

# Creating an Inclusive School – Week 1

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## 1. Introduction to Week 1



Figure 1 What makes a school 'inclusive'? Egerton primary school, [Kenya] in 2016

At least half of the world's 65-million children with disabilities of primary and lower secondary age are estimated to be out of school (Disabled World, 2020), compared to only 13% of their non-disabled peers (UNICEF, n.d.). A disproportionate number of disabled children are not therefore benefiting from education. Children with disabilities who are in school often experience difficulties as a result of a lack of facilities and expertise to support their learning.

This represents a significant waste of human resource and human potential. 'Inclusive education' involves finding ways to support all children to learn and so they can contribute to society as productive and caring adults. Creating an inclusive school is a process rather than a destination and this course offers a means to explore that process.

Within a school, people can work together to solve problems. As an organisation, the school will have access to other community organisations which can provide specialist support and training as required. The school will also have stakeholders such as care-givers and parents, the local community and the school management committee – all of which can contribute to creating an inclusive school by pooling their resources and efforts.

All schools are different and reflect the community that they serve and the context in which they are located. However, it is possible to identify the different features that an inclusive school in any context might have. This first week you will take an overview of what makes an inclusive school, and over the next three weeks you will investigate each aspect in more depth.

In this first week you will:

1. consider the features of an inclusive school, and some of the attitudes that need to be challenged;
2. you will also be introduced to the different aspects of creating an inclusive school, each of which will be examined in more depth in Weeks 2, 3 and 4. You will reflect on what is meant by 'school ethos' and how 'school cultures' are built (in preparation for Week 2)
3. reflect on your experiences of professional development, how effective it was and how it might be more effective (in preparation for Week 3)
4. consider how an inclusive school can be monitored and developed (in preparation for Week 3)
5. consider who the different stakeholders in a school might include (in preparation for Week 4)

### 1.1. Activities for week 1

Activity number	Title	Details	Time
1.1	The UNICEF Wave model	Revisit the UNICEF Wave model. Read a blog and focus on Wave 2.	20 mins
1.2	What makes an inclusive school?	Watch a video clip and reflect on the issues raised. Contribute a forum post.	20 mins
1.3	Features of an inclusive school	Read a document from UNICEF and relate it to a context with which you are familiar.	40 mins
1.4	Developing positive attitudes	Watch a short video or use the transcript provided. Reflect on some of the attitudes that prevail and how these can be challenged. Make a forum post and read others.	20 mins
1.5	Creating an inclusive ethos and culture	Reflect on a school that you are familiar with and examine the ethos. Contribute to a discussion on the forum.	40 mins
1.6	Professional development	Listen to Daniel talking about training. Reflect on your experiences of professional	40 mins

		development and contribute to a discussion on the forum.	
1.7	Monitoring inclusive schools	Reflect on the question ‘What makes an inclusive school?’ and identify one piece of evidence that would help a school that you are engaged with to monitor itself for inclusivity.	40 mins
1.8	Stakeholders	Download and skim-read a UNICEF booklet. Engage with one of the case studies.	40 mins
1.9	End of week quiz		

## 2. The UNICEF ‘Wave model’

The UNICEF Wave model of intervention provides a structured way of thinking about inclusive education. It is based on the premise that inclusive education is the responsibility of all teachers. *Inclusive teaching and learning*, focused on ‘Wave 1’ interventions – the things which all teachers can do to support all children in their classrooms. This course is about ‘Wave 2’ interventions – the things that teachers can do collectively to support inclusive education.

The focus here is therefore on the school. The first activity this week gives you the opportunity to revisit the model, this time focusing on Wave 2 interventions.

Activity 1.1 Feeling excluded

*Allow approximately 20 mins for this activity.*

[Read this blog post](#) about the Wave model and note at least three key points in your study notebook about the Wave 2 interventions.

