



Inclusive Education Global Policy

**We teach the unreached by
including the excluded.**

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1. Introduction

Inclusion is at the core of United World Schools' mission to transform the lives of children through education. We believe that all children, including the most marginalised, should have access to quality¹ inclusive education. To achieve this, we work in some of the world's poorest regions, operating in remote communities to provide previously out-of-school (OOS) children with access to primary education. We work in areas where children have no access to a government education and where the local community is committed to sending their children to school. **We teach the unreached by including the excluded.**

OUR VISION: A world in which all children have the chance to go to school

OUR MISSION: To improve, through education, life opportunities for some of the world's poorest children living in remote and marginalised communities.

Our commitment to inclusive education

Inclusion is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners (UNESCO 2017).

We believe that inclusive education benefits all children. Inclusive education can deliver improvement in academic achievement, promote student wellbeing and unlock opportunities for further education and employment. The impact of inclusive education extends over generations, benefiting individual students and the communities in which they live. However, we recognise that not all children in communities served by UWS are able to go to school and learn. We commit to doing all we can, within the remit of successfully delivering the UWS mission, to reduce barriers to and within education and to support the children most at risk.

Policy Statement:

United World Schools is committed to providing quality inclusive primary education to all children within the communities it serves, while reducing the barriers *to* and *within* education for those most at risk of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement. We recognise that the hardest to reach children often face multiple layers of exclusion due to factors such as gender, disability, poverty, ethnicity, religion and language. We work with students, schools and communities to provide targeted support, and to ensure all children have the chance to participate and learn in a safe and stimulating environment.

The transition of UWS schools to the state education sector is a crucial part of our model. Creating a shared understanding and commitment to inclusive education within our communities, schools and local leadership is a key aspect of the transition process. Our goal is to create a culture of inclusive education that is sustained in the long term after UWS exits, whereby our schools are encouraged to remain as part of our network as 'Legacy Schools'. Our Legacy Schools create a community of practice, enabling schools to share ideas, resources and best practice to ensure the continuity of quality, inclusive education.

Our commitment to inclusion is underpinned by international goals and treaties, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on

¹ See appendix 2 for UWS' vision of quality education.



the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)² as well as the global goals set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This commitment is reflected in our Impact Model and Theory of Change, where we primarily address SDG 4 which calls for 'inclusive and equitable quality education' however we also work towards related goals where we contribute to the wider development of communities through promoting gender equality (goal 5) and reducing inequalities (goal 10).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to communicate United World Schools' commitment to inclusive education, establishing a clear approach, implementation procedure and guiding principles for our global programmes and schools to work towards. This is to ensure that all children in the communities we work with have equal opportunity to access quality inclusive primary education. It is also intended to clarify United World Schools' position on inclusive education to external stakeholders, supporters and other interested parties.

Scope

As a Global Policy, this policy applies to:

- a) United World Schools, including its headquarters in the United Kingdom and all of its country offices.
- b) All UWS personnel, including UWS staff, UWS School Teachers, trustees, temporary staff (e.g. consultants and contractors) and volunteers.
- c) All children enrolled within UWS schools.

United World Schools is committed to improving the participation and achievement of all children enrolled in UWS schools. Additionally, we recognise that some children within our communities face multiple barriers to education and remain out of school. We aim to improve the presence, participation and achievement of at risk groups by working with schools, communities and local governments to raise awareness, develop identification mechanisms and reduce stigma, stereotyping and discrimination.

