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**The Significance of Inclusive Education for Promoting Equality and Social Justice**


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**Abstract**

Inclusive education represents a fundamental shift in the way educational systems respond to learner diversity and social inequality. Rather than viewing difference as a deficit, inclusive education emphasizes the recognition, respect, and accommodation of diverse abilities, identities, and social backgrounds within mainstream educational settings. This paper offers a theoretical exploration of inclusive education as a key instrument for promoting equality and social justice. It examines how inclusive education aligns with human rights principles and challenges long-standing structures of exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination in schooling. Drawing upon conceptual frameworks such as equity, social justice, the social model of disability, and culturally responsive pedagogy, the study highlights the role of education in reshaping power relations and fostering democratic participation. Inclusive education is discussed not merely as a policy mandate but as a transformative practice that enhances access, participation, and a sense of belonging for all learners. By addressing systemic barriers related to disability, culture, language, gender, and socio-economic status, inclusive education contributes to more just and equitable learning environments. The paper argues that the success of inclusive education depends on sustained policy commitment, institutional accountability, and collaborative engagement among educators, families, and communities. Ultimately, inclusive education is positioned as a vital pathway toward achieving social cohesion, equality, and long-term educational justice.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education; Social Justice; Equality; Equity; Diversity; Human Rights; Educational Inclusion

**1. Introduction**

Inclusive education has gained significant attention and been adopted as the primary model for ensuring education for all, especially those with disabilities. Normative discussions increasingly assert its relevance for promoting equality and social justice, highlighting its potential to narrow disparities and affirm diverse identities. Significant global commitments to inclusion have further elevated its profile, establishing it as an indispensable aspect of policy initiatives throughout the education sector. Despite high-profile endorsements, the relationship between inclusive education and equality is poorly conceptualised and often poorly articulated. Inclusive education can be interpreted as a human right, an entitlement to be admitted to mainstream educational systems and institutions. Yet, equality remains an elusive term, with little agreement concerning its scope, meaning, or applicability to schools. This warrants a closer examination of inclusive education in conjunction with conceptions of equality, equity, and social justice (Rangarajan & Subramanyam 2025). Education occupies a significant place in national and international policy and reform agendas. Inclusive education is enshrined in numerous legal, regulatory, and policy documents; explicitly relates to diverse learners, disadvantaged communities, and under-resourced schools; and commands attention across the educational community, including school leaders, teacher educators, pre-service teachers, instructional designers, curriculum officials, and educational specialists. Inclusive education also encompasses

considerable theoretical interest and study, addressing key stakeholders and pertinent design constructs for inclusive policy formulation. Expanding appreciation of the breadth of educational and curricular designs encompassed within inclusive education and enhancing understanding of content-type-specific distinctions may prove beneficial for achieving socially desirable educational goals and objectives, particularly in a digital age where non-traditional content-types periodically outstrip the weight of traditional-styled syllabus design documents. (Mahlo, 2013)

## 2. Conceptual Foundations of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education embraces a broad conception of educational access and participation that incorporates learners' diverse backgrounds, presentations, identities, and needs. For many, exclusion and marginalization at school persist throughout life. People are assigned to or self-identify with particular categories, such as disability, language, gender, ethnic or racial group, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation, and their experiences of access, participation, and achievement often reflect those categories.

A framework in universal design for learning proposes multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression for curriculum and instruction that take learner variability into account. Within critical pedagogy, the cultural reproduction and critical education paradigms view the educational system as serving the interests of dominant groups. The former approach seeks only to change curricular material, whereas the latter views empowerment as the ultimate goal. The social model of disability argues that systemic barriers create disadvantage, framing adjustments to those barriers as the most effective form of support. These frameworks provide complementary lenses for understanding how inclusive education can promote access, participation, and achievement for diverse learners (Mahlo, 2013).

### 2.1. Definitions and scope

Inclusive education remains a contested concept. Some define it as a process of addressing and responding to a wide diversity of needs in schools. Others restrict its scope to the integration of specific categories of students into regular classrooms. Some advocate for systemwide deployment of scarce resources, while others argue for direct support to the individual student at the point of learning. Such disagreements regarding definition, purpose, and implementation reflect more fundamental tensions connected with the political economy of educational reform. These tensions are only partially captured in the debate about models. A larger philosophical discourse interrogates equity, equality, special needs, individuality, collective social arrangements, and the intersection of social and cultural awareness with both individual agency and the explicit structural constraints that shape formation, curricular construction, and celebratory norms—equally recognized as forces within a neoliberal state apparatus (Mahlo, 2013).

