Mapping of Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in South Asia

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Beyond Education
Inclusive schools, inclusive societies.

- Family, community engagement and partnerships
- Awareness, attitudes and practices

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Supply

Measuring and Monitoring Quality

- Standards and indicators for inclusion
- Monitoring and quality assurance

- Approaches to educating children with disabilities
- Education work force development and teacher training
- School environment and infrastructure
- Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment
- Learning materials
- Support services for students, parents and teachers

- Policy and legislative framework
- Data on children with disabilities
- Disability-inclusive sector plans

Enabling Environment

- Financing and funding mechanisms
- Leadership and management

Key Findings

Disability-Inclusive Education Initiatives in South Asia

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Policy and Legislative Framework

1

Almost all (7 of 8) countries have signed and/or ratified the UNCRPD. Bhutan is yet to ratify the convention, but significant policy reforms have been put in place in recent years to address disability-inclusion.

2

Disability and general education laws and policies across the region guarantee inclusion of children with disabilities in education but practice focuses on special education and integration.

3

Inclusive education policies are more ambitious in setting goals for inclusion. A policy dedicated to IE is in place in Afghanistan and Maldives. Sri Lanka has a draft IE policy.

Enabling Environment

Education Sector Plan and Financing

1

All ESPs in the region, with the exception of India which does not have an ESP, address the rights of children with disabilities, although focus is mainly on expanding special education and mainstreaming in regular classes.

2

There is insufficient data to determine the proportion of education budgets spent on education of children with disabilities. **Some countries indicate funding for children with disabilities but often limited to supporting special schools.**

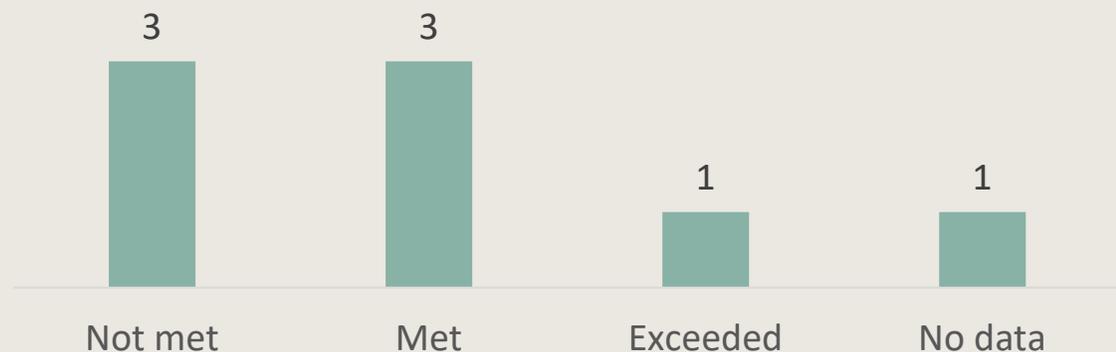Enabling Environment

Funding and Financing

Most countries in the region are not meeting the required expenditure on education.
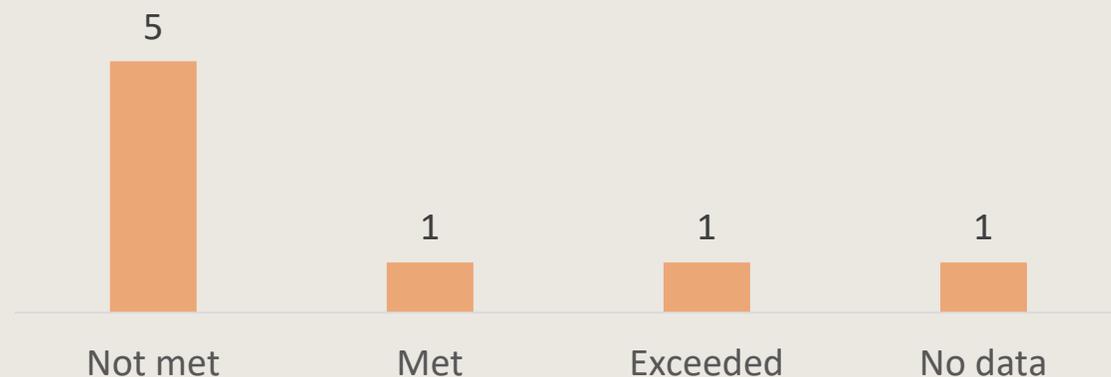
Funding earmarked for disability-inclusive education may not always be apparent in financial plans.