Wave 2 interventions take place at a school level. They are the things that teachers and administrators can do when they work together. We asked Daniel and Lydia from the Kenya Institute of Inclusive Education KISE to tell us what they think is meant by an ‘inclusive school’. In the next activity, you will hear what they had to say.

Activity 1.2: What makes an inclusive school?

*Allow approximately 20 mins for this activity.*

Listen to what Daniel and Lydia from KISE have to say.

[View transcript](#) / [Download PDF](#)

As you listen, note down the features that they highlight.

Write down your responses to the following questions:

1. What is your reaction to what you have heard? Is there anything you would add if asked the same question?
2. Daniel highlights a number of what he calls 'soft skills'. What do you understand by 'soft skills'?
3. How does a school that you know make positive attitudes to inclusive education obvious to all those connected to the school?
4. Lydia suggests that an inclusive school will have a resource centre. Apart from the obvious provision of resources to support teaching, what other purpose does she suggest that it might serve? How does a school that you know meet the needs of students in this respect.

Contribute a short post on the course [Week 1 forum](#), describing two important features of an inclusive school and how they are put into action in a school that you know. These might be things highlighted by Lydia and Daniel, or things from your own experience. Note down any other contributions that you find interesting and respond to at least two.

### 3. The features of an inclusive school



Figure 2 Inclusive education in practice

UNICEF makes the following statements about inclusive education on [its website](#):

*Inclusive education means all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools. It means real learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded – not only children with disabilities, but speakers of minority languages too.*

*At the school level, teachers must be trained, buildings must be refurbished and students must receive accessible learning materials. At the community level, stigma and discrimination must be tackled and individuals need to be educated on the benefit of inclusive education.*

Daniel and Lydia highlight both physical aspects of an inclusive school, and also what Daniel refers to as the 'soft' aspects – attitudes, willingness to work collaboratively, people who deliberately seek information.

It is perhaps worth highlighting that some aspects of creating an inclusive school, such as building a resource centre, may sound daunting in view of the costs, but small changes can be made over time, which don't cost very much and make a significant impact.

A 'resource centre' for example, may start as a table or cupboard in a staff room, where teachers contribute resources they have made from local materials. Over time, as the number of resources grow, a space can be found in a room or the resource centre could be included in the school library. In an ideal world, this will also be a place where specialist resources are kept and where experts trained in specific special needs might use as a base if they visit the school. It could also be a place for volunteers from the community to visit. They could take on tasks such as organising and labelling the resources, repairing them if they are broken, or even helping children with reading.

Each school and its pupils are unique and it's important to recognise and remember this. The resource centre for your school, which benefits your specific mixture of pupils with and without disabilities, may look very different from a neighbouring school for this reason. You will need to identify the needs of your school's pupils and balance what you can realistically provide and achieve in terms of the space you have available, the teaching and support resources and the budget to cover what you require.

Activity 1.3: Features of an inclusive school

*Allow approximately 40 mins for this activity.*

Download the UNICEF publication [Inclusive Education](#). This booklet is a 'call to action' and sets out the implications of article 24 of the 'Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities'. Skim through the publication and note down anything of interest to you.

Look at the diagram on Page 4 which has 'Inclusive education' in the middle and five aspects of it highlighted in a circle.

For a school which you are familiar with, reflect on what each circle might represent in practice. In your notebook write down some aspects of inclusivity which that school does well and some which could be developed. For example: 'Cultural changes' includes 'respect for diversity and participatory learning'. The school might do well on the former, through a welcoming attitude, regular assemblies which celebrate diversity and some physical adaptations, but not have participatory learning embedded in its classroom teaching.

## 4. Attitudes to inclusion

One key feature of an inclusive school is a positive attitude to diversity from its teachers and administrators. This will help all learners to understand diversity and to value differences. In the next activity you will listen to Daniel explaining that some communities have unhelpful attitudes which stem from a lack of understanding of disabilities and what causes them.

The reasons for disabilities are numerous and complex, with many arising from difficulties at birth (WHO, 2018).