The analysis also follows through on the meaning of inclusion when viewed through a cultural and social-definition lens, identified as limiting or enabling, and when grounded in the underlying intent of an inclusive stance towards recognizing and honouring the socially constructed and negotiated nature of both culture and society (Gale, 2001). A widely quoted enumeration of the fundamental, core, or substantive principles governing inclusion holds that it must be equitable, multifaceted, and contextual, yet not all of the principles thus articulated capture the character of inclusion equally well. Such axioms appear also to be constitutive of equity and social justice as they show up on one's analytical radar, and they arguably miss the orientation of preserving, enhancing, and celebrating culturalized being, culturally real situatedness, and culturally characterized commonwealth that characterize an enabling stance.

### 2.2. Theoretical frameworks for inclusion

Theoretical frameworks for inclusion enhance the understanding and application of inclusive education. Four key frameworks are particularly relevant: universal design for learning (UDL), the social model of disability, critical pedagogy, and contrasting perspectives on cultural reproduction and empowerment.

Universal design for learning proposes flexible approaches to curriculum design that anticipate and accommodate individual learning differences. UDL provides a framework for developing educational programs and policies that respond to diverse individual needs. Barriers to learning arise at the intersections of the person's characteristics and the learning environment. UDL addresses barriers by presenting information in multiple ways that align with a learner's modalities, offering choices and alternatives in the means of expression, adjusting the degree of difficulty, and facilitating motivation through engagement. An understanding of UDL clarifies how curricula and assessments might reinforce or hinder inclusive education (Hossain, 2021).

The social model of disability distinguishes between impairment (the physical condition) and disability (social barriers that impede participation). Within the education sector, the notion of reasonable accommodation promotes the removal of barriers on the grounds of disability. A social model of disability enables educational leaders to rethink notions of barrier-free education in respect to other vulnerabilities—including race, social economic status, language, and culture. Even once disability-related impediments are removed, however, other barriers may persist.

Critical pedagogy champions dialogue and the transformation of the relationship between student and teacher, thereby promoting critical consciousness and civic agency. It raises awareness of how social institutions reproduce rather than eliminate inequality, oppression, and domination. Students are prepared to disrupt normative discourses and dominant paradigms that reinforce everyday inequalities and injustices. Mentoring and participatory approaches encourage young people belonging to marginalised groups to engage and influence discourses that shape their lives.

Perspectives on cultural reproduction and empowerment vary widely. The former stresses how the education system transmits dominant cultural norms; the latter regards schooling as a means for students to explore, celebrate, and affirm their own diverse identities. These alternative frameworks illuminate the extent to which pedagogical practices align with an inclusive agenda and indicate the kinds of change necessary to reinforce the equitable sharing of opportunities.

### 3. Historical and Policy Context

Educational exclusion has a history as long as formal education itself. Segregated programmes for learners with disabilities were first established in the late 18th century, when social movements began to advocate for the inclusion of those previously treated as uneducable (Mahlo, 2013). Laws mandating the establishment of special schools began to appear in the United States and Europe in the early 19th century. The application of exclusionary principles expanded in the 20th century to include race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, gender, and religion. Even with international advancements in civil and human rights during the second half of the century, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), restrictive policies and curricula continued to thwart inclusive education for innumerable learners in countless contexts.

The inclusive movement for equity in education surfaced in the UK and USA during the 1970s. However, inclusion remained limited to discussions of race and special education until the 1990s. The 1990 adoption of the World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs (UNESCO, 1990) catalysed the global effort. The 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education reinforced this call for inclusion. The last decade has witnessed a further evolution of inclusive education towards a more comprehensive vision grounded in equity, diversity, and social justice. The call for inclusive education has been echoed in national governments, supranational organizations, and civil society sectors. Many countries have enacted formal legislation and policy documents endorsing inclusive education and securing necessary resources.