Expenditure on education as % of GDP (Benchmark: 4%–5%)

Not met	Met	Exceeded	No data
3	3	1	1

Expenditure on education as % of total public expenditure (Benchmark: 15%– 20%)

Not met	Met	Exceeded	No data
5	1	1	1

Enabling Environment

Data on Children with Disabilities

Disability prevalence (%)

- Pakistan (WG): 13
- Sri Lanka (WG): 8.6
- Maldives (WG): 8
- Afghanistan (WG): 3.2
- India: 2.2
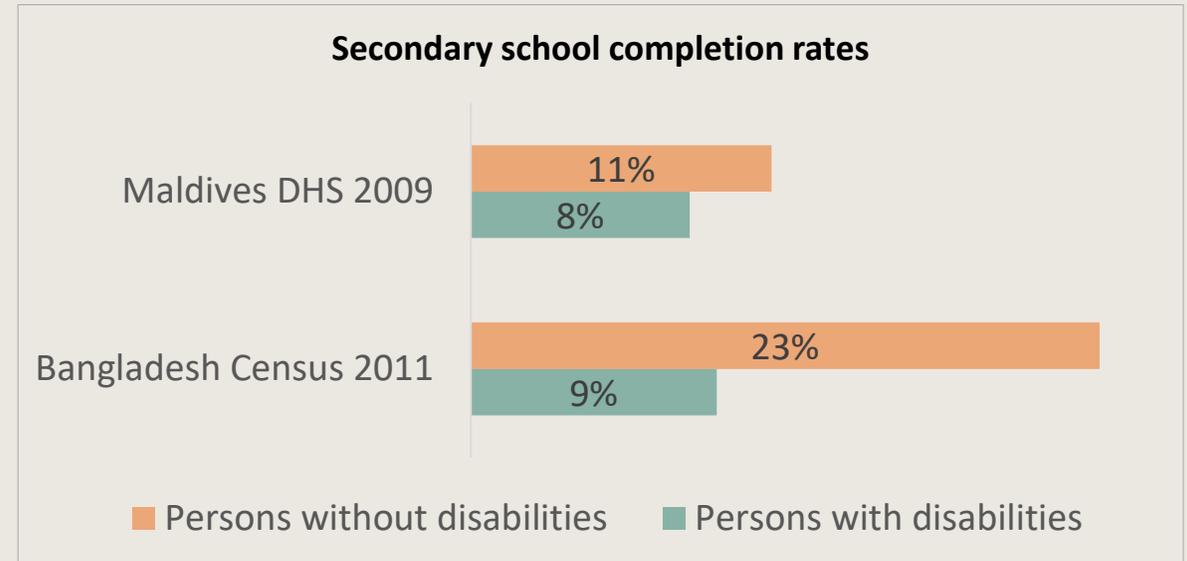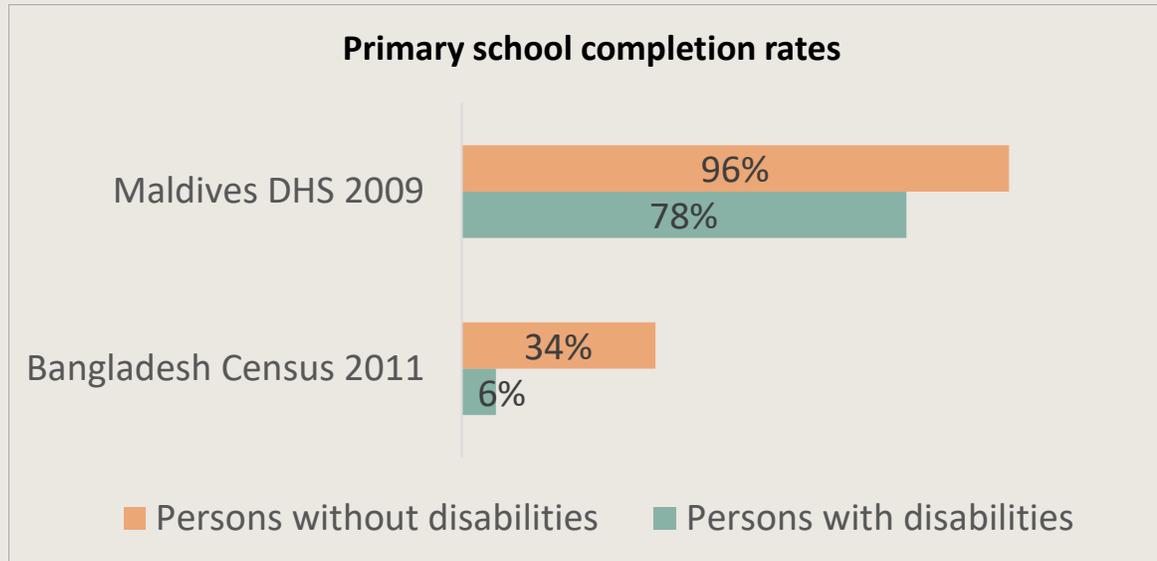- Bhutan (WG): 2.1
- Nepal: 1.9
- Bangladesh: 1.4

