



**Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access,  
Transitions and Equity**

**Including Disabled Children in Learning:  
Challenges in Developing Countries**

**Alison Croft**

**CREATE PATHWAYS TO ACCESS  
Research Monograph No. 36**

**June 2010**





Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access, Transitions & Equity  
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The Consortium for Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) is a Research Programme Consortium supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Its purpose is to undertake research designed to improve access to basic education in developing countries. It seeks to achieve this through generating new knowledge and encouraging its application through effective communication and dissemination to national and international development agencies, national governments, education and development professionals, non-government organisations and other interested stakeholders.

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## **List of Acronyms**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BCODP	British Council of Disabled People
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
DPOs	Disabled Peoples' Organisations
EENET	Enabling Education Network
EFA	Education for All
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICF-CY	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – Children and Young people
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SEN	Special Educational Needs
UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

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## **Preface**

Previous CREATE research monographs have identified disability as a major factor in exclusion from education in India (Giffard –Lyndsay, 2007) and a common cause of children dropping out of school (Hunt, 2008). Forthcoming CREATE publications also highlight the high proportions of out of school children who are disabled in South Africa, and the lack of provision for disabled children in India.

This monograph locates ways in which disability amongst children is constructed and links these to approaches to pedagogy. The monograph draws attention to the key distinction between ‘individual models’ which highlights impairments at the level of the individual and ‘social models’ which see disability as a predominantly socially constructed form of exclusion. How disability is positioned across these dimensions has important implications for the ways in which disabled children are included or excluded from access to education in developing countries, and shapes policies adopted to reduce exclusion. Though the basic distinctions in the approaches have a degree of universality, the responses to disability may not since these have to recognise context, culture, resource constraints and different preferences.

The monograph develops examples of different approaches to disability and learning from different countries and highlights problems that emerge, notably in relation to strategies that promote special education and mainstreaming for disabled children. Key to this discussion are issues related to needs for specially adapted pedagogy for children with different disabilities linked to whether these are seen to be individually or socially determined. The monograph argues that children with disabilities have similar educational needs to other children and the same human right to full access to basic education. Effective approaches must consider both the supply side strategies most familiar to governments and development partners, and the demand driven approaches sometimes but not always adopted by NGOs, especially those with participatory governance structures. They must also highlight the importance of political will and direct engagement with a subject sometimes marginalised from debates on education policy.

This monograph thus takes forward thinking on educational access and disability in ways that provide the basis for future policy dialogue. It also identifies areas where more empirical work is needed to provide a more secure evidence base for decision making.

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## **Summary**

This is an exploratory study suggesting ways of analysing challenges for developing countries in the move to greater inclusion of disabled children and young people in learning. The paper focuses on pedagogical challenges to realising more inclusive education. Pedagogy encompasses not only the practice of teaching and learning, but also the ideas that inform practice held at various levels of the education system and in broader society. This paper therefore examines aspects of teaching and learning and ideas about the social purposes of education. It is based on a review of relevant literature drawing together insights from developing and developed economies.

The paper is divided into five chapters. After a brief introductory chapter, Chapter 2 looks at analyses of the concepts of disability and inclusive education in order to explain the rationale for looking at challenges to educational access for disabled children and young people. Chapter 3 considers the relationship between pedagogy and inclusion. Chapter 4 considers some of the pedagogical challenges to inclusive education and Chapter 5 concludes the paper by looking at the implications of the review for future research. This paper aims to be an introduction to some current work on disability and educational access for those working more generally in education and development and thus seeks to contribute to mainstreaming disability in educational research, policy and practice.



# **Including Disabled Children in Learning: Challenges in Developing Countries**

## **1. The continuing challenge of including disabled children in education**

The drive to achieve Education for All (EFA) by 2015 has led to a focus on the barriers to participation in basic education for marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2010). In particular, there has been significant criticism that disability was not mentioned in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>1</sup> (Albert et al., 2005): “As the world strives to achieve the MDGs it is important that disability is not treated as a left over” Obeng Asamo (n.d.)<sup>2</sup>. It is increasingly recognised that the MDGs will not be achieved without the inclusion of disabled children and young people<sup>3</sup> in education, given the close links between disability, lack of education and poverty (United Nations Secretary General, 2007). Many disabled children and young people around the world are denied sustained access to basic education. Some of these disabled children never enter school, others start but make poor progress eventually ‘dropping out’, and it appears that a relatively small proportion are educated in a parallel system of special schools, running alongside mainstream schools. In the terms of the CREATE (Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity) model of zones of exclusion (Lewin, 2007), they are likely to be concentrated in zone 1 (never having been enrolled), zone 2 (having ‘dropped out’ of primary school) or zone 3 (in primary school but with poor achievement and/or attendance and therefore at risk of dropping out before completing the primary cycle). Children and young people are however, also vulnerable to acquiring impairments that affect their access to education at any point in their educational careers, for example due to conflict or inadequate access to healthcare. Exclusion from education contributes to further economic exclusion in adult life with many disabled people unable to find work (United Nations Enable, 2008).

Historically, problems impeding access to education have been seen as being located within an individual disabled person, who was often medically defined by their impairment. In this view, disabled children are seen as the ones who must adapt in order to ‘integrate’ into mainstream schooling, or be educated in a separate ‘special’ education system. The work of disabled activists and thinkers as part of the disability movement is however creating an increased understanding of disability as a social construction with parallels to evolving understandings of gender and race. One achievement of the disability movement is increasing recognition of disabled people’s rights.