Misconceptions can be challenged by giving people the opportunity to interact and understand each other, rather than focus on difficulties and/or differences. Schools have a vital role to play in this respect.

## Activity 1.4 Developing positive attitudes

*Allow approximately 20 mins for this activity.*

Listen to Daniel talking about some of the attitudes that he has encountered towards children with disabilities. Listen from 0:50s to the end. (If you have completed the Inclusive Teaching and Learning course, you will already have listened to the first 50 seconds)

[View transcript](#) / [Download PDF](#)

As you listen, note down some of the attitudes he refers to.

Note down your responses to the following questions:

1. Where do attitudes like the ones that Daniel refers to come from?
2. How can they be challenged? Can you think of any examples from your own experience where unhelpful attitudes have successfully been challenged?

Make a short contribution to the [Week 1 forum](#). Either describe... a situation from your experience in which attitudes were successfully challenged or describe a situation where unhelpful attitudes caused a problem. It might be a single incident, or something that took place over time. Read the other contributions and note down any suggestions that you could use in your role as an educator.

## 5. Creating an inclusive school

Many unhelpful attitudes arise from being passed down the generations, ignorance or fear. Schools have a vital role to play in challenging negative attitudes to diversity by providing factual information; by modelling inclusive practices; and by providing learners with the opportunity to learn from, and about each other. The influence of an inclusive school extends beyond the physical building. This is shown in Figure 1.

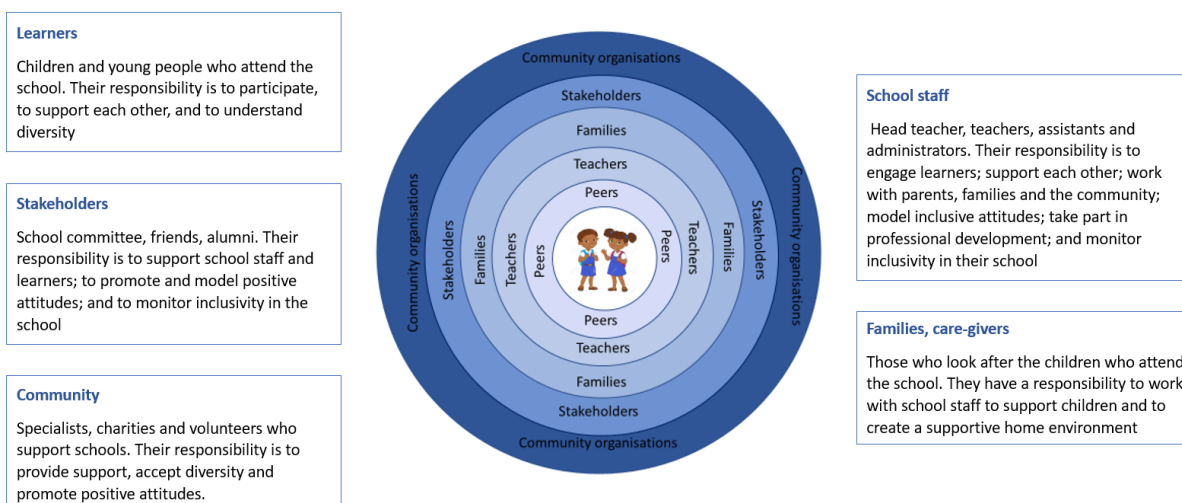


Figure 3: An inclusive school community

### Reflection point

Look carefully at Figure 1. The people in each layer have a role to play in creating an inclusive school, but they also have responsibilities. Reflect on the responsibilities of learners. What can adults do to help learners take on these responsibilities?