1

Disability prevalence rates in the region vary greatly and fall below global estimates.

Enabling Environment

Data on Children with Disabilities

Primary school completion rates

Maldives DHS 2009	Persons without disabilities: 96% / Persons with disabilities: 78%
Bangladesh Census 2011	Persons without disabilities: 34% / Persons with disabilities: 6%

■ Persons without disabilities ■ Persons with disabilities

Secondary school completion rates

Maldives DHS 2009	Persons without disabilities: 11% / Persons with disabilities: 8%
Bangladesh Census 2011	Persons without disabilities: 23% / Persons with disabilities: 9%

■ Persons without disabilities ■ Persons with disabilities

2

Children with disabilities fall behind their peers without disabilities.

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Data on Children with Disabilities

3

Birth registration is critical in safeguarding the rights of children with disabilities.
1 in 3 children in South Asia has never been registered and less than half of those registered have a birth certificate.

4

The use of the Washington Group of Questions is an emerging practice and has the potential to address varying ways of measuring disability and provide comparable data across countries.

5

EMIS upgrades are expected to be more disability-inclusive.

Enabling Environment

Leadership and Management

1 Countries across the region have institutionalized tools for school leaders to engage in a process of reflection, planning and action to achieve equitable education for all.

2 Six countries in the region have roles in disability-inclusive education implementation embedded in the mandate of key departments and offices in the Ministry of Education.

3 Vertical coordination mechanisms strengthen inclusive education implementation.

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Family, Community Engagement and Partnerships

1 **Policies are facilitative of family and community engagement**, but only some countries are able to translate these policies into working mechanisms of coordination.

3 Although engagement with development partners, OPDs and CSOs is strong in almost all countries in the region, **technical capacity on inclusive education remains a concern.**

2 **Development partners are key in driving inclusive education initiatives across the region**, but initiatives could be better coordinated.

4 **There are promising initiatives to include families, caregivers and children with disabilities in decision-making processes at local levels**, but there is limited evidence on national-level policymaking and programming.

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Awareness, Attitudes and Practices

1 **Most countries include disability awareness raising in their policy framework**, and in more than half of the countries, this is leading to strategic communication plans on disability-inclusive education.

2 **Strengthening research and evidence base can improve C4D programming.**

3 **Lack of awareness and negative attitudes on disability and inclusive education still exist** and unique country-specific belief systems require a specialized approach.

4 It is likely that **negative attitudes of teachers towards teaching children with disabilities are rooted in limited pedagogical capacities and knowledge** on disability-inclusive education.