The UN (United Nations) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into force in May 2008 and signatories (142 states by September 2009) are charged in article 24 with ensuring an ‘inclusive education system at all levels’. The Convention recognises that educational provision varies around the world, and so requires states to provide ‘an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in

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<sup>1</sup> For information on the MDGs see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Obeng Asamo ( Director, Ghana Association of the Blind) [www.includeeverybody.org](http://www.includeeverybody.org)

<sup>3</sup> This paper uses the terms ‘disabled people’ and ‘disabled children and young people’ as these are used by the British Council of Disabled People which represents large numbers of disabled people in the country in which it is written. These terms suggest that people are disabled by society - ‘the disability resides in the context not in the person’ (Broderick et al., 2005:200, see also, Rieser, 2008) - whereas terms such as ‘people with disabilities’ are thought to suggest that the ‘disabilities’ are within individuals. It is recognised however that in other contexts ‘people with disabilities’ is the preferred term, i.e. ‘people first’ terminology.

the communities in which they live' (UN, 2006:17). In order to achieve this, states should ensure that 'Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided' (UN, 2006:17). The Convention describes some of the measures that this might involve recognising that staff development will be needed throughout an education system both to provide support for learning and communication, and to understand disability more generally:

...take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities (UN, 2006:17).

The Convention, and other national and international developments before it, are having an impact around the world. For example, Mitchell and Desai (2005) describe the situation in Asia as follows:

During the past decade or so, almost every country in Asia has addressed special education through legislation and/or major policy initiatives, with many showing a growing commitment to inclusive education. Sometimes this commitment is limited in its expression to legislation and policies, but sometimes – and increasingly – it is shown through a range of practices, albeit on a small scale (2005:167).

There is a long way to go however as millions of children remain out of school. How many of these might be considered to be disabled is impossible to establish (Filmer, 2005; Robson and Evans, 2003; Bakhshi and Trani, 2008). Existing data were recognised as 'remarkably weak' in 2004 (UNESCO, 2004b) and the most recent UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report background papers dealing specifically with disability all comment on the widely varying estimates for disability prevalence in the school-aged populations found in particular countries (Anthony, 2009 - Ghana, Lewis – Ethiopia and Rwanda, 2009, Peters - Middle East and North Africa, 2009, Singal – India, 2009). In line with the difficulties in defining disability and classifying impairment (Florian and McLaughlin, 2008), there also appears to be little data on the progress of those disabled children in developing countries who are in school as they are often not receiving any specialist support (Modern et al., 2010) which would imply official identification. Filmer (2005) used household survey data which allowed access to the schooling histories of disabled young people who were in and out of school and was thus able to calculate their school 'survival profiles'. He concludes:

There are clearly large differences in the patterns of attainment between youth with and without disabilities. ...In some countries these differences are exacerbated as children progress through the school system. In particular, in Indonesia, Jamaica, and Romania, where the gap at the start of schooling is on the order of 30 to 45 percentage points, the shortfall in grade completion increases to about 60 or 70 percentage points by grade 8 (2005:11-12).

This suggests that even if they are enrolled in the early grades of school, that many disabled children and young people are not completing primary or lower secondary schooling.

Aside from arguments about social justice and the right to be included in a local school, and about the need for children and young people to learn to live with diversity – to live together

Slee, 2001) - the scale of the challenge of including disabled children in developing countries in successful learning is argument enough that the only cost-effective solution is inclusive education (UNESCO, 2005). In developed countries over the past few decades the arguments about the education of disabled children have largely been about location of provision – for example, special school or local mainstream school – but in developing countries, the challenge is largely to provide any kind of formal education at all to many disabled children.

Getting disabled children into schools is important, overcoming attitudinal, bureaucratic and logistical barriers at various levels along the way, but being in the classroom is only a precondition for inclusion in formal education; presence does not guarantee participation in learning. In the final analysis it is largely what happens in classrooms that determines whether pupils will stay in school, for how long, and with what degree of academic and social success. Benjamin et al.'s empirical study of two primary classrooms in an English city, 'revealed the processes of inclusion and exclusion to be complex ones, renegotiated moment-by-moment by pupils and teachers.' (2003:547). They conclude by noting the small-scale power relations this involves, and their relation to a broader context:

Our data show that 'inclusion' is not a target to be hit, or a goal to be reached; nor is it the final destination of a road of continuous linear improvement. Rather, inclusion is an ongoing process: marked out by struggle and negotiation, and worked out through interpersonal actions and relations in a wider social and political context' (2003:556).

The point that inclusion is usefully seen as a process is an important one and is emphasised by Booth et al. (2000). Supporting the direction of travel towards greater inclusion appears to be more helpful than critiquing a particular educational context as 'inclusive' or 'not inclusive' by referring to standards that have evolved with reference to schools in richer countries (Rose et al., 2005)<sup>4</sup>. This paper aims to contribute to greater understanding of how disabled children can access meaningful learning. This is however a 'contested and challenging area' (Sheehy et al., 2004:137) in which to write with many ongoing debates about concepts and practice and their links to the exercise of power, and so in summarising the issues it is hoped that they have not been over-simplified or important points omitted.

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<sup>4</sup> Walton does however point out that 'Because inclusion is the process, or journey, and not the event or the destination, we can have a broad, diluted and very elastic notion of what inclusion is in practice' (2010:10) running the risk of ignoring the urgency of addressing educational exclusion.