#### 3.1. Evolution of inclusive education worldwide

The evolution toward inclusive education worldwide reflects a fundamental shift from exclusion to inclusion. To grasp the historical and policy context around this shift, it is important to trace early patterns of education for children with perceived disabilities. These patterns are marked by



segregation, abandonment, and exclusion. Following the Second World War, dependence on the medical model's classifications led to further categories being added rather than removing deficiencies from the classification list. The debate on expanding categories of disability and on labels remains unresolved and fuels divergent understandings of disabilities and inclusive education. Globally, the disability rights movement has exerted considerable pressure for inclusive schooling. Many international agreements, treaties, and national policies call for inclusion, but measures vary profoundly and often remain weak. Inclusion thus attracts broad support while curricular and pedagogical issues receive scant attention (Mahlo, 2013).

A solid framework has emerged that illustrates how inclusive education contributes to responses to diverse student needs. In this framework, inclusion encompasses the highest aspiration of a society, equality, and the commitment to equity. The distinction among equality, equity, and social justice finds articulation in a complementary framework that connects the terms to the very concepts of inclusive education. Inclusion entails embracing every student; orientation toward equality and inclusion shapes curricular decisions and pedagogical approaches; equity broadens the conceptual horizon even further, calling attention to issues of language, culture, race, and socioeconomic status; still wider compass, social justice reframes matters of power in terms of inclusive education, raising fundamental questions about authority, decision-making, and agency itself. Inclusive education, therefore, emerges at the confluence of different historical, theoretical, and policy streams linked to broad goals of social transformation and the promotion of justice.

### **3.2. Policy instruments and mandates**

In addition to its foundational global frameworks and local institutional policies, inclusion is promoted through international, national, and local funding targeted at meeting the needs of marginalized learners and communities. Such funding often operates within systems of accountability that define specific governance structures, outline roles and responsibilities, and delineate monitoring and data-collection mandates to assess implementation progress and outcomes.

## **4. Mechanisms by Which Inclusive Education Promotes Equality**

Education is a fundamental human right for all individuals. Inclusive Education promotes equality by addressing issues of human rights, equity, and social justice. It aims to contribute to an inclusive society through a rights-based approach, making schools more just and non-discriminatory. Furthermore, the implementation of Inclusive Education requires changing systems that perpetuate power and exclusion. Disabled learners often experience intersectional subordination, highlighting the need for policies that combat discrimination and foster an inclusive environment (Mahlo, 2013).

### **4.1. Access and participation**

Despite progress, children with disabilities remain at a disproportionate risk of exclusion from the general education system, with many still being schooled in special education facilities segregated from their peers. The 2030 Agenda urges countries to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Accommodating diverse learning requirements—by removing obstacles to access and participation—represents a core strategy for achieving inclusive education. This section documents developments and interventions related to enrollment and attendance, as well as physical, material, and technological accommodations.

Progress on access and participation remains uneven across jurisdictions, and barriers persist for diverse students. An inclusive approach thus requires addressing the educational opportunities of under-represented groups. Children with disabilities continue to be substantially over-represented among students excluded from the overall educational system (Mahlo, 2013). Empirical data on access and participation in additional marginalized categories, such as ethnic and linguistic minorities, indicates limited engagement in mainstream programs. Many countries still operate legislative frameworks exempting specific categories of learners from participation in mainstream schooling.

Cree communities in northern Quebec exemplify the intersection of language and access to mainstream education. To foster inclusion, teaching practices must recognize pupils' first languages and promote instructional routines aligned with students' everyday lives. Addressing such contextual aspects materially influences learner participation across various settings. Efforts also remain necessary to secure affordable and equitable access to child care, early childhood education, and other complementary programs.

#### **4.2. Academic and non-academic outcomes**

Inclusive education enables all learners to participate in and contribute to their communities, mitigating marginalization and exclusion (Cara, 2013). Inclusive policies enhance both access to and participation in quality education for diverse communities and promote academic, physical, social, and emotional well-being. Inclusion positively influences academic and non-academic outcomes through its effects on learner engagement, self-efficacy, overall well-being, and graduation from education and training programs.

Academic outcomes include achievement and engagement in educational programs. Inclusive education enhances the achievement of learners with disabilities by improving engagement. Comparisons of full-inclusion models with exclusive provision of resource-room support reveal positive impacts on the academic engagement and overall well-being of primary-school learners designated for special education. The proportion of primary-school learners enrolled in general education influences the academic engagement of those still in segregated settings, with the meta-analysis noting small but significant average correlations at the primary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. Higher peer-academic-ratio scores, indicating a greater percentage of peers in academically high-achieving categories, positively affect the academic engagement of secondary-school learners with intellectual or learning disabilities in general-education programs.