Roles and responsibilities

Although all UWS personnel are expected to adopt the inclusive principles and implementation procedures outlined in this policy, the Senior Management Team (SMT)³ and Inclusive Working Group (IWG) are responsible for driving implementation and monitoring its impact. To achieve this, the IWG will:

- Maintain a minimum of six members, including at least: one Inclusive Education Lead; one staff member from each country (Inclusive Leads); and one member of the UK Programmes and the UK Fundraising teams respectively.
- Meet at least quarterly, and recommend targets, actions and training, to be approved by SMT. The IWG will report to the Board on the implementation of the policy annually.
- Work collaboratively with country offices to ensure priorities are aligned and challenges are considered. Inclusive Leads will report to and from IWG meetings and will support effective in-country implementation.-

² CRC (1989) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

CEDAW (1979), Article 10 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

CRPD (2007), Article 24 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crpd/pages/conventionrightspersonswithdisabilities.aspx>

³ In some contexts, SMT is referred to as Senior Leadership team (SLT)



2. Guiding principles for inclusion

We are guided by the core principles of inclusion within our programmes, communications and school practices to ensure the presence, participation and achievement of all students. We believe that inclusion is an ongoing process that benefits all.

Presence:

- We believe that all children have the right to a quality education and should have equal opportunity to access it.
- We recognise and try to reduce the barriers that exclude some children from attending.
- We work with families and local communities to improve enrollment, attendance and retention.
- We monitor children's attendance and seek ways to support those at risk of dropping out.

Participation:

- We work actively towards eradicating all forms of discrimination in our schools to ensure all children are treated equally in every aspect of school life.
- We ensure the safety of all children and empower them to speak out.
- We promote a positive ethos in schools, where differences between students are seen as opportunities to enrich learning, rather than as problems to be fixed.
- We support the wellbeing and personal development of all students and staff.
- We value the views and opinions of children, creating opportunities to promote student leadership and voice.
- We ensure the curriculum is accessible to staff and students, providing support to access the language of instruction.
- We monitor and support the progress of children who are not participating fully.

Achievement:

- We create a school environment that supports all students' learning, developing foundational skills (we teach children to read, write and count).
- We equip students with lifelong skills, focusing on transferable life skills and social-emotional learning.
- We make learning engaging and interactive, promoting new ways of teaching that encourage student collaboration and choice.
- We adapt teaching and learning to meet the different needs of students.
- We have high expectations for all, nurturing individual skills and talents and encouraging students to continue their education after primary school
- We design assessments to support the progress and achievement of all students.
- We monitor and support children who are underachieving.



3. Policy Implementation

The following section outlines key measures that UWS will implement to put policy into practice. It sets out UWS' approach and minimum expectations for integrating inclusion within its school practices, programmes and organisational culture. It allows country offices to tailor interventions to match their needs, priorities and country context. Our goal is to empower country offices, schools and communities to take ownership of inclusive education.

3a. Inclusive School Practices

By building schools in the heart of communities, UWS provides access to education to children living in remote, overlooked and underserved communities. Yet, we recognise that providing access is only part of the solution and that some students face particularly high barriers within education. Many children within our communities face multiple layers of exclusion due to factors such as gender, disability, poverty, ethnicity, religion and language.⁴ We regularly review our school practices to improve the presence, participation and achievement of all children. Additionally, we conduct research and analysis of the specific barriers that some children face in our communities. We use this information to adapt our practices and to design targeted interventions to support the most at risk children.

Working in accordance with national laws and policies on inclusion⁵, our school practices promote inclusive education through:

Working with local communities and governments

- We only work with communities that are willing to send both boys and girls to school.
- We support and develop teachers from within the community, strengthening local capacity to sustain quality inclusive education after transition.
- We empower local community leaders through forming School Support Committees (SSCs), amplifying their voices and fostering democratic decision-making.
- We launch inclusive awareness campaigns with families and communities to raise awareness of the rights of all children to go to school and learn and to address exclusionary norms.
- We work in partnership with local and national governments, to ensure our approach is in line with national priorities. We also advocate (and model) for improved quality and inclusion within the national education system.

Supporting the presence of students through our inclusive school model

- We reduce the financial burden associated with education by providing free education and by minimising indirect school costs.
- We promote gender parity in our schools, striving for gender balance with UWS teaching staff, SSCs and student enrollment numbers.
- We build small schools, called Community Learning Sites (CLS), in hard to reach areas to reduce barriers to access.

⁴ See appendix 4 for our guidance on at risk groups.