## **2. Disability and education**

### **2.1 Defining disability**

Disability has been variously defined as a deficit, a deviation from the norm, social oppression, exclusion, disadvantage, a collection of barriers, a challenge, an experience, an identity, a process, a predicament, difference, an aspect of diversity, and at one end of a continuum with health. Definitions vary depending on who is making the definition, for what purpose, and therefore evolve over time. As noted in a Department for International Development (DFID) white paper on disability and development; ‘defining disability is complicated – and controversial’ (2000:2). Albert (2004) has identified the need to more clearly conceptualise disability in the field of international development because how disability is explained points to the location of action to address associated injustice.

#### **2.1.1 The individual model**

Disability has traditionally been equated with an individual physical or mental impairment. In this ‘individual model’ of disability, the ‘problem’ with fitting into society is thus located within an individual disabled person (Oliver, 1990). The individual model of disability is frequently expressed as the ‘medical model’ where the impairment/disability is explained in medical terms. It is assumed to have a physiological cause and therefore to be susceptible to medical cure or care. Traditional forms of rehabilitation aim to ‘normalise’ disabled people, thus, for example, sometimes favouring time-consuming and painful walking over wheelchair use (Finkelstein, 1994). In this model it is professionals, rather than disabled people, who are perceived to have expertise and knowledge about disability. Consequently, decisions are seen to be informed by professional knowledge and disabled people’s own knowledge of their experience is thought to be discounted, thereby leaving them with limited power and influence in decisions over their own lives. Disabled people may themselves hold this view of disability and ‘may imagine themselves as, among other things, damaged, abnormal, as patients and/or as the dependent objects for a variety of medical or rehabilitative interventions’ (Albert, 2004:2). Where medical cure fails, or is limited, then disabled people are seen as in need of care, through segregated public services and separate residential institutions – i.e. ‘welfarist’ or charity responses to disability. The medical model of disability sometimes supplants and at other times is found alongside religious explanations of disability. Religious models also often see disability as located within an individual but with a spiritual cause such as retribution for sins committed in the past (Ghai, 2002), a curse, or the result of wrongdoing of a family member, often the mother (Anthony, 2009).

#### **2.1.2 The social model**

Disability is, however, increasingly being recognised as a social construction in a similar vein to gender, ethnicity and sexuality. Finkelstein has described how the racial segregation that he witnessed growing up in Apartheid South Africa helped develop his understanding of the oppression faced by disabled people:

After I was released from prison for working with the underground ANC [African National Congress] and SACP [South African Communist Party] I was ‘banned’ for five years and came to the UK in 1968 with strong feelings about ‘social oppression’ which coloured all my thoughts and actions at the time. Despite this outlook I had not, like most disabled people, considered ‘disability’ from this point of view. It was only

when my wife, Liz, and I joined the UK disability organisations in the early 1970s that I came to view complaints about the constrictions imposed on disabled people as similar to the oppression of South Africans under the apartheid system of segregation (2005:1).

Finkelstein worked with other disabled activists such as Hunt to set up in the UK the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and through this to redefine disability. Key to the UPIAS 'social interpretation' of disability is the difference between 'disability' and 'impairment':

In our view it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society....Thus we define impairment as lacking part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body; and disability as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities (UPIAS/Disability Alliance, 1976:14).

The recognition of oppression was a seminal stage in the development of the disability movement in the UK in which disabled people fought for their own emancipation.

A galvanizing force for many disabled activists and their supporters in the UK and further afield was the understanding that came from Oliver's description of individual and social models of disability, developed in the early 1980's from the UPIAS interpretation of disability (Oliver, 1990):

In the broadest sense the social model is nothing more or less dramatic than a concerted shift away from an emphasis on individual impairments as the cause of disability, but rather onto the way in which physical, cultural and social environments exclude or disadvantage certain categories of people; namely, people labelled disabled (Barnes, 2001:3).

In the social model of disability it is barriers created by the organization of society which are seen to exclude disabled people. Policy therefore needs to focus on removing barriers to disabled people's full participation in society (Albert, 2004). In order to realise disabled people's rights, it is society that needs to adapt to include disabled people, rather than disabled people adapting to what is considered 'normal'. Thomas writing from the British context notes that for many disabled people, discovering the social model of disability is 'often revelatory and liberatory, enabling them, perhaps for the first time, to recognize most of their difficulty as socially-caused' (2002:40).

The social model has had considerable impact on academics, activists, policy-makers and also providers of disability services, for example in considering who can contribute to decisions about resource distribution (Lang, 2007) particularly in the UK. Lang also argues that the social model is not a 'monolithic entity' but is rather a 'cluster of approaches' (2007:1) which share a fundamental belief that disability and disablement are socio-political constructions.

Sheldon et al. note two broad positions within interpretations of the social model of disability; the idealist and the materialist. The idealist position sees disability as 'the irrational product of

deep-rooted cultural beliefs, attitudes and prejudices' (Sheldon et al., 2007:210) which result in a world designed so that disabled people are excluded, frequently through lack of thought rather than deliberate segregation. The social oppression of disability can therefore be dismantled by addressing people's attitudes and thereby the other barriers to inclusion that these attitudes create and reinforce, such as exclusionary legislation and inaccessible buildings and transport. This position is therefore largely an argument for reforming existing social systems. In contrast, in the materialist position, the focus is much more on economic and political structures than attitudes. Disability is seen as a 'logical outcome of the capitalist mode of production' where 'exclusion and segregation of non-standard workers are thus key factors in the process of disablement' (Sheldon et al., 2007:211) thus leading to the conclusion that political struggle is needed to effect 'radical transformation' of an inequitable system created by capitalism.

