This study looks at some of the developments in inclusive education since the Jomtien Conference by analysing the progress made by disabled learners in overcoming barriers of access to, and participation in, education. Inclusive education is understood to encompass a wider set of issues than those associated with disabled students or students categorized as having 'special needs'. It reflects a concern with all learners whose participation in education is restricted. The study attempts to document the progress made since 1990 in increasing the access to education for disabled learners in particular. But in looking at how participation has developed within centres of learning it is inevitably concerned with policies and approaches to teaching and learning which enhance the participation of all learners.

The study will emphasise the years of primary, basic or compulsory education and will cover education in both formal and non-formal settings. In addition it will look at preschool provision and interventions and the preparation of learners for employment and social participation after formal education. The particular requirement of the deaf for the maintenance of linguistic communities of sign language users will be addressed.