⁵ See appendix 3 for an overview of country policies and laws related to inclusion.



Developing inclusive school cultures and learning environments

- We ensure school environments are clean, tidy, appealing and conducive for learning
- We promote the health and wellbeing of our students by equipping schools with basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.
- We support the safety and dignity of girls by ensuring all latrines are gender-segregated.
- We consider Universal Design principles⁶, within the remit of our high impact/low cost model, in our school design and construction.
- We translate UWS policies (Inclusive Education and Child Protection Policies) into child-friendly school-based policies, building understanding and commitment to inclusion and the rights of all children with students, teachers and school leaders.
- We strive to integrate *UWS' Guiding Principles for Inclusion* within our schools to ensure our practices are in line with its core values.

Equipping teachers with the values, knowledge and skills to teach all students

- We ensure inclusive education is embedded within training for all teachers and is reinforced in every element of pre- and in-service teacher training.
- We regularly review and update training programmes to ensure no discriminatory practices are being promoted, and to ensure our training reflects evidence-based practices and emerging pedagogies such as UDL and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy.⁷
- We address specific barriers, based on each country's priorities and needs, through expanded in-service training on multilingual strategies, disability and gender inclusive education.

Protecting local languages and supporting ethnic minority children access the curriculum

- We help protect local languages and cultures and build the capacity of communities through developing community teachers who work alongside government teachers in our schools. Community teachers speak the indigenous mother tongues of the students, as well as the national language, and as such are vital in supporting children to access the curriculum, as well as protecting their social and emotional wellbeing.
- We embrace linguistic diversity in our classrooms, fostering a culture where teachers can teach and students can learn without fear, using both their mother tongue and national language. Starting with instruction predominantly in the mother tongue, we phase in the national language so children develop biliteracy as they progress in school.
- We develop teacher competencies to use multilingual teaching strategies, aids and materials to supplement government curricula and to enable minority language speakers to participate and learn in lessons.

Developing targeted support for those most at risk

- We recognise that the most marginalised children often remain 'invisible' within data collection and analysis. We use innovative data collection methods, such as Community Mapping, to draw on local knowledge and to help identify those children most at risk.
- We promote locally appropriate interventions, identifying risk factors and specific target groups within each country context and designing tailored interventions to address their particular barriers to learning.
- We identify, monitor and support individual children who are most at risk of early dropout.

⁶ See appendix 1, Terms and Definitions

⁷ See appendix 1, Terms and Definitions



3b. Programmatic Approach

We advance inclusive education through:

- **Applying a twin-track approach.** We mainstream inclusion to ensure it underpins all of our policies, programmes, communication and in country practices. Alongside this, we develop interventions to support the most at risk children within UWS communities, identifying specific target groups (and their particular barriers to learning) within each country context to ensure the most marginalised children have the opportunity to participate and learn in school.
- **Establishing robust child protection practices.** Our inclusion policy and practices go hand-in-hand with our [Child Protection Policy](#) and procedures. The Child Protection Policy affirms UWS' commitment to uphold the rights of all children in our programmes and to keep them safe and protected from harm. We operate under the principle of 'do no harm' and assess all programmes and interventions for child protection risks, paying particular attention to the most at risk children within our communities. All forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination are reported, using our child protection cause for concern reporting system, and are dealt with appropriately.
- **Strengthening staff capacity.** We produce tools and training to build understanding of inclusive education and to support implementation. We identify inclusion champions within country offices to create expertise and drive a contextualised, in-country approach.
- **Promoting inclusive education.** All communication is positive, consistent, in line with our vision and abreast of current research and thinking in the field of inclusive education. We find new and inspiring ways to communicate the work UWS is doing, particularly by giving voice to Education Officers, Community Teachers and students.
- **Integrating inclusion within our M&E systems and processes.** We collect, disaggregate and monitor student outcomes, using this data to inform our decisions and to identify and support those most at risk of marginalization, exclusion and underachievement. UWS continuously learns from the evidence we gather, using it as the basis for development and improvement of our inclusive practices. We design participatory beneficiary feedback mechanisms so all groups are included and to ensure we are accountable to the communities we serve.
- **Strengthening and developing partnerships that champion equality, diversity and inclusion.** We ensure our partnerships are representative of all groups of society and explore potential links/partnerships with organisations to strengthen technical expertise in inclusion.
- **Developing inclusive workplace practices.** We promote equality, diversity and inclusion in our business processes, decision-making, communication and the way we conduct our work. Ensuring our vision of inclusive education is aligned with our workplace culture, values and practices.