Relationship building and the development of a sense of belonging enhance the self-efficacy, security, and well-being of learners with disabilities. Inclusive settings foster social connections among learners, motivating participation and learning. Higher engagement in educational programs correlates positively with self-efficacy and well-being; for postsecondary students, social connectedness with peers is positively associated with academic success and early-task commitment in classroom settings. The achievement and participation of primary-school learners with mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities improves under full inclusion, where friendships develop from initial peer relations; together with peer-tutoring arrangements, this contributes to overall well-being.

#### **4.3. Social integration and identity**

The social component of inclusion encompasses aspects such as the development of friendships and peer relationships, participation in social activities, and the sense of belonging that a student experiences (Mahlo, 2013). It has been widely documented that students with disabilities who are educated in fully inclusive settings have significantly more opportunities to establish and maintain friendships with their peers compared to their segregated counterparts. Alongside interpersonal relationships, the choice of where to learn also strongly shapes the child's identity as a student. When schools lack inclusive education approaches and disable students exist in parallel systems, children's social integration, learning fields and possibilities of favorable self-identification with disability remain constrained.

### **5. Equity, Diversity, and Cultural Responsiveness**

An inclusive education addresses multiple dimensions of diversity and considers the intersectionality of various social identities. Inclusive education, when aligned with internationally recognized principles, promotes attention to equity and social justice for diverse populations. Despite a commitment to inclusion, schools around the world continue to face deep-seated barriers that contribute to exclusionary classroom practices. Inclusive education can still play a central role in the continued pursuit of a more equitable and just education and remains a priority in light of various ongoing global challenges. Prioritizing inclusion represents an effective approach for addressing

critical issues and matters of equity that continue to affect many school systems worldwide (Ainscow, 2016).

A commitment to equity requires attention to various aspects of identity and belonging, including disability, race and ethnicity, gender, language, and socioeconomic status. Within educational contexts, disability-based exclusion frequently intersects with systemic forms of oppression that target already marginalized cultural, linguistic, and racial groups. Excluded groups disproportionately affected by deep-rooted patterns of societal inequity and injustice experience an extra layer of disadvantage when they also fall into the category of persons with disabilities (Berryman et al., 2015).

### **5.1. Addressing intersectionality**

Disability and disadvantage can overlap with other dimensions of diversity, resulting in compounded barriers and increased marginalization. Studies indicate that students with disabilities who also belong to already disadvantaged groups—such as ethnic minorities, refugees, or economically disadvantaged families—experience additional exclusion, lower educational attainment, and poorer health than their peers with disabilities (Mahlo, 2013).

### **5.2. Culturally sustaining pedagogy in practice**

People's languages and cultures should be sustained — not merely acknowledged, a perspective best embraced through culturally sustaining pedagogy. A pedagogical orientation that values and responds to the pluralism of students' lived realities, historically marginalized languages, and critical race consciousness is known as culturally sustaining pedagogy. While culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on sociocultural competencies and upholding culturally relevant knowledge, culturally sustaining pedagogy pushes the boundaries of inclusionary forces as it draws insight from students' different ways of being and knowing. In fact, this very approach aims to implement curricula and pedagogies that not only respond to particular cultural elements but also exhibit a commitment to counteracting dominant socio-political structures that facilitate the marginalization of various students. Consequently, culturally sustaining pedagogy asserts that students should maintain, develop, and challenge essential cultural practices not only while in school but also throughout society, thus aiding curriculum that encourages exploration of counter-hegemonic knowledge and political action (Berryman et al., 2015).

## **6. Strategies for Effective Inclusive Practice**

Inclusive education responds to the general need to transform prevailing education practices to meet a diverse array of educational needs. This problem is especially pressing where a legacy of exclusion has created deep-rooted inequities. Many different approaches have been conceptualised to address such issues. The following strategies are consistent with contemporary approaches to inclusion yet retain flexibility to reflect different local contexts, systems, and policy priorities. Firstly, a key condition for transforming educational contexts is increasing access to learning opportunities, which is often linked to curriculum design and adaptation. The incorporation of universal design for learning (UDL) offers the potential of reaching a larger number of previously unaccounted learners, considered through the lens of more flexible materials, formats, and goals (Mahlo, 2013). Addressing the broader, complex determinants of academic success requires additional, systematic means of intervention that move beyond solely curriculum-related measures and materials. A complementary strategy incorporating differentiated instruction (DI) calls for a wider range of offers and options.