### **2.1.3 Critique of the individual model and social model analyses of disability**

The social model has been critiqued on several points including whether it has universal relevance and therefore how applicable it might be to developing countries (Lang, 2007). The degree to which various explanations of disability are useful in different places needs to be assessed: 'social models only really make sense when understood in particular contexts. Change the context and the model may well become inappropriate' (Finkelstein, 2007:2). There is considerable debate, at times heated (Albert, 2004), on whether this points to a need for a new model (Lang, 2007, Shakespeare, 2009), further development of the social model (Thomas, 2002; 2004), or a recognition and return to the core principles of the social model, rather than defining, and thus limiting the model, by its outworking in a particular context (Albert, 2004). It is beyond the scope of this paper to cover this issue in any great depth save to make the following points that have potential relevance to education in developing countries. A fuller discussion can be found in Albert's (2004) briefing note on the social model of disability in relation to human rights and development.

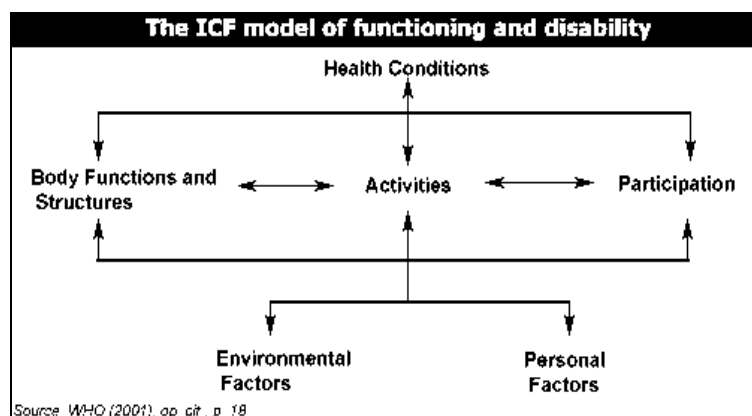
Recent debates in disability theory have considered more relational and interactional models of disability in contrast to the dichotomy of the individual or social models of disability. Some interpretations of the social model discount the role of impairment in their definition of disability, while others argue that it is not the focus for action. The social model does not therefore necessarily deny the role of impairment in restricting activities, although some interpretations might appear to suggest this (Thomas, 2002). In her social relational model of disability, Thomas (2002, 2004) introduces the concept of 'impairment effects' as useful to distinguish limitations caused by impairments from those caused by social barriers. Shakespeare goes further in his criticism of the social model for generally downplaying the role of impairment in the experience of disabled people, and argues that 'people are disabled by society *and* by their bodies' (added emphasis, 2009:186). He explains his interactionist position further as follows:

I define disability as the outcome of the interactions between individual and contextual factors – which includes impairment, personality, individual attitudes, environment, policy and culture. Rather than reserving the word disability for 'impairment effects' or 'oppression' or 'barriers', I would rather use the term broadly to describe the whole interplay of different factors which make up the experience of people with impairments (Shakespeare, 2009:187).



A similar view of disability as an interaction is found in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) introduced in 2001 and the subsequent ICF-CY, an adapted version applicable to children and young people (WHO n.d.). The emphasis is taken away from a medical diagnosis and onto 'functioning'. Disability is seen as a 'decrement in health'; something which everyone can experience to a degree and therefore implies that there are no discrete groups of disabled and non-disabled people. The social nature of disability is acknowledged by measuring an individual's participation in society and the impact of contextual or environmental factors on their functioning. Potential relationships between these factors are shown in Figure 1 below (WHO, 2002:9).

**Figure 1: The ICF model of functioning and disability**



Shakespeare's reference to personality and the 'personal factors' in the ICF model suggest space for human agency in the construction and deconstruction of disability. The materialism of some interpretations of the social model has in contrast been criticized for its deterministic view of the oppressive structures of capitalist society leaving little space for individual or collective agency in response to disability:

Because human agency is lost in the materialism of the social model and because discourse is seen to be a side-effect of social structure, neither can be the focus for social change (Corker, 1998 cited in Thomas, 2002:49).

In contrast to this, a view that gives greater roles to culture and human agency in constructing disability also allows for attitudes to be changed, both from experience of inclusion and as a precursor to greater inclusion.

Recognition of material concerns is still important however, particularly in many developing countries where 'Disability is both a cause and consequence of poverty' (DFID, 2000:1) and survival is 'the ultimate goal for many people in the Global South' (Meekosha, 2008). Ghai similarly notes the harsh reality of social and economic marginalisation for many disabled people in India:

While the discourse in the developed world had progressed from the issues of service delivery and rehabilitation to an engagement with the multiple nuances/meanings of disabled existence, the developing world continues to agonize over the very basic of survival needs (2002:88).