4. Appendix

1. Terms and Definitions

- **Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy:** Teaching and learning that embraces cultural difference and promotes cultural equality, viewing students' cultural traditions and community cultural practices as an individual strength and as an opportunity to enrich learning for all.
- **Exclusion:** According to [UNESCO](#), educational exclusion refers to more than out-of-school (OOS) children. It also includes children who are excluded from entry e.g. they are outside the eligibility criteria for entry; exclusion from regular and continuing participation in school e.g. it is too far to attend regularly; and exclusion from meaningful learning experiences e.g. the language of instruction and learning materials is not accessible.
- **Inclusion:** Inclusion is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.
- **Marginalisation:** The GEC Thematic Review (2018)⁸ defines educational marginalisation as both an outcome and a process whereby individuals or groups are systematically denied their right to acquire academic or social capabilities through education, that results in their exclusion from social institutions, civic processes and economies.
- **Presence, participation and achievement:** UWS adopts the UNESCO (2016)⁹ guidance on presence, participation and achievement: a) presence not only refers to access to education, but also how reliably and punctually students attend school; b) participation relates to the quality of students' experiences while they are in school and c) achievement is concerned with learning outcomes across the curriculum, not just examination results.
- **Universal Design Principles:** Universal Design is based on the concept on diversity- that individual students have different strengths, interests and needs- therefore it is important to develop learning environments and T&L methods that align with student differences:
 - **Learning environments:** are designed and constructed to be accessible for all students, including Children with Disabilities. It considers the accessibility and usability of school buildings, WASH facilities and classroom set up.
 - **Teaching and learning methods:** offer multiple ways for students to engage in learning. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** encourages teachers to a) present information to students in a variety of ways and b) provide students with alternatives (choice) for demonstrating what they know.

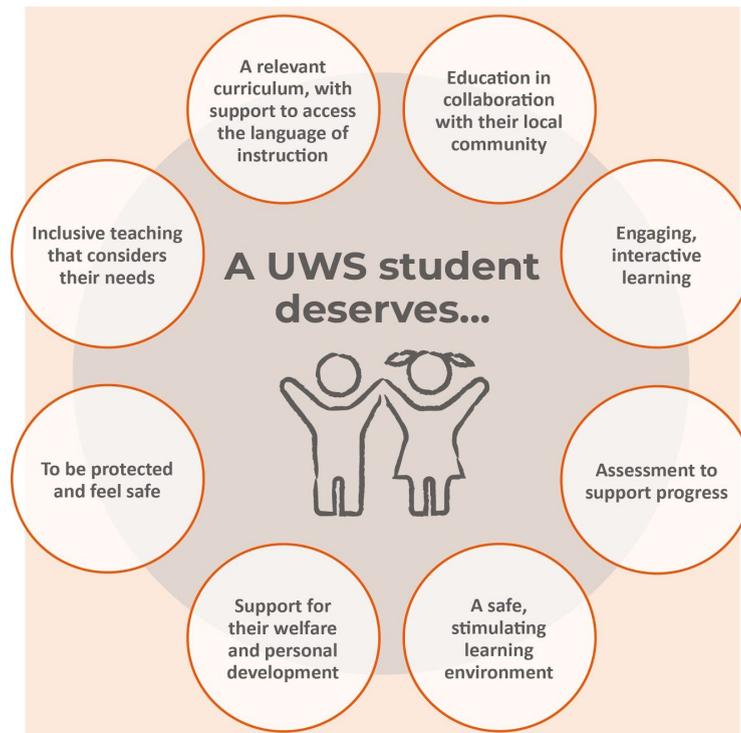
⁸ GEC Thematic Review (2018). *Understanding and Addressing Educational Marginalisation. Girls' Education Challenge.*

⁹ UNESCO (2016), Training Tools for Curriculum Development – Reaching Out to All Learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education. UNESCO.



