should particularly be focused on ensuring that remaining biased content does not negatively impact on any student teachers’ perceptions of themselves or their peers, and does not discourage anyone from continuing with their studies.

How to tell if the advocacy is having a positive effect

Advocacy Guide 1 highlighted that when planning advocacy, you will also develop indicators to help you monitor the process and the impact of your work. The indicators you will create will depend on the details of your advocacy objectives. Indicators, like plans, should be developed through a participatory process that involves a range of stakeholders.
The following list suggests some potential indicators. Advocacy that calls for improvements in teacher education materials, so as to better prepare student teachers for inclusive education, could be considered effective if:

- Those responsible for planning and financing teacher education materials increase the supply of (good quality) materials that focus on inclusive education for use in teacher education.
- Material developers revise the content of materials, resulting in a greater proportion of teacher education materials conveying a comprehensive view of inclusive education, not restricted to a special needs or disability-only interpretation.
- More high quality inclusive education-related teacher education materials are developed and published locally/regionally, resulting in teacher educators and student teachers having access to more contextually relevant materials.
- Education policies are revised, where necessary, resulting in teacher educators having greater freedom and support to develop the skills, to find or make their own materials and/or adapt existing materials.
- The ministry of education and teacher education institutions prepare practical guidance for teacher educators, resulting in more effective and flexible use and adaptation of local and non-local materials within their context.
- Teacher education materials are revised to feature an increased proportion of practical content on inclusive education, resulting in student teachers gaining greater understanding of how inclusive education theory translates into reality.
- A greater number of inclusive education practice examples and case studies are identified and documented locally (by various education stakeholders) and shared through teacher education materials, resulting in student teachers gaining more ideas and confidence for implementing inclusive education in practice.
- Professional development programmes are developed, or improved resulting in greater awareness and understanding of inclusion, diversity and non-discrimination among those responsible for developing teacher education materials.
- Mechanisms are established through which stakeholders (e.g. experienced teachers, parents, students, representatives from diverse and especially marginalized groups in the community) provide inputs into teacher education materials, resulting in student teachers having access to materials which more accurately represent the diversity in their context.
- An increasing proportion of teacher education materials are written and reviewed by people who have direct, practical experience of using active learning methods.
methods and of teaching in learner-centred, inclusive settings, resulting in teacher educators using the materials in more innovative ways.

• Mechanisms are established within the ministry of education and teacher education institutions through which all teacher education materials are reviewed and revised to remove discriminatory content, and include content that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, resulting in the development of an ongoing reflective process of teacher education materials review and ultimately more inclusive materials.

• An increased proportion of teacher education materials are developed in minority languages, and published in alternative, accessible formats, resulting in a greater sense of equality and inclusion among student teachers from minority language groups and with disabilities, and in all student teachers experiencing inclusive principles in action.

Appendix

In this table we suggest possible targets for each of the advocacy messages mentioned in the four challenges. There is also space for you to enter ideas about which advocacy methods and media you could use to convey these messages to key targets in your context. You should aim to develop these ideas through a process of consultation with colleagues and other stakeholders. Further advice on advocacy, and on methods/media, can be found in Advocacy Guide 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Inclusive education should be addressed through specific teacher education materials and by embedding the issue into all teacher education materials.” | • Ministry of education personnel responsible for teacher education, and teacher education materials  
• Government department(s) responsible for budgeting and procurement of materials  
• Staff in schools of education/teacher education institutions involved in selecting, procuring, commissioning or writing/designing materials  
• Student teachers who can demand access to different materials | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
## Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
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<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Teacher education materials need to be developed at the national/regional level, and contain contextually relevant and up-to-date information and examples on inclusive education. Imported teacher education materials need to be used more innovatively and critically.” | • Ministry of education personnel responsible for teacher education, and teacher education materials  
• Government department(s) responsible for budgeting and procurement of materials  
• Staff in schools of education/teacher education institutions involved in selecting, procuring, commissioning or writing/designing materials  
• Personnel who are responsible for educating the teacher educators (e.g. to support teacher educators to use materials more innovatively and critically)  
• Student teachers who can demand access to different materials |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| “Staff responsible for selecting and/or developing teacher education materials need ongoing professional development inputs, and need to share experiences within and between countries. Teacher education material development teams also need to represent the diversity of their country.” | • Ministry of education or heads of teacher education institutions responsible for recruiting, training and managing teacher education material developers  
• Teacher education material developers/selectors  
• Student teachers who can demand access to contextually relevant materials  
• Diverse stakeholder representatives who can demand a voice in the process of developing/selecting teacher education materials |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1*
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<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "Teacher education materials need to be informed by and include more examples of real-life practice in inclusive education in different education settings." | • Staff in ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions who plan, write, design and review teacher education materials  
• Government and NGO staff responsible for supporting inclusive education projects/inclusive schools, and who are in a position to do more to support the documenting and sharing of these experiences  
• Student teachers who can demand access to more contextually relevant, practice-based materials  
• In-service teachers and other education stakeholders who can demand support in documenting their experiences for use in improving teacher education | |
| "Stakeholders need to play a stronger role in informing and reviewing the inclusive education related content in teacher education materials." | • Staff in ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions who plan, write, design and review teacher education materials  
• Government and NGO staff responsible for supporting inclusive education projects/inclusive schools, and who are in a position to facilitate stakeholder involvement in teacher education material development processes  
• Student teachers who can demand access materials that have been developed with stakeholder inputs  
• Stakeholders who can demand that their views and experiences of inclusive education are captured and used in teacher education materials | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Teacher educators need to be given the freedom and skills to select, adapt and use teacher education materials in a flexible way.” | • Staff/departments within ministries of education who are responsible for teacher education policy decisions  
• Heads of teacher education institutions who are responsible for implementing teacher education policies  
• Teacher educators and student teachers who could demand policy changes to allow greater flexibility in the selection and adaptation of materials they use | |
| “Teacher education materials need to reflect inclusive practice by enabling teacher educators to model inclusive practice in their own work with student teachers.” | • Staff in ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions who plan, write, design and review teacher education materials  
• Staff in ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions who are responsible for providing continuous professional development to teacher educators (so that they are skills and willing to model the inclusive practice outlined in teacher education materials  
• Student teachers who can call for teacher educators to develop enhanced skills with modelling inclusive practice | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Teacher education materials need to be planned, written, designed and reviewed by people who have first-hand experience of active learning approaches and adapting materials.” | • Staff in ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions who are responsible for recruiting and educating material developers  
• Teacher educators and student teachers who can call for the materials they use to have greater practical focus as a result of being developed by experienced practitioners | |
| “Teacher education materials need to be accessible to and inclusive of all student teachers.” | • Staff in ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions who develop teacher education materials, and who are responsible for recruiting material developers  
• Government department(s) responsible for budgeting and procurement of materials  
• Student teachers who can call for materials in their languages and for materials in accessible formats  
• Disabled people’s organizations and NGOs who can add to the student teacher voices, and provide technical, financial or advocacy assistance | |
| “Teacher education materials need to convey non-discriminatory messages, actively challenge stereotypes, and encourage all student teachers to feel valued and included, regardless of their background.” | • Staff in ministries of education and/or teacher education institutions who develop teacher education materials, and who are responsible for recruiting material developers  
• Student teachers who can call for materials to be reviewed and revised  
• Stakeholders from diverse groups who can call for materials to be reviewed and revised | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education is a series of 5 Advocacy Guides

Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction
This introduction puts the advocacy guides in context and offers a background to their development. It introduces inclusive teacher education and addresses what makes effective advocacy, who can do it and how it can be done. This introduction also provides an overview of the guidebooks on policy, curriculum, materials, and methodology.