Meekosha argues strongly for the need to develop ‘southern/majority’ perspectives on disability. This exemplifies a further criticism of some interpretations of the social model, namely that they fail to take account of the diverse and evolving experiences of disabled people in particular places, including the interplay of impairment, gender and disability (Thomas, 2002; Ghai, 2002). Recent approaches to disability more strongly recognise that impairments vary in level and type and thereby contribute to the level of social disadvantage faced by disabled people (Shakespeare, 2009). Individuals might find that they have common cause with others with similar impairment rather than identifying their needs with those of all other disabled people; deaf communities being the classic example here. Ghai argues that rather than accepting a universal discourse of disability it will be useful to ‘accept the Western notions as strands in a disability discourse that can also look for theoretical positions that would respond to the concerns of the Indian experience of disability’ (2002:96). Insights from postmodern, poststructuralist and postcolonial approaches to knowledge are thus having increasing impact on disability discourses (Shakespeare, 2009; Ghai, 2002).

In summary therefore, disability is an evolving and contested concept negotiated through struggle to make sense of experiences of disability and find ways of countering injustice around the world. It is important not to let discussion of various approaches ‘obscure the real issues in disability which are about oppression, discrimination, inequality and poverty (Oliver, 1990:1). The heat of some of the debates arises from commitment to make the world a fairer place and a view that a social movement needs to share enough of a common explanation of disability to give a clear focus for action (Smelser, 1962, Sheldon et al., 2007). Fundamental to all the social approaches to disability is recognition of the power that is exerted in defining disability and disability policy, who is exercising this power and how:

It is beyond doubt that the genesis and subsequent development of the “disability movement”, underpinned by the theoretical foundation of the social model, both within the United Kingdom and throughout the world, have created a quantum shift in the manner in which disability has been perceived, and what is now considered to be the appropriate and legitimate manner in which disability policy is to be developed and implemented (Lang, 2007:17).

Other key issues include seeing disability as conceptually distinct from impairment<sup>5</sup> and growing recognition of the variety of experiences of disabled people. While social approaches to disability are increasingly reflected in international discourse, such as the ICF, it is unclear how deeply these are understood at various levels of policy and practice:

A too-easy acceptance of the new disability paradigm may even be counterproductive: by being so easy it runs the risk of ignoring how negative assumptions and attitudes about disability (held by both disabled and non-disabled people) are so deeply ingrained and continually reinforced (Albert, 2004:8).

In some cases, including in the education sector, the language of discourse has changed without an underlying consideration of the reasons for the change and therefore the implications in terms of policy and practice, and ultimately, of the socio-political processes involved.

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<sup>5</sup> In practice it can at times be difficult to say where impairment ends and disability begins (Jacklin, 2010 citing Shakespeare and Watson, 2002).

## **2.2 Implications of social and interactional models of disability for research on educational access**

The analytical framework of the individual and social models of disability is reflected in international agency documents on disability, development and education, (for example, DFID, 2000; UNESCO, 2001; Save the Children UK, 2002; Stubbs, 2008; Rieser, 2008) perhaps particularly where there have been connections to Britain. The influence of more interactionist perspectives on disability is also beginning to be seen, for example in Singal's application of Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic approach to inclusive education in India (2006) and Terzi's (2005) use of Sen's capability approach to analyse impairment, disability and special educational needs (SEN). The social model analysis has been reflected in calls for the inclusive education of disabled children and young people rather than education in a parallel system of special education, or as is the case for many disabled children in developing countries, no formal education at all (Thomas, 2005).

Inclusive education has an historical connection with special education but is viewed, at least among those in the vanguard of the disability movement, and leading academics such as Ainscow, Booth and Slee, as a paradigm shift (Oliver, 2000). It demands more than assimilation or integration and provides a challenge to schools to make 'fundamental changes' so that they 'recognise and represent difference' (Slee, 2001:391). As cogently expressed by Lindqvist as a UN-rapporteur some time ago:

All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children (Lindqvist, 1994 quoted in UNESCO, 2005:13).

Inclusive education is concerned with recognising and realising the right to education of all children of whatever race, ethnicity, gender, linguistic background or impairment – 'Inclusive education is distinguished by an acceptance of differences between students as an ordinary aspect of human development' (Florian and Kershner, 2009:173). It is about embarking on or continuing the 'processes of increasing the participation of all students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools' (Booth et al., 2000:12) and is therefore relevant to all schools regardless of how inclusive or exclusive their current policy and practice. Following their review of the EFA Fast Track Initiative and country level plans to include disabled children in education, World Vision argued that there was 'insufficient clarity on policy approaches, particularly the differences between 'integration' (location of individual children in current provision) and 'inclusion' (systematic change to accommodate diversity)' (2007:2) echoing Albert's comment above about the lack of fundamental understanding of the social construction of disability.

In a broad approach to inclusive education, which is related to more general work on social exclusion and inclusion in development (e.g. Sayed et al., 2003), the focus will vary from place to place depending on who is excluded by current educational policy and practice. Booth gives at least fourteen categories of learners who experience barriers to learning and participation including 'learners with impairments' 'learners in poverty, those affected by war and environmental degradation and change, learners who are victims of abuse and violence, street children, ...girls in situations where their education is seen as less important than that of boys, learners affected by HIV and AIDS or other chronic illness...learners whose home

language is different from the language of instruction' (2000:4). In some schools in developing countries, particularly in lower primary classes before 'drop-out' has taken its toll, it is likely that all learners would be included in at least one of these categories.

Which raises the issue of whether it is useful for any *educational* purposes to identify disabled children as a discrete group or whether the dynamic construction of disability varying with environmental factors means that this is neither possible nor desirable. Some writers argue that what is quality education for all children will be inclusive, and therefore making education more responsive to the needs of children currently excluded will make it better for all:

...the quality education needed to welcome all children to school, and to support educationally-disadvantaged groups such as girls, and poorer children in their learning is also the kind of education that would include disabled children in meaningful learning in schools (Pinnock and Lewis, 2008).

