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Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

Policy

2 ADVOCACY GUIDE

Promoting Inclusive Teacher Education

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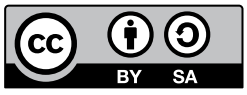

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Introduction

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.[1] 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,

1 Lall, M. 2007. A Review of Concepts from Policy Studies Relevant for the Analysis of EFA in Developing Countries. Create Pathways to Access – Research Monograph No. 11. London, Institute of Education.

state, provincial and local levels – including at the level of individual teacher education 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.[2] 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.

2 UNESCO. 2009. Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education. Paris, UNESCO, p. 14.

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
5. Satisfaction with the policy.' (Reisman,[3] et al, 2007. p. 28)

In the process of analysis, it is necessary to examine the various aspects of the policy being considered. Table 1 contains a suggested framework[4] 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.

3 Reisman, J., Gienapp, A. and Stachowiak, S. 2007. *A Handbook of Data Collection Tools: Companion to 'A Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy.'* Organizational Research Services.

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; and
- 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[5]

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.

5 UNESCO. 2012. Regional Expert Meeting Report: Inclusive Education through Quality Teacher Education in Asia-Pacific. Bangkok, UNESCO.

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.

6 UNESCO. 2012. *Regional Expert Meeting Report: Inclusive Education through Quality Teacher Education in Asia-Pacific.* Bangkok, UNESCO.

7 UNESCO. 2011. *Follow-up Review of Primary Teachers' Training Program in Bangladesh – Final Report.* Bangkok, UNESCO.

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[8]

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 50 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'.

8 Adapted from: Ramachandran, V. 2001. 'Community Participation in Primary Education.' Innovations from Rajasthan. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol – XXXVI, No. 25, June 23, 2001.

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.[9] Further, a 'market driven' approach tends to value education solely for its potential economic benefits[10] 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.[11] 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*;
- Viewing education as primarily a means of achieving economic gains, rather than valuing and promoting education's potential social benefits;

9 Colclough, C. 1993. Who should learn to pay? An assessment of neo-liberal approaches to education policy, in Colclough, C. and Manor, J. (eds). *States or Markets?: Neo-Liberalism and the Development Policy Debate.* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

10 Rizvi, F. and Lingard, B. 2006. Globalization and the Changing Nature of the OECD's Educational Work. In Lauder, H., Brown, P., Dillabough, J., and Halsey, A. H. (eds). *Education, Globalization and Social Change.* Oxford, Oxford University Press. Robertson, S. L. 2005. Re-imagining and rescripting the future of education: global knowledge economy discourses and the challenge to education systems. Comparative Education, 41:2, pp. 151-70.

11 For analysis of the negative impacts of 'market driven' approaches to education policy on teachers, see, for example: Vongalis, A. 2004. Global Education Policy Directives: Impact on Teachers from the North and South. *International Education Journal.* 5(4), pp. 488-501.

- 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; and
- 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*.

What is the advocacy message?	Who needs to hear this?	How could you convey this message in your own context?*
"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	

*Insert your own ideas based on the advice given in *Advocacy Guide 1*

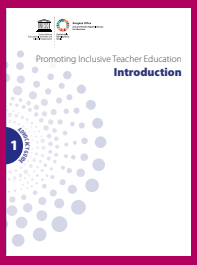
What is the advocacy message?	Who needs to hear this?	How could you convey this message in your own context?*
"Ministries of education and teacher education institutions need to review and align policies – and develop new policies when necessary – to support a comprehensive approach to inclusive education 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*

What is the advocacy message?	Who needs to hear this?	How could you convey this message in your own context?*
"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

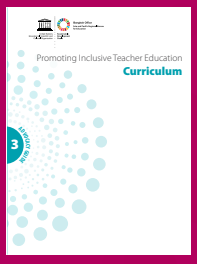


Advocacy Guide 1: Introduction

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.

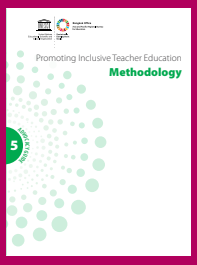


Advocacy Guide 3: Curriculum

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.

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