DI acknowledges that wide-ranging diversity can be found across an entire class, school population, or education system; it further acknowledges that the complementary range often also extends beyond many of the demographic characteristics most commonly recorded or reported (Tichá et al., 2018). While numerous action plans and initiatives have been trajectory-focussed for extended periods, progress nevertheless remains starkly uneven. Some jurisdictions and systems have matured to higher-order progression stages, extending into inclusion-orientated global or international (and/or transnational) priorities. Others continue to reflect elementary education access considerations in both

supply-driven availability and remaining rights-based nondiscrimination. Even the most able and successful all-rounders can experience challenges; frequent transitions or interruptions (e.g. health, personal, family) across school systems and sectors, even where improving advance opportunities or provision, can nonetheless still lead to residual or reverted regression.

### 6.1. Curriculum adaptation and universal design for learning

The curriculum must be flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of learning materials, formats, and approaches that lend themselves to adaptation for individual learners' needs and preferences. Providing resources in multiple formats—presentation (text, audio, video), representation (digital, print, free/reduced cost), and technology-support (read-aloud, dictionaries)—further increases accessibility. Varying the nature and degree of anticipated learner outcomes enables students to participate actively without requiring one-size-fits-all modifications (M. Dalton et al., 2012).

Universal design for learning (UDL) promotes equitable learning opportunities by emphasizing flexible instructional materials, adaptable learning goals, and multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. Because all learners differ, the curriculum and approach must remain adaptable throughout the educational process and respond to changing needs (A. McKenzie & M. Dalton, 2020).

### 6.2. Differentiated instruction and supports

Inclusive education encompasses a myriad of approaches to teaching and learning that promote access, equity, and participation for all learners in the general-education environment (Mahlo, 2013). Further, it calls for supporting the diverse needs of students within school systems—regardless of cultural identification, language, gender, or disability—so that they remain connected to the regular education experience (Kumar, 2021). While provision of appropriate supports has been called the operational imperative of inclusive education, actual implementation has, in many cases, fallen short of the expectation that curricula, materials, methods, and assessments should be universally designed. Consequently, differentiated instruction remains both a practical approach and a continuing challenge.

Mahlo and Kumar (2021) underscore the importance of providing individualized support and a variety of instructional techniques. An internationally recognized approach that guarantees equitable access, UDL combines universal principles and criteria for the design of individualized curricula to enable underserved students—those at risk and those with disabilities—to benefit from school and improve their educational prospects. By stressing flexible methods, a wider spectrum of goals, and a more ample selection of tools, UDL encourages wider student participation, increases the likelihood of persistent engagement, and diminishes educational loss.

### 6.3. Collaboration among stakeholders

Inclusive education requires collaboration and commitment among several stakeholders: families, educators, students, the community, and policymakers. Each stakeholder has a unique role to play that complements those of the others. Families provide students with emotional support, which contributes to their self-regulation and enhances their learning. Participating students provide insights that are key to the inclusion of all learners. Educators address individual student needs and link students to resources, while the community provides supportive services and the broader educational system promotes equity. Sustainable inclusive education mandates the active involvement of all stakeholders to support diverse learners throughout their acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and protocols.

Families are critically important to inclusive education. Their involvement improves student attendance and academic progress, especially among learners with learning disabilities (Mahlo, 2013). Students also play a vital role. Their participation ensures that those strategies and supports that students perceive as promoting their inclusion are in fact the ones that influence their engagement and progress. As children grow older, community agencies begin sharing the responsibility of



supporting families, educators, and learners. These agencies strengthen communities by providing a web of essential collaborative Anchor supports. They also facilitate access to community and student services, equipment, materials, and funding. Community involvement in education has positive effects on student achievement and enhances social cohesion.