This is particularly true where education seems to be excluding many learners as expressed in high repetition and drop-out rates. Lomofsky and Lazarus write that 'many learners, between 40 and 50%...have special needs that require learning support beyond that which is traditionally available in the classroom in ordinary (not special) South African schools' (2001:305). When students with 'special needs' are pushing 50% this is a strong argument for educational failure being systemic rather than located in individual children. In countries across the spectrum of economic development, there is longstanding over-representation in special educational provision or exclusion from education of certain ethnic and linguistic groups adding weight to the argument that schooling rather than individual children needs reform (Coard, 1971; Dyson and Kozleski, 2008; Morvayová et al., 2008; UNESCO, 2010). This might lead to the conclusion that additional educational attention is not needed for disabled children, that all children have a variety of individual strengths and weaknesses, and therefore that labelling certain children as 'disabled' adds nothing to their lives but stigma (Norwich, 2008).

In contrast to the broad approach to inclusive education, a narrower view of inclusive education also exists where the focus is on disabled children, and attempts to address educational exclusion more generally are sometimes seen as evidence of the continuing marginalisation of disabled children<sup>6</sup>. Miles and Singal (2010) discuss in detail the confusion generated by the differing standpoints of international agencies on the definition of inclusive education.

The current construction of schooling, and society's broader attitudes to impairment, suggest that there will be some educational disadvantage, socially, academically or both, for many children with impairments i.e. disability of relevance to schooling. This issue will be explored further in chapter 3. Given what is known about the large-scale exclusion of disabled children from schooling in developing countries, there might therefore be reasons for focusing at times specifically on their access to education. Even when compared to other children and young people in the same communities, disabled children are less likely to have ever been to school (Thomas, 2005) or to have significantly less schooling (Filmer, 2005). Commenting on UNICEF and UNESCO initiatives, a recent report by Inclusion International noted the 'unfortunate fact is that many well intentioned attempts to address exclusion from school have

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<sup>6</sup> This perhaps reflects at least in part the situation in developed economies where disabled children are those most noticeably excluded from mainstream education.

simply neglected to consider children with disabilities' (2009:22). In considering inclusion more generally there is therefore a danger that disabled children will be forgotten.

In response to the tensions exposed here, and recognising parallels with other equality issues, a key DFID policy paper promoted a 'twin-track' approach to providing greater equality for disabled people, similar to that which has been used for promoting gender equality. In this, attempts to mainstream disability into development 'Addressing inequalities between disabled and non-disabled persons in all strategic areas of our work' are combined with supporting initiatives more directly focused on 'enhancing the empowerment of people with disabilities' (DFID, 2000:11). This is an ongoing process and concerns were raised in a paper written to DFID by the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) that disability equality as an issue could be 'Mainstreamed into invisibility' (2005:5). This paper therefore considers the extent to which it is useful to focus specifically on disabled children to improve their access to meaningful learning in low-income countries.

In working to achieve inclusive education for disabled children, the shift from an individualist to a social perspective on disability implies a shift of focus for action. This is a shift from assessing individual children to assign them to specialist provision or to require them to repeat a school year, towards assessing how school systems at various levels include or exclude children (Ainscow, 1999; Ghesquière and Van der Aalsvoort, 2004). Building on the social model of disability this is often framed as a focus on the barriers to inclusion:

While we may often be able to do little to overcome the impairments of learners we can have a considerable impact in overcoming the physical, personal and institutional barriers to their access and participation (Booth, 2000:4).

At the level of national and international policy, support for inclusive education appears to be growing with many low-income countries signatories to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Modern et al. reviewed DFID's work on disability and education and considered however that 'relatively strong policy environments are just not being put into practice' (2010:14) based on their survey of 46 Disabled People's Organisations and Civil Society Organisations involved in advocacy for Education for All' in 26 countries. In the survey respondents were presented with a list of factors and asked to tick all that were barriers to learning faced by disabled primary-age children in their country. Over 70% of respondents reported that all of the following were barriers:

- inaccessible school buildings
- schools being located too far away from where disabled children live
- a lack of appropriate facilities at school
- a lack of teacher training in inclusive education methodologies
- a lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials
- a lack of extra support in the classroom for children with disabilities
- social stigma and negative parental attitudes to disability
- poverty (Modern et al., 2010:15)

Modern et al. therefore argued that there is a need to 'bridge the implementation gap' in education for disabled children. While it is not clear from the paper how the initial list was

generated or the degree of importance attached to the different factors, this does suggest that disabled children are thought to face barriers to inclusion both inside and outside the classroom.

Much research on progress towards inclusive education has focused on the attitudes of parents, teachers, 'non-disabled' peers and sometimes disabled children themselves (Van Kraayenoord, 2007). Examples include Mdikana et al.'s (2007) examination of the attitudes of student teachers' in Johannesburg towards the inclusive education of learners with 'special educational needs' and Kuyini and Desai's (2007) and Ocloo and Subbey's (2008) research in Ghana that included teachers' attitudes to inclusive education. In the idealist version of the social model outlined above, attitudes would be the focus of reform in a school system, and therefore research on these is needed. If however there are broader socio-economic forces at work in constructing disability in classrooms, then researching attitudes at the school level will inevitably be of limited use:

...the issues go far beyond the notion that the problem is one of individual disability attitudes. These are not free floating but are both set within and structured by specific, historical, material conditions and social relations. Goodwill, charity and social services are insufficient to address the profundity and stubbornness of the factors involved" (Barton, 1993:242, cited in Lang, 2007:6).

