

Early Intervention in Inclusive Education in Mumbai

The 'Why' and the 'How'



Guidelines for the Manuals



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Supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)



Foreword

The '*How to Series of Inclusive Education*' is a set of manuals that have emerged from a study undertaken by The Spastics Society Of India, Mumbai in collaboration with UNICEF and supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The title of the project is *Inclusive Education Practice in Early Childhood*. It is an action research project involving both intervention and research on a large scale covering 6000 families based in the impoverished areas of the Mumbai slums. Six hundred children, both disabled and non disabled, were placed in Demonstration Learning Centres within the community where an enrichment programme and a need based intervention was given over a two year period. The intervention strategies were carefully documented and the progress of the children tracked by external researchers not connected with the intervention team. The aim was to study the mechanism or *intervention* strategies needed to put *children with disabilities* into existing programmes being run by Government and non-Governmental agencies and the barriers that came in the way to accessibility and participation.

From this evidence based research emerged a series of instructional resource material: the '*How to Series of Inclusive Education*.' These manuals are relevant for any organisation, or agency, working to address the crucial need of bringing *children with any disability* into inclusive settings. They recommend *a whole community approach to inclusive education*, and although the research was carried out in India it can be used anywhere in the world.

What are these manuals about ?

The manuals provide for the implementation of inclusive practice, methods and strategies that can be introduced with simple modifications in any school or classroom or community moving towards inclusive education.

The manuals emphasize the importance of the preschool years, the first five years when any child is able to learn the most. This holds true for 'all' children, including children with disabilities. In fact the consequences of neglect at an early age are especially disastrous for disabled children, as they are at high risk of developing secondary handicaps.

Intervention must be provided in order to avoid secondary handicaps from occurring.

Early detection and intervention services should be conducted in the community. The idea is for people to take appropriate services and their skills into the community, instead of having the community come to them.

This service can address a wide range of needs such as care, learning, health, support, socialization. It should cater to various needs simultaneously and should be flexible, adapting to the varying needs of the community.

The manuals emphasise a holistic approach that combines healthcare, education and simple treatment and management needs of children with disability.

What is the content of the manuals?

There are several sections to each manual detailing how to include children with varying differences. The manuals describe in detail how inclusion can be done. They show 'how' to implement inclusive practices, using the community as collaborators.

The manuals are available in three languages... in Hindi, Marathi and English.

Who is this manual for?

Training in the community at various levels to see the importance of children with disabilities being included in it. The training needs to have a top down, bottom up approach on a macro, mezzo and micro level where all levels of people are sensitized to the needs of disabled children.

At the macro top level of training are the policy makers at the National, State and Municipal level officials, administrators in all the three sectors of Health, Education, and Welfare.

At the mezzo level, the manuals provide instructions for the policy implementers, professionals, para professionals community workers, teachers, therapists and master trainers.

At the micro level, training for anganwadi workers, parents and families in the community. The manuals have been written on four levels.

Level 1 (L1 PM) is for policymakers, academics, administrators, non-Governmental agencies. People who are key policy and decision makers formulating policies and programmes. They explain the 'why' of inclusion, and details about the available Guide and Manuals.

Level 2 Professional, (L2 P) deals with professionals who have a substantial degree of knowledge in areas of disability, health and education, have working experience and are able to train others in their field with the Guide and Manuals. This resource will also be appropriate for Senior Health and Education Officers, NGOs in the field.

Level 3 Master Trainers (L3 MT) are those who will go into the community to teach Anganwadi workers, parents, other members of the community how to handle the child with disability.

Level 4 Anganwadi Multipurpose Workers (L4 AMW) deals with the capacity training of community anganwadi workers who will be actually involved with the day to day handling of children with disability.

What are the contents of the manual?

They have been grouped in six basic themes of Policy, Community, Education, Training, Meeting individual needs, and Managing inclusive classrooms.

Policy

Manual 1 - Is for policy-makers and will contain information designed to raise awareness of the barriers that come in the way of inclusion and it provides suggestions for structural and policy changes that can take place within the Indian context.

It will provide checklists for policy-makers to evaluate their own service in terms of preparedness to support inclusion.

Manual 2 This is a training manual for bureaucrats and administrators at State and District level who will be implementing policies, and who require an overview of the issues concerning children with disabilities, as well as a brief description about what can be done for them.

Community

Manual 3-6 These are training manuals aimed at changing attitudes in the Community. They provide suggestions for sensitization and building awareness about disability issues and inclusion in local leaders, community members and health volunteers, parents and local primary healthcare workers.

Education

Manuals 7-11 Training manuals to plan inclusive programmes for professionals, master trainers and anganwadi workers: How to understand the child's environment and plan a curriculum suited to his background; how to implement an ecologically valid curriculum; how to build up the community and use cost effective teaching aids from recycled material. Suggestions on how to provide play opportunities for children with disability.

Training

Manual 12 This manual is about how to train the anganwadi worker to understand children with disability, and include them in the classroom situation. The idea is to develop a Multi purpose worker and not just a teacher.

Meeting Individual needs

Manuals 13-14 How to develop aids and appliances and how to work on health and nutrition.

How to plan an inclusive classroom

Manuals 15-16 These manuals identify children with disability; plan an inclusive classroom to include children with different disabilities.

Acknowledgments

The writers of the How to Series on Inclusive Education are Mithu Alur and Research Consultant Jennifer Evans. The other members of the team of people who have contributed to the manuals are:

Ami Gumashta, Maria Barretto, Deepshikha Mathur, Anuradha Dutt, Shabnam Rangwala, Anita Prabhu, Sangeeta Jagtiani, Ritika Sahni, Susan Barla, Sharmila Donde, Ishwar Tayade, Gulab Sayed, Shraddha More, Varsha Hooja, Theresa D'Costa, Lucas Baretto, Manish Kapdoskar, Preetham Thapa.

The Principal Investigators of the project are Dr Mithu Alur India and Dr Marcia Rioux, Canada. Research Consultants tracking and evaluating the project are: Dr Urvashi Shah and Dr Anuradha Sovani. The Research Agency has been A.C. Neilsen.

The Core Committee monitoring the Project are: Dr Mithu Alur, Dr Marcia Rioux, Dr Prakash Gurnani, Mrs Chetna Kohli, Mrs Deepika Srivastava.

List of Manuals

Policy: how to develop and implement inclusive education

1. Policy makers at National and State level
2. Policy implementers at local and community level

Community: How to create an inclusive community

3. How to open an inclusive nursery or anganwadi
4. How to open a Mahila Mandal (self help group)
5. How to sensitize the community
6. How to work with parents in partnership

Education: How to plan an inclusive programme

7. How to carry out an Ecological Inventory
8. How to design an Ecologically-enriched Curriculum
9. How to plan an inclusive curriculum
10. How to build community resources
11. How to provide opportunities for play

Training:

12. How to train Anganwadi Multipurpose Workers (AMW)

Meeting individual needs:

13. How to develop aids and appliances
14. How to work on improving health and nutrition

How to plan an inclusive classroom:

15. How to identify children with disability
16. How to include children with disability

Including children with...

- a. Multiple Disabilities
- b. ADHD
- c. Epilepsy
- d. Autism
- e. Visual impairment
- f. Speech, Language and Communication
- g. Intellectual impairment