The remaining activities this week introduce three aspects of creating an inclusive school:

1. creating an inclusive ethos and culture;
2. developing as a learning organisation.
3. working with the community and stakeholders;

## 6. Creating an inclusive ethos

The 'ethos' of a school is determined by the values and attitudes of those that work there. This course takes the view that 'ethos' and 'culture' will mean different things to different people and cannot be imposed from outside. Rather, they 'emerge' from actions, roles and structures within the organisation. In Week 2, the focus will be on 'how' to create an inclusive ethos and culture which is seen as 'inclusive' by a wide range of people – what roles, policies, ways of working and structures are required? In Week 2 you will consider some examples, in detail.

Activity 1.5: Creating an inclusive ethos and culture

*You are advised to spend 40 mins on this activity*

Think about a school with which you are familiar. This might be where you work, where you have worked in the past, or a school that you support in some way, as a District Official or member of the Management Committee.

In your study notebook, write down what you know about the 'ethos' of that school. What are the 'lived values'? What do they celebrate? How are they perceived in the community?

Write down any roles, policies or ways of working that are evident in that school, that you think help create an inclusive ethos and culture. For example, there might be assemblies which celebrate the achievement of pupils, a dedicated 'head of inclusion', regular training for teachers, opportunities for parents to come into school.

Pick out two factors that you think are particularly effective in contributing to an inclusive ethos and culture and describe them on the [Week 1 forum](#). Comment on at least two other posts.

## 7. Developing as a learning organisation

Developing inclusive teaching practices and creating an inclusive school takes time. Teachers need support in bringing about change and access to professional development opportunities. Evidence suggest that this is more effective if it take place continuously, in the workplace and is

linked to practice. But that requires systems and processes to be in place. You will explore these in Week 3.

Week 3 will also focus on how to monitor a school for inclusivity, so that areas for further development can be identified. You will consider how school leaders and the school management committee will know if some of the systematic ways of working that were discussed in Week 2, are effective in creating an inclusive ethos. To create an inclusive school, the head teacher and school management committee need to be confident that new initiatives are working and if not, why not.

This quote is from some researchers working in Uganda (Okiror et al. 2017):

*Teachers are the people entrusted with the onus of manpower development and should not only be trained at the college level, but also be continuously supported, retooled, supervised, monitored and motivated for effective performance in a changing work environment. (p425)*

Activity 1.6 Professional development

*You are advised to spend 40 mins on this activity*

[View transcript](#) / [Download PDF](#)

1. Listen to Daniel talking about teacher training. Daniel works at the Kenya Institution for Special Education (KISE), which provides training for teachers who wish to specialise in teaching learners with particular needs, alongside in-service training. As you listen, note down the points that Daniel makes.
2. Think about in-service training that you have taken part in, or organised. Did it do what Daniel suggests? Write down the ways in which it could have been adapted to fit the model that Daniel describes. Are there any new roles, or ways of working that would need to be put in place in a school with which you are familiar?

On the [Week 1 forum](#) describe some professional development training that you have experienced that you felt was very effective and helpful, and made a difference to your practice. Say briefly why you found it helpful.

## 8. Monitoring Inclusivity

Creating an inclusive school should be regarded as a process that takes place gradually, over time. School leaders and teachers may try different initiatives, but then find that they don't work out quite as they anticipated and need adapting. By monitoring the effect of different initiatives and reflecting on why some ideas are more effective than others, organisations can learn.

Monitoring processes can be formal (achievement data, attendance, questionnaires, interviews, lesson observations) and informal (noticing, informal conversations with stakeholders, children's work). In Week 3 you will consider some of these processes in more detail.

Activity 1.7 Monitoring inclusive schools

*You are advised to spend 40 mins on this activity*



In Activity 1.2, you heard Lydia's and Daniel's responses to the question 'what makes an inclusive school?'

In your notebook, write your own response to this question.

For each of the features that you suggest, write down the extent to which that school was 'inclusive'. What evidence might you look for? Identify some formal evidence and some informal evidence that could be collected.

Thinking of a school that you are familiar with, write a post on the [Week 1 forum](#) highlighting one inclusive feature of that school and how you know. For example: Following some school-based teacher development, teachers used more participatory approaches in lessons. The evidence that this made a difference was that attendance improved.