Locating the problems largely at the level of the school as in Modern et al.'s list of barriers to inclusion suggests a deficit view of schools and perhaps of teachers, and risks both 'blaming the victims' of broader forces, and limiting the agency of teachers, pupils and parents to move towards greater inclusion even in difficult circumstances. Some of the research on attitudes also appears to assume that stakeholder attitudes need to be positive before inclusion can move forward, whereas in fact the relationship between attitudes, beliefs and practices is more complex. Save the Children's work in Mongolia for example showed how attitudes can become more positive through the experience of inclusive education (Pinnock and Lewis, 2008). Similarly, Walton found that schools could become more inclusive 'on the job' as the presence of disabled learners stimulated change:

...schools in South Africa which are developing good and sustainable inclusive cultures and practices are welcoming diverse learners and are learning how to include as they include (forthcoming:10)

This paper attempts a preliminary analysis of some of the challenges to inclusive education that are related to the history and current context of schooling in low-income countries which often share aspects of a colonial past and look ahead to an increasingly globalised future. It aims to draw on the strengths of the materialist analysis while also acknowledging individual and collective agency. The implication of defining disability as a dynamic interaction that includes impairment and context is that information is needed on the processes through which impairment and impairment effects interact with schooling to create disadvantage, that is, on disablement processes. This paper focuses on some aspects of these processes in formal schooling that interact with children's impairments and other aspects of the context to either help or hinder access to meaningful learning. In particular it focuses on pedagogy and influences on pedagogy. While other issues are undoubtedly important, such as the provision of communication and mobility aids, pedagogy is seen as pivotal to inclusive education.

### **3. Pedagogy and inclusion**

#### **3.1 The importance of pedagogy**

The challenge to include is one that addresses all levels of an education system (Ainscow, 1999) including pedagogy. Understanding pedagogy is important because this illuminates the frames that teachers use, more or less consciously, as they make the final transformation of whatever organisation of schooling they work in, and form of curriculum they have been given, into the words and actions that make up teaching and learning:

...teaching is an *act* while pedagogy is both act and *discourse*. Pedagogy encompasses the performance of teaching together with the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it. ....Pedagogy connects the apparently self-contained act of teaching with culture, structure and mechanisms of social control (Alexander, 2000:540 original emphasis).

The fundamental question teachers ask as they face a class in person and in their imagination in planning is: How do I (sometimes 'we') help this student or these students learn this with these resources in this place? This requires a varying degree and balance of knowledge of oneself (what one brings to the teaching situation in terms of methods, confidence in using such methods, patience, energy etc), of the students, of the curriculum, of the resources available, of the teaching and learning environment (often a classroom), and of the likely interactions between all of these. What one considers valid and useful knowledge within these aspects is framed by one's own more or less conscious theories of learning and teaching and the purposes of education. Pedagogy impacts:

not just on the treatment of curriculum content, but also on the use of space, the handling of time, the grouping of pupils, the formulation of tasks, the balance of activities, the focus and criteria of judgements and, above all, the structure, content and control of pupil-teacher talk' (Alexander, 2000:552).

The pedagogical culture that teachers work in is influenced by those higher up the education system and outside it whose decisions, attitudes and beliefs affect the work of teachers and the resources available to them. Pedagogy evolves across time and space and is frequently contested at various levels of education systems (Alexander, 2000; Tabulawa, 2003).

This paper undertakes a broad cross-national analysis of some aspects of pedagogy as they relate to implementing inclusive education in developing countries. This cross-national stance is considered appropriate because of the increasingly international agendas for action and suggested solutions for reforming education generally and for including disabled children in education. United Nations instruments, such as the UN Convention described above, help set agendas (Mittler, 2005) and UN agencies such as UNESCO provide materials supporting their implementation. There are many other governmental and non-governmental organisations working internationally on promoting and implementing inclusive education (e.g. see World Vision, 2007). Alexander (2000) argues that curriculum is usefully seen as a part of pedagogy, and at the level of national curricula there are also several forces that operate to increase standardisation across the world, for example as developing countries 'copy institutions such as education from more [economically] successful nations' (Benavot et al., 1996:308).

There is a small but growing recognition of the importance of pedagogy in achieving Education for All (EFA). Alexander notes that the EFA discourse is seriously lacking in its consideration of the 'vital domain of pedagogy' (2008:13). Similarly, Lavia argues that:

The EFA campaign is a progress on previous global initiatives, yet, despite current rhetoric about the inclusive purposes of the EFA agenda and encouraging moves at modernization of curricula, there is a dearth in the debate about the cultural politics of education and wider implications of developing pedagogies for social transformation (2007:284).

She challenges:

...the perspective that claims a neutrality of global education agendas and seeks to counter technicist positions that avoid dialogic engagements about the intersection between education and schooling and issues of culture, power and politics (2007:284).

In line with this, Miles and Singal write that inclusive education:

...necessarily challenges didactic, teacher-centred teaching practices, such as rote learning, and so opens up opportunities for developing better pedagogy and greater competence. EFA often fails to explore such broad issues (2010:12).