Advocacy Guide 2: Policy
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teacher education policies. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development, and implementation of inclusive policies.

Advocacy Guide 3: Curriculum
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of pre-service teacher education curricula. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive curricula.

Advocacy Guide 4: Materials
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching/learning materials used in teacher education. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching/learning materials.

Advocacy Guide 5: Methodology
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching methodologies used at teacher education institutions. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching methodologies.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Methodology
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Methodology

Ian Kaplan and Ingrid Lewis
Contents

Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 1
  What do we mean by methodology? ................................................................. 1
  Why is inclusive education methodology an important advocacy issue? .... 2

Challenge 1: Welcoming diversity ...................................................................................... 3
  Analysing the situation ......................................................................................... 3
  Advocacy goals ........................................................................................................ 5

Challenge 2: Teaching skills and method ........................................................................... 9
  Analysing the situation ......................................................................................... 9
  Advocacy goals ........................................................................................................ 13

Challenge 3: Practice, reflection and support ................................................................ 21
  Analysing the situation ......................................................................................... 21
  Advocacy goals ........................................................................................................ 23

How to tell if the advocacy is having a positive effect ................................................ 29

Appendix ......................................................................................................................... 30
Introduction

This advocacy guide on ‘Methodology’ is the fifth in a series of five guides devoted to ‘Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education’. It can be used on its own or in combination with the four other advocacy guides which are: ‘Introduction’, ‘Policy’, ‘Curriculum’, and ‘Materials’.

This guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching methodologies used in teacher education. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching methodologies.

What do we mean by methodology?

This advocacy guide discusses methodology in and through pre-service teacher education – that is, the methodology used in the teaching that takes place within teacher education institutions, and also the methodology student teachers will be expected to use within schools during practicum placements and when they become fully-fledged teachers. The term methodology here refers to the ‘how’ of teaching, i.e. how teaching and learning is planned, organized, conducted, and assessed within teacher education institutions and schools. Methodology is directly concerned with how inclusive education is actually engaged with in the ‘real world’ of teacher education institutions, schools and communities.

Inclusive teaching methodology is intrinsically linked to and mutually supportive of inclusive curricula. In this sense, an inclusive curriculum provides the overall framework within which inclusive teaching methodology is enacted (for more on curriculum see Advocacy Guide 3). However, although you may have a curriculum which ‘ticks all the boxes’ in regards to inclusive education content and structure, without an approach to teaching methodology which is itself inclusive, inclusive education is not possible in the classroom realities.

In this advocacy guide we will be looking at inclusive teaching methodology in relation to:

• teaching methods and skills – ensuring that the methods of teaching and learning in and through teacher education are flexible, learner-centred and inclusive of diverse needs; that student teachers are supported to develop their own locally relevant resources, and that they are supported to understand and engage in formative forms of assessment;
• practice, reflection and support – ensuring that student teachers are given opportunities to engage in actual teaching practice in a reflexive way using action research, and that they receive proper, ongoing support throughout their teacher education – and that they learn specific skills required to make their teaching more inclusive – e.g. in relation to gender, disability, language, etc.

Why is inclusive education methodology an important advocacy issue?

Inclusive education is ultimately dependent upon the human interactions that take place within education and related social systems. To a large extent, methodology shapes and informs the human interactions that occur in teacher education institutions, schools and communities and is an essential element of inclusive education and a key area for advocacy. Inclusive teaching methodology is ultimately the way in which teachers are able to put inclusive education concepts, theories and techniques into practice. However, inclusive teaching methodology can be challenging to enact (especially for those teachers and students who have had little experience of inclusive methodology in their own education backgrounds). It needs practice and support, coupled with advocacy, to ensure that inclusive education is understood, used widely and sensitively and is ultimately effective.

Inclusive education is dependent upon the nature and quality of teaching and learning. In fact, ‘the medium is the message’. This means that when teaching methodology is inclusive in form and function, the practice of such methodology itself becomes a means of inclusive education advocacy and a reinforcement of the concepts and intended outcome of a quality learning experience for all. For example, if a teacher is able to facilitate mixed ability group work in a classroom (a key inclusive education method) in which students with different abilities are able to support each other, this not only serves to encourage and develop actual learning, but also demonstrates the potentials and advantages for students of different abilities to learn together, i.e. this models an inclusive classroom in practice.

In order to realize an inclusive approach to teaching methodology which is aligned with and supportive of curricula, a range of methodology-related objectives must be met. In the following sections of this advocacy guide, we will look at some of these objectives as identified through recent research.¹

These include:
• taking a systematic approach to welcoming diversity and identifying barriers to inclusive education;

¹ Forgacs, R. 2012. Strengthening Teacher Education to Achieve EFA by 2015. How are student teachers prepared to adopt inclusive attitudes and practices when they start teaching? Synthesis and analysis of the reviews of pre-service teacher education systems in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam (2008-2011). Bangkok, UNESCO.
• promoting and facilitating learner-centred teaching;
• employing interactive and varied teaching and learning approaches, and avoiding the overuse of methods which are inappropriate for some learners;
• using approaches to teaching which encourage teachers to innovate and adapt curricula and materials to fit local contexts;
• engaging in formative and authentic\(^2\) forms of assessment;
• developing personalized learning approaches for students;
• ensuring good quality supervision and support for student teachers;
• ensuring extensive teaching practice (practicum);
• engaging in reflective and reflexive teaching practice to enhance inclusive teaching competencies.

As with any advocacy work, you will want to investigate exactly which challenges and needs exist in your own unique context and therefore what specific changes you will work towards. The information provided here is intended as a guide to advocacy for inclusive teaching methodology, not a prescriptive set of rules.

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**Challenge 1**

**Welcoming diversity**

**Analysing the situation**

*A lack of a systematic approach to welcoming diversity and identifying barriers to inclusive education*

When teachers are not supported to view problems in the system, the school, and their own classrooms as being the true barriers to inclusive education, there is a risk that the learners themselves will be seen as problems. This may result in teachers trying to fit a learner into a flawed system instead of working to change the system to fit the learner. This approach unfairly puts the responsibility for inclusive education on learners. If teachers do not receive support in identifying barriers in the system, they will struggle to

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\(^2\) Authentic assessment actively involves children in the assessment process. For example, it has been described as: ‘... involving the child in evaluating his or her own achievements. Authentic assessments are performance-based, realistic, and instructionally appropriate.’ In UNESCO. 2004. *Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments – Booklet 5 – Managing Inclusive Learning-Friendly Classrooms*. Bangkok, UNESCO, p. 43.
cope with actually including learners with diverse needs in their schools and classrooms. However, when teachers are only focused on barriers to inclusive education, this puts an overemphasis on the negative and works against the highly important role teachers play in welcoming the diversity of learners, recognizing and celebrating diverse strengths, and building upon these to develop dynamic, inclusive learning environments.

As mentioned in *Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction*, it is important to identify and address the barriers in the system that might prevent learners from accessing education, participating in the learning process, and achieving to the best of their ability (academically and socially). These barriers might relate to attitudes, practices, resources, policies or the environment. Often, system barriers to inclusive education will be multiple, interrelated, or overlapping. For example, negative parental, familial, or community attitudes about girls’ attending school, combined with poverty (in which school aged children are expected to work to help provide food and money for their struggling families) may work together to reinforce the exclusion of girls from poor, rural areas from schooling. Attitudes inevitably impact on practices, e.g. if a teacher has negative attitudes about the potential of children with learning disabilities/difficulties such as autism, Down’s syndrome, etc. to learn and participate in school, that teacher may not make efforts to support including children with learning disabilities/difficulties in classroom activities, or may even exclude such children from particular lessons. Additionally, such barriers are often linked to wider structural (and cyclical) inequalities in society, e.g. a poor family may not have access to quality education, which in turn reduces their children’s access to power and status in society, reducing opportunities for such families’ social mobility and perpetuating a cycle of poverty which reinforces social and economic inequity between poorer families and those with more wealth and power.

**Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context before embarking on advocacy**

- What is the overall thrust of national education policy in terms of promoting inclusive education? Does education policy itself promote inclusion?
- Do pre-service teacher education classes in your institution support student teachers in identifying system, school, and classroom barriers to inclusion as opposed to focusing on learners as themselves being at fault?

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• Are student teachers encouraged to pay attention to existing learner/school/community strengths, positive attitudes and practices and to strategize solutions which draw on local skills and resources?

Advocacy goals

Methodology advocacy message 1

“It is always the system and school that pose the barriers to inclusive education, never the learner.”

Advocacy message 1, above, is linked closely with advocacy messages 2 and 3, below. If you approach education from the standpoint that all barriers to inclusive education ultimately stem from problems in the system in accommodating for the diverse strengths and needs of learners, rather than the barriers stemming from the learners themselves, then you are in a good position to actually analyse barriers, recognize strengths (in the system and in individuals) and welcome diversity in a systematic manner as discussed below.

Methodology advocacy message 2

“Addressing barriers to inclusive education requires a systematic approach which includes:

1) identifying the barriers to inclusive education;
2) strategizing solutions to those barriers; and
3) working to change the system accordingly.”

Taking a systematic approach to considering barriers to inclusive education ensures that specific barriers, as well as overlapping issues and patterns which lead to exclusion, can be identified, mapped and addressed to ensure that all learners are included. Engaging in this process is an important aspect of inclusive teaching methodology which reinforces the need to adapt systems to fit learners, as opposed to the other way around. The identification of barriers is a necessary first step in working to change the system and practices in schools and teacher education institutions.

The following table lists the main categories of system barriers with a few examples of typical barriers and solutions. Which barriers/solutions can be found in your context?
### Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of barriers</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Attitudes**     | • A bias against children and adults with disabilities and/or children/adults from ethnic minority or low caste groups (in some contexts) in schools and teacher education institutions  
                   • A belief that slower learners are not worth wasting time on  
                   • Negative attitudes against girls’ or women’s education in schools and teacher education institutions  
                   • A belief that children should be working either in family homes or in the community (or beyond) to help support their families  
                   • A false belief that not all children are able to learn | • A welcoming attitude to all children and adults which sees their diversity as an opportunity for better education and not as a problem  
                   • A belief that working to support the learning of slower learners is just as valuable and worthwhile as supporting the quicker learners  
                   • Seeking to support girls to attend and flourish in school; and seeking to support women to attend and flourish in teacher education institution  
                   • Supporting parents/families to understand the value of education for their children |
| **Practices**      | • Rote teaching and learning  
                   • Exam-centred education culture  
                   • Teacher seen as the transmitter of knowledge  
                   • Seating arrangements that are fixed and rigid and do not promote interaction and active engagement by all  
                   • A lack of interactive and participatory teaching methods and activities  
                   • Corporal punishment  
                   • The use of a language which most of the learners cannot understand | • Varying individual and group work and the use of fun, interactive, participatory and learner-led activities, such as drawing, singing, role-play, etc.  
                   • Positive discipline  
                   • Multilingual teaching |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of barriers</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Practices**     | • Conscious or unconscious gender bias in teaching and learning methods  
                    • Unwillingness/inability to deal with learners with disabilities in schools and teacher education institutions | • Treating girls and boys in schools fairly and equally (and the same with women and men in teacher education institutions)  
                     • Being proactive in working with children and adults with disabilities (and developing the skills to do so) to include them fully |
| **Resources**     | • A lack of chairs, desks, textbooks  
                    • The lack of assistive devices for children and adults who require them  
                    • A lack of teaching and learning resources which are gender sensitive, accessible to children/adults with disabilities, accessible to children/adults from minority linguistic and ethnic groups, locally relevant, etc. | • More money and support for procuring chairs, desks and teaching and learning materials  
                     • Making teaching and learning resources which are locally relevant and accessible |
| **Policies**      | • Policies which do not support gender balance  
                    • Policies which only allow for teaching in a dominant national language (as opposed to learners’ mother tongue)  
                    • Policies which do not support children and adults with disabilities  
                    • Policies which do not support the development of gender sensitive, linguistically appropriate and locally relevant curricula and materials in relation to communities and classrooms | • Policies which actively encourage gender equality  
                     • Policies which support teacher education in multilingual and mother tongue teaching  
                     • Policies which support accessibility in schools and teacher education institutions for learners with disabilities  
                     • Policies which support teachers to adapt curricula and materials to local needs and contexts in relation to communities and classrooms |
Methodology advocacy message 3

“Diversity should be welcomed and seen as a strength, not a weakness.”

When diversity is welcomed, teachers and learners are supported to value such diversity as opposed to fearing it. This develops inclusive social skills such as empathy and cooperation and reinforces the idea that all learners bring richness and value to schools, classrooms and teacher education institutions. An inclusive approach to education creates opportunities for teachers to tap into and develop the particular strengths and experiences their learners bring into education settings, in order to complement learning and promote social justice. For example, learners from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds can be supported to share aspects of their cultures in schools and classrooms (e.g. stories, songs, dances, etc.) in ways that broaden the horizons of all learners as well as teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of barriers</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Environment       | • Inaccessible classrooms, e.g. multi-storey school buildings with no access to upper floors for children with mobility challenges, a lack of ramps, and a lack of accessible toilets for people with disabilities  
• A lack of clean water and toilets (separate provision of toilets for girls) | • A focus on making all schools, teacher education institutions and classrooms fully accessible for learners with disabilities (this need not be dependent on extensive financial resources - e.g. ramps can be built cheaply using locally available building materials, as opposed to costly materials imported from elsewhere)  
• Resources (i.e. money, time and effort) spent on ensuring all schools have access to clean water and toilets |
Challenge 2

Teaching skills and methods

Analysing the situation

Teaching which is not learner-centred

This issue relates to an overarching approach to teaching. Teaching methods which are teacher-centred, not learner-centred, are not inclusive because they are not flexible enough to adapt to the diverse needs of different learners, nor are they well suited to draw out and build on learners’ individual talents, backgrounds, and experiences. Teacher-centred methods also tend to approach learning as instrumental, fixed, or predefined and not as the active process that learning actually is and should be. Additionally, a teacher-centred approach views learners as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in creating knowledge.4

A lack of interactive and varied teaching and learning approaches

Following from the previous point, there are several methodological problems which lead to teaching and learning which is dull, inaccessible for some and generally non-inclusive. These include: a lack of variance (diversification) in approaches to teaching; an over-reliance on rote teaching (in which teaching and learning is mainly focused on the teacher ‘delivering’ knowledge to learners in the form of lecturing and in which learner response is based on repeating back what the teacher has delivered) and a lack of balance between individualized instruction and group work which promotes interaction between learners.

This is not just about the style of engaging with teaching and learning content, but also the way classrooms are organized. If learners are made to sit in desks arranged permanently in rigid rows with the teacher based mainly at the front of the classroom, this too works against inclusive teaching. This rigid, teacher-centred approach to classroom organization is typical in many classrooms in the region and as a first step this must change to promote participatory and inclusive learning.

Example from Viet Nam

The ‘New School’ model

Student teachers are being educated to teach within a ‘New School’ model which is being developed nationally to realize inclusive education. This model supports small class sizes, and small group sessions. The ‘New School’ model:

- breaks learners into small groups for discussion;
- allows learners to study at their own pace;
- establishes a learning corner in the classroom (this is subject based, such as a Math corner);
- supports learner feedback on teaching (e.g. through a ‘magic box’ in which learners are encouraged to put comments or letters to teachers);
- offers possibilities for multigrade classrooms (e.g. in which 2-3 grades are taught together);
- supports parents’ participation through Parent Teacher Associations
- encourages community participation; and
- provides support for teachers in using (1) teacher guidelines, (2) student textbooks, and (3) student workbooks (subject based).