## 7. Implications for Policymaking and Educational Reform

The concept of inclusive education rests on a commitment to equality and social justice, defining an educational system that accommodates and responds to diversity (Mahlo, 2013). Educational policy tends to rely upon a narrow view of inclusion that fails to consider the multiple dimensions of diversity — the interrelation of race, culture, gender, language, socio-economic status, and disability reinforcing a discourse focused exclusively on access. This is inadequate for educating children fully and is ineffective in promoting the principles of equality and social justice. Education plays a fundamental role in shaping diversity, culture, and identity. Equal access to education alone is not sufficient to promote human rights, equitable participation, and full engagement in the social, economic, and cultural spheres of life. Inclusive education is initially conceived at the plant and agricultural level. It becomes a set of professional practices implemented in the educational sector to extend the concept of inclusive education to other sectors and levels of society.

Within education, attention must turn from mere access and the widening of school population numbers to the quality of education, the right to learn, and failure and success. Further development of the concept of inclusive education diverges into two separate but interconnected processes: transforming educational institutions and their governance systems into more inclusive ones and eliminating all forms of barriers to learning and participation. Accommodating all forms of diversity and enabling all individuals and groups, irrespective of their position, to enjoy the right to quality learning opportunities becomes indispensable. Despite intensifying global commitment to inclusive education, a substantial number of children are still excluded entirely or from certain aspects of the education system, disabled children still attend segregated schools, and general education systems continue to lay emphasis on some learners and not others.

Understanding the implications of these developments for public policy is crucial to realizing the vision of inclusive education and full citizenship within society. Research indicates a significant impact — positive or negative — of public policy on efforts to implement the vision articulated in the Salamanca Statement of 1994. As a prerequisite to the transition from typical to effective inclusive practices, the governance structure of education systems, the distribution of powers, the framework within which policy is formulated and evaluated, the flow of public resources from central authorities to educational institutions, and the modes of monitoring and accountability all warrant consideration and exploration.

### 7.1. Governance, funding, and accountability

Governance, funding, and accountability are key leverages for inclusive education to contribute to the equality and social justice aims. Seven governance models regulate the provision of services and adoption of policies with respect to inclusive education: nationalization, federalism, decentralization, privatization, public-private partnership, deconcentration, and transnationalization (Mahlo, 2013) that provide different incentive structures.

The governance and accountability mechanisms are designed to enforce the implementation of inclusive education in order to enhance participation of under-privileged individuals and groups (Kay Kelley, 2016). Specific governance mechanisms are established to define and reshape the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholder from Ministry level (governance structure) to school level (Arteaga & Knaul, 2015; Mijs, 2016). It's important to ensure the alignment in between the structure of the governance model adopted and the other education monitoring and accountability mechanism.

### 7.2. Professional development and teacher preparation



Educators play a foundational role in inclusive education. Consequently, professional development (PD) and teacher preparation are crucial for promoting inclusive teacher practices (Triviño-Amigo et al., 2022). Teachers need diverse competencies to support inclusive education, including valuing diversity, high expectations, teamwork, and professional growth. Curricula should thus balance attitudes and values with knowledge, accompanied by practical training in inclusive settings to boost self-efficacy and foster positive attitudes toward students with disabilities. Ongoing PD and support are essential, especially for novice teachers and those who perceive insufficient preparation. Addressing teacher well-being and working conditions is also critical for effective inclusive education. Establishing systems to monitor teacher preparation and providing continuous training will help meet international commitments such as the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and sustainable development goals promoting inclusive education.

### 7.3. Monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement

Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential for optimizing and sustaining inclusive education systems. Countries committed to inclusion must invest in mechanisms that enable the systematic collation, reporting, and sharing of data on practice and impact. Indicators of engagement, participation and achievement, and the analyses and progress reported will vary according to local priorities, context, and capacity. Countries and systems seeking to build a comprehensive picture of inclusion might consider monitoring the elements set out below.

Where feasible, and at the earliest opportunity, baseline data should be collected on enrolment, attendance and participation (with suitable adjustments, where appropriate, for the local education context), and reported to different stakeholders (authorities, institutions, teachers, students, families, community). Tracking the attendance of children with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream or special settings and the extent to which reasonable accommodations—such as accessible infrastructure or material, technology, and curricula—are in place for the curriculum, pedagogies, and assessments is also fundamental. Several international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Mahlo, 2013), permit or advocate for exceptions to the formal definition of ‘inclusion’ among some groups of children.

## 8. Conclusion

Inclusive Education aims to contribute to a society based on human rights, equity, and social justice. Its implementation requires changing systems that perpetuate power and exclusion. The focus is on addressing social and educational injustice within educational environments, emphasizing the need for policies that promote inclusivity and non-discrimination.

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