2. UWS Quality Education Vision.

Our Quality Education Vision was developed using national standards and considering international best practice. It is used as the basis for training programmes, policies and communications.



3. Overview of country policy contexts

All three countries have ratified CRC, CRPD and CEDAW.

Cambodia

Cambodian Constitution 1993- does not specifically address the educational rights of CwD but Article 65 states that the gov will “protect and upgrade citizens’ rights to quality education at all levels and shall take necessary steps for quality education to reach all citizens”.

- **Child-Friendly School (CFS) Policy 2007-** all children should have access to inclusive education, including CwD
- **Education Sector Plan 2019-2023-** MoEYS has committed to ‘inclusive and equitable quality education’ as a priority objective.
- **2030 SDG 4 Roadmap-** approved 2019, 5 priority objectives including achieving gender parity in access (to quality education) and learning outcomes.

Nepal

Constitution of Nepal 2015- guarantees the right to compulsory, free education, includes ‘state support for the disabled’, ‘the right to acquire education in its mother tongue up to the secondary level’ as well as the right to free education through braille and sign language.

- **School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) 2016-2023-** commits to improving the quality of education and reducing inequity in learning outcomes. Key strategies include improvements in the learning environment, pedagogical practice and strengthening equity through developing a long-term inclusive education plan.

Myanmar

2008 Constitution- provides a framing set of principles for children’s access to basic education and, specifically, a commitment to a free and compulsory primary education (Article 28 & 366).

- **National Education Law 2014-** emphasises the right to education for all, including explicit mention of CwD and the use of ethnic languages
- **National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016-21-** ‘access, quality and inclusion’ 1 of its 9 transformational goals. Key strategies include supporting ‘at risk’ students, promoting access for CwD and providing quality T&L materials



4. Guidance on ‘at risk’ groups

We operate in communities who have historically been left behind. Thus, the very nature of UWS’ work means students face multiple, intersecting barriers to education daily. However, within these communities there are subgroups of children who are more vulnerable to educational exclusion and early drop-out.

Poverty	Gender	Disability	Ethnicity, Religion & Language
<p>Almost every community UWS works with is significantly below the international poverty line of c.\$2/day. We understand that poverty is both a consequence and a cause of being marginalised.</p> <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding for education> lack of schools in remote locations • Distance to school • Overage students • School fees & indirect costs (uniform, stationary, books etc.) • Hunger and poor nutrition • Dropout due to child labour 	<p>UWS adopts a broad vision of gender equality, that goes beyond access to consider the barriers girls face in and beyond education. We recognise that gender is not synonymous with girls’ education. Girls and boys- and individuals with other gender identities- have different needs and face different barriers.</p> <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmful gender norms and attitudes within families and communities • Gender stereotypes in teaching & learning • School-related gender-based violence • Dropout due to pregnancy or marriage • Inadequate WASH facilities> practical issues (and stigma) linked to menstruation 	<p>Disability includes physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. We understand that disability is not a barrier in itself, rather children with disabilities face barriers when people, environments and infrastructure do not adapt to meet their needs.</p> <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsuitable and inflexible teaching methods & resources • Inaccessible learning environment • Limited understanding of disability • Stigma/negative attitudes within families and communities 	<p>UWS works with marginalised communities who have historically been excluded from formal education on the basis of ethnicity, language, religion and/or caste.</p> <p>Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National language as the only language of the curriculum and language of instruction • Negative attitudes towards some ethnic groups/castes attending school and mixing with other groups • Geographical isolation • Religious or ethnic conflict