This approach to teaching, learning and organizing will require specific support in inclusive teaching methodology, in both pre-service and in-service teacher education.

Teaching methods which are only appropriate for some learners

Certain teaching methods (e.g. teacher-centred, lecture-based methods) favour the quickest, most able learners at the expense of slower learners, learners who do not know the language of the classroom well, and learners with disabilities. If a learner struggles with listening and memorizing, it follows that teaching which depends entirely upon a teacher lecturing and rote memorization risks excluding that learner. However, it is not that one particular method of teaching, or classroom management, is always best. As all learners have different learning needs and strengths, any particular teaching method which is used to the exclusion of other methods (e.g. only using rote learning through call and response, or only group work) risks reducing the quality of the learning experience, if not excluding some learners.

Approaches to teaching which do not encourage teachers to innovate and adapt curricula and materials to fit local community and classroom contexts

Teacher’s lack of skills and confidence in developing locally relevant curricula and materials and contextualizing teaching to fit local contexts is a major barrier to inclusive education. In most countries, school curricula are centrally developed and the role of teachers is to implement the curriculum. Some countries allow schools to choose content for local curriculum. Whether in a centralized or decentralized system of curriculum development, a teacher’s role is to adapt the curricula to the local context so that it is relevant to the learner, family and the community. Although there is some overlap between local community contexts and classroom contexts in schools (e.g. mother tongue languages), these are definably different areas:

- Locally relevant curricula and materials in relation to communities address local culture and circumstances (e.g. indigenous knowledge, the socio-economic situation, rural or urban life);
- Locally relevant curricula and materials in relation to classrooms address the needs of specific learners in the classroom (e.g. linguistic and learning needs).

Teacher education institutions which do not encourage students’ creativity and initiative in the area of materials and curricula adaptation and development, can result in teachers who have less ability to be flexible and responsive to the contexts of their schools and learners, lack independence and professional confidence, and are overly reliant on existing curricula materials. This is a particular problem for teachers who end up working in schools where there are limited and/or poor quality teaching and learning materials. Even high quality curricula and materials benefit from adaptation to fit the specific contexts teachers find in their communities, schools and classrooms.

A lack of relevant formative⁶ continuous and authentic assessment

Assessment which is overly prescriptive and inflexible, without clear goals or purpose, and which is not linked to learning objectives, will likely miss the actual dynamics and process of learning that occurs in schools and classrooms and may only provide a partial, if not misleading, picture of the learning taking place. Forms of assessment which are imposed from ‘above’ without being understood by teachers and learners can be alienating and there is an added risk that such assessment may be applied inaccurately.

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Additionally, although assessment of learning is important, a lack of assessment for learning, in which the assessment is formative, that is, part of the learning process, is not conducive to inclusive education. When teacher education institutions do not prepare their students to understand and engage in continuous formative assessment, i.e. assessment which is ongoing (not a stand-alone test at the end of term or year) and which is geared towards understanding the process of learning a learner goes through, it will be difficult, when the students themselves become teachers, for them to gauge and support children’s learning (and adapt their teaching accordingly). In the Asia-Pacific region, there is heavy reliance on high-stakes examinations as a means of assessing student achievement and this does not contribute to learning and inclusive education.

Formal, summative forms of assessment (which tend to be oriented towards outcomes, scoring/ranking and particular forms of testing) can be valuable as part of a comprehensive approach to assessment; however, they risk being overly narrow and prescriptive when they are the only forms of assessment used, as they tend to account for only certain forms of learning and favour learners who test well. Also, the exclusive use of periodic, summative forms of measurement as the only means of assessing learning is less valid and useful than a continuous, ongoing approach which considers everyday learning in the classroom over time.

Further, assessment which is not authentic, i.e. which does not actively and meaningfully involve learners themselves in the assessment process, misses out on opportunities to build learners’ confidence and self-awareness.

Teacher education institutions which only prepare their students to do formal, summative forms of assessment are likely to produce teachers who lack the capacity to measure (and support) the progress of diverse learners with different learning needs.

A lack of continuous, formative and authentic forms of assessment of learning in teacher education institutions is equally problematic and hinders the inclusiveness of such institutions.

**A lack of experience in using personalized learning approaches for students**

Following from the previous point, high quality assessment is dependent upon teachers understanding the specific capacities, needs and contexts of individual learners. Without knowledge of and experience in using individual learning plans (e.g. Individualized Family Services Plans; Individualized Educational Programmes; Individualized Transition Plans / Equivalency Programmes), student teachers will struggle to understand their learners’ needs and progress when they begin work as teachers.
Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context before embarking on advocacy

- Do teacher education classes in your institution support student teachers to understand and engage in learner-centred teaching and the personalization of teaching and learning?
- Do teacher education institutions adopt continuous formative and authentic assessment alongside more formal, summative assessment?
- Are student teachers exposed to a full range of teaching methods which address learners’ different needs and strengths (e.g. taking into account different sensory perceptions in learning such as visual, auditory, kinesthetic; learners’ attention and self-awareness; memory; individual attention; grouping, etc.) and the need for a diverse and varied approach to using such methods?
- Are learner-centred teaching methods modeled in the actual teaching that takes place in your teacher education institution?
- Are student teachers and teacher educators empowered and supported to adapt and develop locally relevant curricula and materials to address learners’ specific community and classroom learning contexts?
- Does the ministry of education develop and implement policy which supports learner-centred teaching and continuous formative and authentic assessment both in teacher education and in schooling?

Advocacy goals

Methodology advocacy message 4

“Student teachers need training in using teaching methods which are learner-centred, participatory and continuously adapted to fit learners’ needs – many student teachers have little or no experience of these methods and they will need a high degree of support to understand and use them effectively.”

Teacher education institutions need to take account of the fact that learner-centred methods rely on subtle teaching skills (e.g. skills in observation, self-awareness, facilitation, etc.) and the development of shared responsibility and shared power in the classroom between teachers and learners. Learner-centred teaching methods may seem straightforward and easy to implement. However, to understand them and be able to use them effectively, student teachers will need a lot of support within their teacher education institutions and during practicums in order to develop capacity in recognizing and responding to learners’ needs and strengths, and in developing relationships of trust.
between teachers and learners. These underpin quality learner-centred practice. As many student teachers will have little or no experience of learner-centred teaching in their own schooling backgrounds, it may take more time than expected for them to understand and be confident to engage in learner-centred teaching.

To support the process of developing learner-centred teachers, it is essential that teacher education institutions use learner-centred methods in their own teaching and learning as this works towards promoting inclusion within pre-service teacher education. It also serves to model such approaches, so that student teachers will be better able to use them when they become teachers.

Other important aspects of learner-centred, inclusive teaching include:

- Teachers become facilitators of learning (e.g. through facilitating group work in which learners support their peers’ learning) rather than transmitters of knowledge;
- Teachers are able to diversify the methods of teaching and classroom management they use in ways which are sensitive to learners’ diverse needs, are engaging and interesting for learners (and support active, learner participation), and that have a balance of group and individualized work; and
- Teachers are able to individualize instruction, and develop learners’ capacity for self-regulation and self-awareness.

As opposed to learner-centred methods of teaching, it requires less skill, preparation and effort to manage a classroom using teacher-centred methods. These typically rely on the teacher’s dominance of the classroom, a didactic approach to instruction, and corporal punishment and fear as a means of control and motivation. Learner-centred teaching methods in which teachers share control of the classroom with learners offer the best means of promoting the inclusion of all learners. These methods ultimately lead to more effective classroom management as they support better understanding and shared goals between teachers and learners.