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Approaches to Educating Children with Disabilities

1

All countries provide special education for specific types of disabilities, often for children with visual and hearing impairments.

2

Alternative paths to education were established to give children with disabilities more opportunities for learning. However, without clear plans to transition to inclusion, initiatives risk promoting segregation.

3

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) initiatives show commitment to inclusive skills education training.

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Education Work Force Development and Teacher Training

1 Across South Asia, **international aid agencies contribute to improving the capacity of governments, school leaders and teachers** in adopting disability-inclusive approaches to teaching and learning

2 **Inclusive education is beginning to be integrated into pre-service curricula and programmes across the region.**

3 **Governments across the region give emphasis to building the strength of in-service teachers to teach children with disabilities.**

4 Despite the training available for teachers, the literature shows that in all the countries in the region, **teachers still lack the confidence and skills needed to teach diverse learners.**

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School Environment and Infrastructure

1

Disability-inclusive classroom construction and upgrading of school buildings and facilities increase access and participation of children with disabilities.

2

Standards for safe schools were developed in most countries in the region.

3

Legislative frameworks on the protection of children against violence exist in the region, but implementation could be strengthened.

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Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

1

Ongoing curricular reforms and innovations provide opportunities for improved inclusion of children with disabilities.

2

Restructuring of national assessment frameworks and systems aims to measure learning outcomes.

3

Promoting differentiation and child-centred approach to teaching and learning is key to inclusion.

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Learning Materials

1

Civil sector partnerships were forged to develop accessible teaching and learning materials.

2

Upgrading learning materials and improving textbook development standards facilitate inclusive teaching and learning.

3

Assistive devices and leveraging technology increase learning opportunities.

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Support Services for Students, Parents and Teachers

1 Development partners support governments in delivering early identification and intervention services to children with disabilities and families.

2 Early childhood education programmes are present in all countries, but participation of children with disabilities remains low.

3 Community-based rehabilitation programmes provide access to essential services.

4 Social support schemes for children with disabilities are present in all countries, and some countries have targeted support for girls with disabilities.

Supply

Measuring and Monitoring Quality

1

School quality standards in the region encourage inclusive practice by integrating indicators facilitative of inclusion.

2

Monitoring mechanisms for disability-inclusive indicators and quality assurance of disability-inclusive programmes have been developed, although the extent of the data gathered and their utilization vary among the countries.

3

Involvement of OPDs in monitoring and evaluation strengthens their role in advocating for the rights of children with disabilities for equitable education.

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Gender and Humanitarian Issues

1

Initiatives have been taken to improve gender parity in education across the region. Improving gender-specific sanitation facilities in schools appears to be the most common intervention as it encourages more girls and female teachers to attend school.

2

In the majority of countries, children with disabilities are targeted in the education response to COVID-19.

3

Minimum standards for education in emergencies have been adopted in some countries to ensure safety in schools.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Key Recommendations

For governments

1. Strengthen legislative frameworks and increase accountability.

2. Increase investments towards inclusive education.

3. Improve data on children with disabilities.

4. Apply universal design in teaching and learning, including infrastructure.

5. Strengthen institutional capacity for inclusive education implementation. Increase focus on supporting teachers and raising teacher quality.

6. Improve coordination and partnerships and increase opportunities for learning among and within countries.

7. Raise awareness and understanding of disability and inclusion.

8. Include learning continuity for children with disabilities in COVID-19 response and recovery plans and programmes.

9. Ensure gender equality.

10. Set achievable strategic goals.

For civil society and development organizations

1 Continue advocating for disability-inclusive education.

2 Direct programming and funding towards inclusive education.

3 Strengthen institutional capacity.

4 Create communities of practice.

For further research

1 Analyse financing and expenditure on disability inclusion.

2 Build evidence of good practice.

3 Research knowledge, attitudes and practices towards disability.

4 Conduct a mapping study on the accessibility of learning environments.

5 Research the recruitment, training and impact of teachers with disabilities in disability-inclusive education.

Thank you.

For questions, feedback or more information,
please contact us at info@beyondeduc.org