## 9. Working with families, communities and stakeholders

"There are many ingredients to successful inclusive education from trained inclusive teachers and accessible schools, to the right kind of policies and action plans at national level, but without getting the support of the local communities, and changing attitudes where there is stigma about disabilities, there will never be true change." Julia McGeown, *Humanity Inclusion* (2020, p11)

When teachers meet children in class, they only see part of the story of the child's lives. The other people who interact with the children, will see a different side of them, and will know different things about them. What the teacher knows and can therefore use to support them in class, will depend on who they ask.

One teacher may have a different story from a classroom assistant, a parent, a friend or an expert. The teacher may not know that the child has domestic responsibilities, is feeling isolated with no friends, is ashamed of their body, misbehaves to avoid reading or loves to draw.

By working in teams, different expertise and information can be shared in order to support children who feel excluded for some reason. By working together, we are acknowledging that disabled and other children at risk of being excluded, face several connected barriers and that these may be intersectional in areas of marginalisation such as gender. In Week 4, you will look at a school as part of a wider community which draws on expertise from a range of organisations and stakeholders.

Activity 1.8 Stakeholders

*Allow approximately 40 mins for this activity*

UNICEF has produced many resources to support inclusive schools. [Download this booklet](#) about Parents, Family and Community Participation in Inclusive Education.

Read the example on Page 10 under the heading: Looking at Examples: the Cross-sectoral nature of inclusive education. As you read, note down all the organisations that are

involved in supporting Salim and helping Shirina in her work as a teacher in a school which welcomes all children.

Apart from parents, the School Management Committee and the District Education Officials (or equivalent in your country), can you think of examples of community-based teams or charities that work in your context and do, or could, provide support to schools. Make a list in your study notebook. You will return to this list in Week 4.

If you have time, skim through the rest of the booklet and note down anything of interest to you.

## 10. Summary

Complete the end of week quiz below.

## End of week quiz

For each of the following questions indicate whether it is 'true' or 'false'.

1. Some mild learning disabilities may be linked to birth difficulties
2. Learning disabilities are a result of poor parenting
3. Teachers need expensive specialist training at college in order to support children with disabilities
4. Children with disabilities are safest in special schools
5. Girls with disabilities are more likely to be out of school
6. Teachers cannot work as teachers if they have a disability
7. An effective inclusive school will be part of the community which it serves. Match the group with their responsibilities:

1. Learners	A. Those who look after the children who attend the school. They have a responsibility to work with school staff to support children and to create a supportive home environment
2. School staff	B. Specialists, charities and volunteers who support schools. Their responsibility is to provide support, accept diversity and promote positive attitudes.
3. Families and care-givers	C. Head teacher, teachers, assistants and administrators. Their responsibility is to engage learners; support each other; work with parents, families and the community; model inclusive attitudes; take part in professional development; and monitor inclusivity in their school
4. Stakeholders	D. Children and young people who attend the school. Their responsibility is to participate, to support each other, and to understand diversity
1. Community organisations	E. School management committee, friends, alumni. Their responsibility is to support school staff and learners; to promote and model positive attitudes; and to monitor inclusivity in the school

8. Select the best definition for 'school ethos'
  - A. What the school is like
  - B. A summary of the number of teachers, the number of students and how the school is organised
  - C. The lived attitudes and values of those who work in the school, which will be evident through the roles, policies and ways of working in the school
  - D. A summary of the exam results and attendance figures

## 11. Further reading

1. The Global Monitoring Report in 2020, focused on inclusive education. It sets out the scale of the problem, but also provides many inspiring case studies and examples of inclusive practices.

UNESCO <https://en.unesco.org/news/global-education-monitoring-gem-report-2020>

2. This blog highlights the disproportionate impact of the COVID19 pandemic on girls, and the steps being taken

<https://www.ukfiet.org/2021/facing-the-future-of-girls-education-for-the-covid-19-generation/>

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