The use of positive discipline and other complementary approaches to classroom management support inclusion generally and learner-centred teaching specifically, but these are not quickly and easily implementable. Rather, they take time and need to be nurtured, especially as teaching peers and other school staff, parents and school communities and learners themselves may be unfamiliar with learner-centred approaches.
Methodology advocacy message 5

“An inclusive teaching methodology requires training in specific inclusive methods such as supporting the learning of children with disabilities, promoting gender equality and multigrade and multilingual teaching.”

Inclusive teaching methodology requires that teachers have a high degree of awareness of learners and learners’ needs as well as the skills and confidence to support all learners in the classroom.

Specific issues include:

- **gender** – promoting gender equality requires teachers to be sensitive to gender imbalances and work to address these;
- **language** – learners with different mother tongues than the national language need teachers with specialized skills in mother tongue/multilingual teaching, both to teach in the learners’ mother tongue and to use mother tongue language teaching as a bridge to supporting learners to learn the national language;
- **mixed ages and levels** – teachers in contexts in which learners from different age and level groups are taught together in the same classroom require skills in multigrade teaching; and
- **disability** – learners with disabilities need teachers with a whole range of skills of identification, referral, support, and special attention and lessons, etc.

Methodology advocacy message 6

“Student teachers need empowerment, training and support in adapting and developing curricula and materials to fit their local community and classroom contexts.”

Pre-service teacher education programmes should develop inclusive teaching competencies on the part of prospective teachers. An important focus of inclusive education teaching methodology therefore should be on building student teachers’ capacities in curricula and materials development and adaptation. Student teachers who, during their studies in teacher education institutions and practicum work, are encouraged and supported to adapt and develop curricula and materials will be better able to work with the curricula and materials when they become teachers within an overall flexible and diversified approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

When teachers have skills and confidence in this area, they will be able to adapt existing curricula and materials and develop their own teaching resources which are locally relevant
and appropriate to learners’ specific needs and strengths. On the one hand, this is to support student teachers to be able to make the best use of existing curricula and teaching and learning materials when they become teachers, and to be able to appropriately adapt such curricula and materials to fit the specific needs of their learners (e.g. by making teaching and learning materials more accessible for children with disabilities). On the other hand, this is also about empowering student teachers to tap into local community resources (e.g. traditions of oral storytelling, indigenous knowledge about the natural world, local celebrations and festivals, etc.) to make learning as contextualized, engaging and relevant as possible.

The development of such capacities is just as relevant and necessary for experienced, practicing teachers in schools, as it is for student teachers and newly qualified teachers. Ultimately, these processes can be enhanced through the creation of teacher networks and communities of practice for sharing knowledge and ideas, and developing and enriching the curriculum in a collaborative way. Such networks can be developed and nurtured between different schools and different teacher education institutions, as well as between teacher education institutions and schools.

Educating teachers to become curricula and material developers, and competent in local adaptation of curricula, requires a great deal of moral and technical support from within teacher education institutions as well as from ministries of education. If teachers feel they must stick rigidly to existing curricula and resources (such as textbooks and teacher guidelines), they will not have the flexibility to adapt to specific local contexts and specific learners’ needs.

Likewise, teacher educators themselves should be encouraged to develop and adapt curricula and materials within their teacher education institutions, to fit the needs and strengths of their student teachers as well as their local context. Gaining skills and confidence in materials and curricula development is essential to teachers’ professional development and is important in both pre-service and in-service teacher education.
Example from Malaysia

Workshops to support teachers in developing classroom resources and materials

In Eastern Malaysia, a mentoring project has been supporting primary school teachers to develop their own classroom resources, a process which is complementary to recent changes in the curriculum. One method of supporting this process has been to organize regular workshops in which local teachers work together to develop classroom resources. Learner-friendly resources including: puppets, pop-up books, masks, costumes, games, songs, and music, have been developed and workshops have focused on building teachers’ capacity and confidence to source and develop their own resources linked to existing curricula. This has been an effective means of encouraging teachers’ creativity, collaboration and the sharing of ideas around the creation and use of locally contextualized teaching and learning materials. Although the workshops have principally involved in-service primary teachers, increasingly, school management, district education officers and even parents are participating. There is great potential to further develop workshops to involve pre-service teacher educators and student teachers as well.

Commenting on the process and participation in such workshops, a district education officer from Sarawak, Malaysia, explained:

‘Workshops are very good and the teachers like these … the sharing that happens. In my district there was a workshop in which fifteen schools met together and learned a lot of innovative ways to teach and to build resources and teaching aids. If you attend any other pedagogy workshops elsewhere they are mostly based on building lesson plans and that’s it. But, when it comes to the kind of workshop, like the recent one in my district, it’s doing it and seeing it and not just talking and listening and not just sitting down, but they are actually building how to do it and sharing this with other schools.’

Methodology advocacy message 7

“Student teachers need training in understanding and using a range of inclusive assessment practices including formative, continuous and authentic forms of assessment (as well as summative forms of assessment). Teacher education institutions also need to use a similar range of approaches in their own assessments of learning.”

Teacher education needs to focus on preparing teachers to engage in continuous forms of formative and authentic assessment, as well as summative forms of assessment.

Formative assessment relies on qualitative feedback alongside quantitative measures. It focuses on different forms of evidence of learning and supports both teachers and learners to be responsive and make adjustments to better meet learning needs.⁸

Formative and summative forms of assessment can both be meaningfully incorporated into an overall process of continuous and authentic⁹ assessment, which is essential to inclusive education.¹⁰ Overall, this process can be called inclusive assessment.

Inclusive assessment should consider a range of learning indicators that go beyond what is measurable through only numerical testing and scoring learners’ performance. A fuller range of learning indicators can include: a focus on how learners interact with each other (as well as learner-teacher interaction); learners’ social and emotional well-being; learners’ specific learning preferences (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic); and learners’ capacities for memory, attention and self-regulation. Such assessment requires that teachers be skilled and reflective observers. Assessments generally use comparative standards to find out how the performance of a student compares with that of others. In inclusive assessment, improvement standards are used to show how a student is progressing over time.

Inclusive assessment relies on a range of assessment tools which may include: observations; portfolios of learners’ work (including drawing, writing, worksheets, etc.), checklists of skills, knowledge, and behaviours; tests and quizzes; and self-assessment and reflective

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⁹ Authentic assessment is contextually relevant and links to reflective practice. Darling-Hammond and Snyder explain, ‘Under the title of authentic assessment, we include opportunities for developing and examining teachers’ thinking and actions in situations that are experience based and problem oriented and that include or simulate actual acts of teaching. Such acts of teaching include plans for and reflections on teaching and learning, as well as activities featuring direct interactions with students.’ See: Darling-Hammond, L. and Snyder, J. 2000. *Authentic Assessment of Teaching in Context.* Elsevier, Teaching and Teacher Education.16, p. 524. http://www.jcu.edu/education/dshutkin/ed587/articles/Authentic_assessment.pdf (Accessed 4 April 2013.)

¹⁰ On the importance of continuous assessment see: UNESCO. 2003. *Open File on Inclusive Education: Support Material for Managers and Administrators.* Paris, UNESCO. Continuous assessment is taking place all the time and not just at specific intervals (such as the beginning, middle of or ending of a school year).
A key consideration in inclusive assessment is its ‘flexibility’ in terms of the use of assessment tools that allow each student to demonstrate his or her competence.

Inclusive assessment is equally valuable as a means of assessing student teachers’ learning within teacher education institutions. Indeed, a continuity of approach to assessment should build from within teacher education institutions to be further developed and carried forward with new teachers into their schools and classrooms.

