USAID EDUCATION: ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

USAID works to ensure children and youth, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable, have access to quality education that is safe, relevant, and promotes their social well-being.

USAID believes that education is a foundational driver of development and fundamental to achieving self-reliance. When children and youth attend school and build skills they can use in the workforce and to navigate life, they are able to build more hopeful and prosperous futures for themselves, their families, communities, and countries. USAID works in more than 50 developing countries to ensure that investments in education systems—from pre-primary to higher education—enable all children and youth to acquire the education and skills needed to be productive members of society.

Approximately 50 percent of the 150 million children with disabilities worldwide are out of school; 90 percent of those have never been in school.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Despite worldwide improvements in access to education, millions of children and youth still lack access to quality learning opportunities. Even after being enrolled in educational programs, children and youth

with disabilities continue to face inequities in receiving the full benefit of education. This is especially pronounced for women and girls with disabilities. USAID and its partners are working to bring education opportunities to these populations and address the barriers that prevent equity and inclusion for all children and youth.

Universal Design for Learning[1] principles inform USAID's holistic approach to educating students with disabilities and fostering learning outcomes—they support flexible learning environments that accommodate individuals with learning differences. They also influence many aspects of USAID's education programs such as formulation of policy, allocation of resources, training content for teachers, learning materials for students, support services, infrastructure, transportation, and assistive technologies.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

- In **Cambodia**, **Malawi**, and **Nepal**, USAID programming is addressing critical needs in the education system for students with disabilities. These include developing and using teaching and learning materials; screening, identifying, and referring children and youth with disabilities for services that enable greater access to and participation in school; and training teachers to better support these students in the classroom. In total, approximately 900,000 students—both with and without disabilities—will benefit from these programs.
- The Sign On For Literacy prize competition sought technology-based innovations to increase literacy for deaf children by providing greater access to sign languages, early grade reading materials, and reading instruction. One of the prize winners, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology, will develop open source software in the **Philippines** to enable communities to create literacy content in their country's local and national sign languages to be shared via an open-content digital library of folktales.
- In **Paraguay**, to raise awareness and public support for inclusive education, the USAID-funded Saraki Foundation launched an innovative communication strategy, "Who Trains Who?" It features students with and without disabilities and has the message that inclusive education benefits everyone—including students, teachers, parents, and entire communities. The project raises awareness of the need for an inclusive education system and develops and implements a pilot for inclusive education—including sports—in select public and private schools.
- In **Mali**, the Inclusive Education for Visually Impaired Primary School Children project supports the enrollment and retention of children who are blind or have low vision in primary education in four regions of Mali—Segou, Koulikoro, Gao, and the capital, Bamako. The project trains teachers on inclusive education so they can respond to the learning needs of all children, including those who are blind or low vision, and establishes demonstration schools, which will serve as replicable models for the rest of Mali. More than 250 students have benefitted from the program.

CONTACT

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Resources: https://www.edu-links.org/topics/disability-inclusive-education

[1]See USAID's Education Links website to learn more about Universal Design for Learning and access the Literacy For All toolkit:

https://www.edu-links.org/resources/universal-design-learning-help-all-children-read