**Example from the Bahamas**

*Self-assessment with university students*¹²

Here, a professor at the University of the Bahamas considers the process and value of working with students on self-assessment:

“To implement self-assessment, my students meet in pairs to discuss the standards and/or criteria they should use for judging a piece of work or performance. This may be done in any subject area, from Dance to Mathematics. I give them guidelines of what is acceptable and unacceptable. I facilitate, encourage and suggest, but I do not direct or give orders.

The students are always interacting with tourists and so they are articulate. They ask me questions and make suggestions about the assessment process, and we hold group discussions. Through these interactions, I provide additional information and we create an inclusive environment where all students feel loved, respected and accepted. I act as a role model, using my initiative to invent active learning methods. In this way students begin to appreciate experience-sharing and problem-solving, which are at the heart of inclusive education.

Once they agree about the assessment standards/criteria, pairs of students interact with other pairs, and this is repeated until there is consensus across the class. Students then use the standards/criteria to evaluate performance. To do this, they engage each other in conversation, wait their turn to speak, actively listen to and critique each other, and provide feedback. Active classroom observation and non-written ways of observing and participating become the norm. Self-assessment like this can also happen in the playground, laboratory, public places, etc.


Students complete a form on the front of their assignments, which they use to highlight areas for personal improvement. After each assignment they voluntarily discuss with each other their errors and how they will prevent a reoccurrence. This lays the groundwork for improved standards.

Individual students feel included in decision-making through their active participation in the assessment process. They know their views are taken seriously. Shared decision-making promotes shared responsibility and ownership; both essential for inclusion. Diversity – an inevitable offshoot of tourism in the Bahamas – is celebrated rather than tolerated.

Visually and hearing impaired students in my class are given space to participate while others support them, for example, by recording the information. Students who are slow at understanding have the opportunity to keep pace with others. The supportive environment means that no one is stigmatized for being ‘different’. Our communication ‘ground rules’ stop extrovert students from smothering quieter students, and I am on hand to advise or intervene if required.

Students from comparatively impoverished backgrounds feel welcome as equal partners in the classroom, instead of feeling ostracized as they may do in the community. Working closely with other students in one-on-one discussions also helps students with behavioural problems to experience and develop more ‘acceptable’ behaviour. Using these cooperative approaches makes it easier and quicker for me to identify and address impairments, emotional stress or related conditions in classrooms.

Self-assessment promotes reflection, introspection, creative and divergent thinking. My students have to negotiate to reach mutual agreement. The process assists less-able students, who now have opportunities for more input into an activity than they would in a more traditional classroom. At-risk groups find solace in a group focused on interaction and mutual agreement. Students tend to question exclusion. They break stereotypes and segregation and promote an inclusive education system from which all can benefit.”

**Methodology advocacy message 8**

“Student teachers need to be supported to consider individual learners’ needs through the development of individual learning plans, but at the same time to be aware of the systemic barriers to inclusive education.”

Linked to the previous points on assessment is the need for teachers to develop individual learning plans while being aware of group dynamics in learning environments as well as the systemic barriers to inclusive education, so that the responsibility for inclusive education is not placed on the learner.
Individual learning plans need to be balanced with an approach to understanding the group dynamics within schools and classrooms (i.e. how learners interact) to best support whole class and whole school inclusion. In addition, it is important for teachers to maintain a view to the systemic barriers to inclusive education (as detailed in ‘Challenge 1’) alongside an individualized approach to learners. Too narrow a focus on individual learners risks identifying them, rather than the system, as the source of barriers to inclusive education. It is this complex understanding of the individual within the system that offers the greatest potential for achieving inclusive education. Individualized approaches to teaching do not depend on segregating learners; rather, this concerns the personalization of common (shared) learning experiences and a diversified approach which allows for a balance of group and individual learning.\textsuperscript{13}

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**Challenge 3**

**Practice, reflection and support**

**Analysing the situation**

**Poor supervision and support**

When student teachers are not supported through continuous, constructive feedback from teacher educators, they will be far less likely to understand and effectively engage in inclusive learner-centred teaching (and to utilize the subtle facilitation skills these inclusive methods depend on) when they become teachers. This links with the earlier points on inclusive assessment.

Additionally, student teachers who experience only negative feedback from their teachers and supervisors are likely to lose motivation. Likewise, without proper encouragement and constructive feedback for change, students are unlikely to develop their own capacities for critical reflection, or to make meaningful changes in their practice.

Poorly supervised and supported student teachers are unlikely to have the skills or confidence to effectively meet the challenges of inclusive education in schools and classrooms when they become teachers themselves.

A lack of teaching practice for student teachers and teacher educators

Too much of a focus in teacher education on teaching theory and not enough on actual practice will leave student teachers unprepared to engage in actual teaching and to face the challenges such practice involves. Unfortunately, some teacher education programmes place a minimum of focus on teaching practicum. A lack of practical teaching experience (within a supportive programme of teacher education) will result in less likelihood that student teachers will be able to make connections between theory and practice when they themselves become classroom teachers.

It can also be problematic when teacher educators themselves lack recent, practical experience in schools. Teacher educators who have limited or no recent classroom experience of working with teachers in schools can lose the sense of what it means to actually teach children and young people and interact with school communities. They are also more likely to be out of touch with the current contexts, challenges and practices of schooling. In some cases, teacher educators may never have had the experience of teaching in schools, or may only have a history of limited practicum experience from when they were student teachers. If teacher educators are unable to draw on their own experiences of teaching in/working with schools, they will be less likely to be able to address student teachers’ practical concerns. Additionally, teacher educators who are disconnected from schooling may have difficulty in supporting their student teachers to connect theory with practice.

A lack of reflective practice

An approach to teacher education which does not encourage student teachers to be critical thinkers, to question and to be genuinely reflective, poorly prepares them to become critical, flexible and self-aware teachers. Without reflective practice, teachers will struggle to adapt their teaching to fit the needs of different learners, which is essential to inclusive education.

Questions you can ask to help you analyse the situation in your context before embarking on advocacy

- Is enough time and support (for student teachers) given to practicum experience within your teacher education programme?
- Do your teacher educators have recent, practical experience of teaching in and/or working with schools and school communities?
- Does your teacher education institution provide ongoing support, guidance and constructive feedback for student teachers during teacher education classes and practicum – is this properly planned and funded?
• Are student teachers taught to effectively utilize support (e.g. through working with other teachers, teaching assistants, and parents)?
• Are student teachers given enough practicum experience?
• Are student teachers required and properly supported to engage in their own reflective practice and action research?
• Is there good coordination and collaboration between teacher education institutions and host schools in supporting student teachers to gain sufficient inclusive teaching experience?

Advocacy goals

Methodology advocacy message 9

“Student teachers need opportunities for regular periods of practical teaching experience as part of their teacher education programmes.”

Actual teaching practice within the context of pre-service teacher education is essential in preparing student teachers for their future careers. Regular periods of teaching practicum allow student teachers to connect theory with practice and develop their teaching skills within the nurturing environment of pre-service teacher education programmes. Ensuring that teaching practicum achieves its potential as a positive learning experience and solid preparation for inclusive teaching is dependent upon good quality mentoring and support, an issue which will be discussed further within this section.

It is difficult to specify exactly how much practicum work there should be within teacher education programmes, or the exact nature of such practicums. However, it is desirable for student teachers to have ongoing exposure to schools throughout each year of their pre-service teacher education. This can occur through voluntary work in local schools (e.g. as teaching assistants); specific projects with schools (e.g. action research); school visits with observations of lessons; and more sustained periods of actual teaching, and/or assistant teaching. Practicums should increase in frequency and duration over the course or a pre-service teacher education programme, ideally culminating in student teachers experiencing a prolonged period of time in a school.

Teachers in practicum schools can benefit from the support of student teachers in their classrooms, but equally have vital roles to play as mentors in supporting students to be keen, reflective observers and to develop practical skills in inclusive lesson planning, teaching, classroom management and assessment. Supportive and constructive feedback is essential and it is also important that teachers who are mentoring student teachers have good contact and support from teacher education institutions.
Student teachers should ideally experience a range of different inclusive education contexts and challenges within their practicum placements, involving, for example: children from disadvantaged communities; children from different ethnic and linguistic groups; children of mixed ages and abilities; mixed gender groups; children with disabilities; rural and urban schools; and ‘gifted and talented’ children.

The establishment and running of practicum programmes for student teachers in schools is a process which also can be used to develop meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships between teacher education institutions and schools/school communities. Such relationships can be reciprocal. They open possibilities for participating schools and teachers to access in-service teacher education and professional development from partner teacher education institutions, and also to contribute their knowledge and experience directly to teacher education (e.g. through mentoring student teachers during practicum placements, or by participating in/facilitating workshops and/or guest teaching in teacher education institutions).

**Example from Myanmar**

*Practicum field trips*

The Karen, one of the indigenous, ethnic groups of Myanmar, run their own pre-service teacher education programme at two locations on the border between Thailand and Karen State, Myanmar. This programme supports Karen language and culture, incorporates indigenous knowledge and Western schooling and prepares Karen student teachers to teach in a range of different community schooling contexts in Karen communities in Myanmar.

The programme provides students with two years of pre-service teacher education and a further two years of experience teaching in Karen schools, before prospective teachers become fully qualified. During the first two years of the programme, although students are based at a teacher education institution, they also experience practicum in local schools at certain points during each year. One such practicum experience for first year students involves a structured programme in which teacher educators and students spend a month of travelling (mostly on foot) through Karen communities (both small villages and larger towns) in a designated area to meet with teachers, learners, parents and school committees. This trip provides opportunities for student teachers to meet school communities, interview community members and learn more about schooling

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in Karen State in advance of their school-based practicum work and eventual teaching. During the field trip the student teachers also have opportunities to conduct fun, interactive and educational activities with children, parents and other community members along the way. This boosts their confidence and gives them valuable practical experience.

Here several members of a class of first year Karen student teachers discuss their experience of the practicum field trip:

“The most interesting thing for me was meeting the teachers in Karen State. Even if they only get a little, they work very hard to educate the young children to become educated people. Because I will become a teacher, this gives me strength. I also learned from one of the students that she wanted her school to have more standards so she could continue her education without having to leave her village. I was very encouraged and inspired by the teachers and students.”

“The most interesting thing was that when we arrived in the villages the villagers welcomed us and were happy to see us. We could see the children really, really want education. Even the parents wanted to be involved. They had work to do, but they stopped to share their time with us.”

“Working together in a group (of student teachers) with the communities, we learned that we are not qualified teachers … so when we did things we talked about them together, we discussed them. When we prepared for an activity each person gave their ideas and then we discussed these and chose the best one. In the future we need to do more to work closely with the district and township so we can share the work together and do education better.”

Methodology advocacy message 10

“Teacher educators need good connections with schools and school communities and benefit from being able to draw on their own experiences of teaching in schools.”

To keep connected with teaching and other aspects of schooling, it is important for teacher educators themselves to spend time working in/with schools and school communities. When teacher educators are able to have regular connection with and time in schools their understanding of schooling can be bolstered. This works towards keeping their teaching and support for student teachers grounded, practical, up-to-date and relevant.

Although teacher educators face time constraints and the logistics can be challenging, there are potential opportunities for teacher educators to spend more time in schools if teacher education institutions and schools are flexible and proactive.
Possibilities include:

• organizing and participating in joint teaching related workshops and other activities (e.g. focused on specific skills and competencies, such as literacy, teaching material development, etc.) between teacher educators/education institutions, schools and school communities;
• school visits for teacher educators during student teachers’ practicum (e.g. to meet members of the school community, observe their student teachers in practice, and/or observe lessons more generally); and
• a short period of guest teaching in schools for teacher educators.

Methodology advocacy message 11

“Student teachers need constructive, ongoing supervision and support from teacher educators in teacher education institutions and from teacher mentors in practicum schools.”

Proper supervision requires that teacher education institutions support their students, both technically, in relation to specific teaching skills, and pastorally (e.g. in relation to counseling, encouragement and moral support) as they face the emotional challenges of teaching. Supervision and support for student teachers needs to be properly planned and funded at the level of teacher education institutions. Such support should be continuous, depending on frequent communication, and based on the development of a relationship of trust between teacher educators and student teachers.

Student teachers also need to be supported through mentoring by teachers in the schools in which they do practicum work. Teacher mentors are often best placed to provide the most relevant, in-situ support when student teachers actually need it (e.g. immediately after a challenging lesson). The supervising and mentoring role of these teachers must be clarified.

Teacher education institutions should have a duty to monitor the relationships between student teachers and schools during teaching practicum to ensure that students’ needs are met and that teachers are comfortable in their mentoring roles and that a truly supportive environment is in place.

Methodology advocacy message 12

“Student teachers need guidance and experience in how to develop and utilize networks of support within schools and school communities (e.g. other teachers, teaching assistants, parents).”
Inclusive education requires a supportive environment to thrive – student teachers need experience in how to seek and manage support both in and outside of classrooms. This includes education and practical experience in how to work effectively with other teachers and school management (such as head teachers); how to work effectively with teaching assistants, and how to work with parents to support their children’s learning.

Practicum placements should give student teachers structured (as well as unstructured) opportunities to engage with parents and other members of school communities. The importance of developing and sustaining good relationships between teachers and parents/families in support of inclusive education is something that needs to be reinforced from early within pre-service teacher education. This engagement with parents and community members will help student teachers understand societal barriers to inclusive education and how these barriers impact learning in schools.

Networks of peer support are also important and student teachers should be encouraged to develop critical friendships with their peers; critical friendship is both about getting support and engaging in reflective practice. Reflective practice is discussed further under the next advocacy message.

**Critical friendship for teachers**

Although teaching is very rewarding, being a teacher can sometimes be an isolating experience, especially if there are not many other teachers in your school or community. Having someone to talk with about your work can make teaching feel less isolating and be a good way to reflect on and improve your practice as a teacher and an inclusive educator. Of course, it is very likely that you will talk informally with colleagues about work when you get the chance. However, it is also useful to have a more structured approach to talking about your experiences of teaching and learning. This can be called a critical friendship.

A critical friend is someone who can support you with your work as a teacher. Like other friends, one of the most valuable things a critical friend can do is be there to listen to you talk about your experiences of being a teacher, both good and bad.

As a teacher, the best choices for critical friends will be other teachers like you because they understand about your work and the challenges you face.

A critical friend can offer a fresh set of eyes and ears and use their experience to help you with your own challenges and issues.
A good critical friendship is based on trust. As a critical friend, you should try and be supportive and non-judgemental.

A good critical friendship will develop and become stronger over time. If you and your critical friend find your first meeting to be a positive experience, plan a time to meet again, and repeat the process.

Methodology advocacy message 13

“Student teachers need to be skillful in reflective practice linked to a cycle of action research.”

Reflective practice, linked to action research, is essential for good teaching and learning as it supports teachers to actively consider both their teaching and their learners and make thoughtful changes and adaptations accordingly. The more teachers understand about their own practice and the needs and perspectives of their learners (as well as other members of the school community), the better they will be able to face the challenges of inclusive education. With this in mind, student teachers need to be taught and supported to practice different techniques for reflecting on their own performance as teachers and learners, their learners’ experience and performance in aid of identifying problems, as well as positive practices to make improvements.

Reflective practice, as a means of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, links with the idea of inclusive assessment as discussed in the previous section.

Reflective practice is useful as part of a wider ongoing process of action research in which teachers and other school community members consider key issues and challenges which they would like to address, develop a plan of action, make informed changes based on their research enquiry, evaluate impacts, and adjust accordingly and repeat the process as necessary.

Student teachers need education, practice and support in conducting action research in and with school communities. This is important because action research can be a very meaningful process and support a holistic, whole school approach to inclusive education. For example, learners themselves can be supported to research their out-of-school peers (e.g. by finding out which children in their community are out of school and why), which can lead to better informed efforts to include those children in school, and also be linked to school curricula (e.g. the process of developing surveys and counting of out-of-school children can be linked to mathematics).
Reflective practice and action research is not just relevant to teaching practice in schooling, but should be encouraged and supported within teacher education institutions. For example: student teachers should be supported to be reflective of their own learning experience; teacher educators should likewise engage in reflective practice; and teacher educators and student teachers can work together to develop action research projects within their own teacher education institutions in support of developing better, more inclusive, teaching and learning.

Ultimately, reflective practice and action research should be seen as an essential aspect of teachers’ ongoing professional development.

How to tell if the advocacy is having a positive effect

Advocacy Guide 1 highlighted that when planning advocacy you will also develop indicators to help you monitor the process and the impact of your work. The indicators you will create will depend on the details of your advocacy objectives. Indicators, like plans, should be developed through a participatory process that involves a range of stakeholders.

The following list suggests some potential indicators. Advocacy that calls for improvements in teaching methodology, so as to better prepare teacher education institutions, student teachers and teachers for inclusive education, could be considered effective if:

- It is fully understood and accepted that barriers to inclusive education always originate in the system, never the learner.
- The process of addressing barriers to inclusive education involves: identifying the barriers; strategizing solutions; and working to change the system to overcome the barriers.
- Diversity in terms of ethnicity, language, gender, ability/disability, etc. in teacher education institutions and in schools is understood as being a strength, and is welcomed accordingly.
- Teacher education institutions provide training and ongoing support for students and staff in learner-centred, participatory and adaptable teaching methods.
- Teacher education institutions provide training and ongoing support for students and staff in specific inclusive methods such as supporting the learning of children with disabilities, promoting gender equality and multigrade and multilingual teaching.
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education: Methodology

- Teacher education institutions provide students and staff with training and ongoing support in developing curricula and materials to fit local community and classroom contexts.
- Teacher education institutions offer training and ongoing support for students and staff in inclusive assessment (i.e. assessment which is formative, continuous and authentic, as well as summative forms of assessment).
- Student teachers and staff in teacher education institutions are supported to consider individual learners’ needs through the development of individual learning plans, whilst paying attention to barriers to inclusive education within the education system.
- Student teachers have regular and sustained opportunities for practicum experience in schools throughout their teacher education.
- Teacher education institutions and staff have strong and productive links with schools and school communities.
- Student teachers receive constructive and ongoing supervision and support from teacher educators and teacher mentors in practicum schools.
- Student teachers receive guidance and support in developing and utilizing support networks within schools and school communities (e.g. with teachers, teaching assistants, parents).
- Teacher education institutions provide students and staff with training and ongoing support in reflective practice and action research.

Appendix

In this table we suggest possible targets for each of the advocacy messages mentioned in the above challenges. There is also space for you to enter ideas about which advocacy methods and media you could use to convey these messages to key targets in your context. You should aim to develop these ideas through a process of consultation with colleagues and other stakeholders. Further advice on advocacy, and on methods/media, can be found in Advocacy Guide 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the advocacy message?</th>
<th>Who needs to hear this?</th>
<th>How could you convey this message in your own context?*</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| “It is always the system and school that are the barriers to inclusive education, never the learner.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula  
• Staff in schools and members of school communities (e.g. parents) | |
| “Addressing barriers to inclusive education requires a systematic approach which includes: 1) Identifying the barriers to inclusive education 2) strategizing solutions to those barriers; and 3) working to change the system accordingly.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula  
• Staff in schools | |
| “Diversity should be welcomed and seen as a strength, not a weakness.” | • Ministry of education personnel who oversee teacher education policy, programmes and budgets  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula  
• Staff in schools | |
| “Student teachers need training in using teaching methods which are learner-centred, participatory and continuously adapted to fit learners’ needs – many student teachers have little or no experience of these methods and they will need a high degree of support to understand and use them effectively.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula  
• Staff in schools, especially those supporting/mentoring student teachers’ practicum | |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
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</table>
| “An inclusive teaching methodology requires training in specific inclusive methods such as supporting the learning of children with disabilities, promoting gender equality and multigrade and multilingual teaching.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula | |
| “Student teachers need empowerment, training and support in adapting and developing curricula and materials to fit their local community and classroom contexts.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula  
• Staff in schools  
• Members of school communities | |
| “Student teachers need training in understanding and using a range of inclusive assessment practices including formative, continuous and authentic forms of assessment (as well as summative forms of assessment). Teacher education institutions also need to use a similar range of approaches in their own assessments of learning.” | • Ministry of education personnel, particularly those concerned with school assessment, evaluation and inspection  
• Local/district/provincial education officers concerned with school assessment, evaluation and inspection  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula | |

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| “Student teachers need to be supported to consider individual learners’ needs through the development of individual learning plans, but at the same time to be aware of the systemic barriers to inclusive education.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing training curricula  
• Staff in schools and members of school communities (including learners and parents/families) | |
| “Student teachers need opportunities for regular periods of practical teaching experience as part of their teacher education programmes.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and supervising student teachers during teaching practicum  
• Staff in teaching practicum schools | |
| “Teacher educators need good connections with schools and school communities and benefit from being able to draw on their own experiences of teaching in schools.” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions  
• Staff in schools and other members of school communities | |

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| “Student teachers need constructive, ongoing supervision and support from teacher educators in teacher education institutions and from teacher mentors in practicum schools.” | • Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and supervising student teachers during teaching practicum  
• Staff in teaching practicum schools |                                                   |
| “Student teachers need guidance and experience in how to develop and utilize networks of support within schools and school communities (e.g. other teachers, teaching assistants, parents).” | • Ministry of education personnel  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and developing teacher education curricula  
• Staff in teaching practicum schools and other school community members |                                                   |
| “Student teachers need to be skillful in reflective practice linked to a cycle of action research.” | • Ministry of education personnel, particularly those concerned with education research  
• Heads of teacher education institutions  
• Staff in teacher education institutions who are responsible for teaching and supervising student teachers during teaching practicum  
• Staff in schools and other members of school communities |                                                   |

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in Advocacy Guide 1
Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education is a series of 5 Advocacy Guides

Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction
This introduction puts the advocacy guides in context and offers a background to their development. It introduces inclusive teacher education and addresses what makes effective advocacy, who can do it and how it can be done. This introduction also provides an overview of the guidebooks on policy, curriculum, materials, and methodology.

Advocacy Guide 2: Policy
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teacher education policies. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development, and implementation of inclusive policies.

Advocacy Guide 3: Curriculum
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of pre-service teacher education curricula. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive curricula.

Advocacy Guide 4: Materials
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching/learning materials used in teacher education. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching/learning materials.

Advocacy Guide 5: Methodology
This advocacy guide focuses on challenges and barriers in the area of teaching methodologies used at teacher education institutions. It offers strategies and solutions for teacher education institutions, ministries of education and other key education stakeholders to advocate for and support the adaptation, development and implementation of inclusive teaching methodologies.