This paper aims to explore a number of these issues, particularly at the intersection of schooling and culture. In the era of increasing globalisation many of the same pressures are felt around the world. Pather brings these points together as follows:

Crossing boundaries between North and South is a refreshing idea. It is possible based on the fact that the same complexities and dilemmas, in various forms and in varying magnitude, exist in both. All are, in some way, attempting to conceptualize and implement inclusive policy and practice, although for countries of the South, national agendas are often based on borrowed notions of, and strategies for, inclusion.' (2007:628)

While there are significant differences between as well as within countries, there are some common issues that are likely to be shared to a greater or less degree across many of the resource-constrained education systems of developing countries. For example, Booth and Black-Hawkins presented a composite case-study of a school based on research in South Africa at a multi-national workshop, and found that 'several people [from India] commented that it could easily have been a school in India' (2001:15). In addition many societies are working with education systems and pedagogies with roots in a shared colonial past (Crossley and Tikly, 2004).

Research on inclusive pedagogy and the process of its development is important because such research, although a growing field, has been limited to date across developed and developing economies and studies available in English have focused on the United States (Nind and Wearmouth, 2006). What kind of pedagogy is needed to include disabled children and young people in education, how much does it vary according to context and what does this tell us about policy for developing, using and sharing such pedagogy?



### **3.2 Do disabled learners need special or inclusive pedagogy?**

A key question in providing education for disabled children is, at the level of pedagogy, do they require something 'special'. In other words 'Is teaching for pupils who have difficulties in learning additional teaching of the same kind as for those without difficulties or is it teaching which is different in kind' (Corbett and Norwich, 1999:117).

The degree to which it is thought useful to identify particular groups of disabled children and design specific pedagogical and perhaps related structural interventions to educate these groups is widely debated (e.g. Ballard, 1999; Farrell, 2000; Hegarty, 2001; Thomas and Loxley, 2001; Davis and Florian, 2004; Lewis and Norwich, 2005; Norwich, 2008). Lewis and Norwich identify two pedagogic positions on difference. Firstly, the 'unique differences position' in which learners are considered to have needs that are common to all, and needs that are unique to them as individuals:

Differences between individuals are accommodated within this position, not in distinct groups or sub-groups, but in terms of the uniqueness of individual needs and their dependence on social context. Yet, for this to be so, common pedagogic needs have to be considered flexible enough to enable wide individual variations to be possible within a common framework. Those who favour a strong inclusive position to the education of pupils with difficulties or disabilities adopt this view.' (2005:4)

There have been several rationales for the provision of segregated education for disabled children one of which is the need for specialist teaching. This idea has been strongly critiqued by Thomas and Loxley who describe much special pedagogy as an approach:

...which assumes that when a child's time at school appears to be going wrong special measures are needed: special assessment, special pedagogy in short – special education...Children who are slower to learn – for whatever reason – need the same in order to learn as any other child. They need the kind of things which... our humanity tells us they need: interest, confidence, freedom from worry, a warm and patient teacher. The legacy that one hundred years of special education has given to teachers is the idea that this isn't enough; that you need all sorts of special procedures and qualifications to help you understand them, and all sorts of special techniques before you can make any sort of job of helping them (2001:26).

Similarly Florian and Kershner argue that 'All children have much in common, including the fact that their individual characteristics and preferences are uniquely interrelated rather than neatly categorisable' (2009:173-174). When teaching a particular child, it might be more pedagogically profitable to know about and respond to their interest in animals, for example, than know that they have been diagnosed with a particular syndrome. Davis and Florian (2004), following a literature review entitled 'Teaching strategies and approaches for pupils with special educational needs' concluded that:

We found that there is a great deal of literature that might be construed as special education knowledge but that the teaching approaches and strategies themselves were not sufficiently differentiated from those which are used to teach all children to justify the term SEN [Special Educational Needs] pedagogy. (2004:33-34)

Instead of 'special' pedagogy, several writers have described pedagogy that has the potential to include all learners. Themes found in research reviews of inclusive pedagogy from the UK include the need for teachers to respect and accept responsibility for all pupils, have ongoing staff development and support to evolve inclusive practice in context, allow pupil participation in decision-making, see learning as socially constructed (i.e. through dialogue with the teacher and within peer-groups), link to pupils existing knowledge and use activities that learners find meaningful that are often 'hands-on', have knowledge of learning difficulties and use combinations of teaching strategies (Davis and Florian, 2004; Rix et al., 2009). This largely resonates with progressive approaches to pedagogy such as learner-centred education, general calls to improve the responsiveness of schooling (Molteno et al., 2000), and initiatives such as UNICEF's (2009) 'child-friendly' schools. Responsive teaching does not always need to respond to children individually, it can respond to their common needs, a feature Croft (2002b) found in the practice of some lower primary teachers in Malawi, and described as 'children-centred' rather than 'child-centred'.

In contrast to this, Lewis and Norwich's second position is the 'general differences position' where, in addition to the needs common to all, and their unique needs, learners are also thought to have needs that are specific to a sub-group to which they belong. Florian and Kershner describe this position as having 'intuitive appeal'. Lewis and Norwich asked educators working in various fields of special education to write about the pedagogy thought appropriate for their particular field and collated these into one volume. Commenting on these chapters in the conclusion to their edited book Norwich and Lewis note that even within these contributions there was evidence of the limits of 'pure' group-specific pedagogical practices. Firstly, there was co-occurrence of identified difficulties; children did not fall neatly into what were often impairment-related categories and might for example have learning difficulties and hearing impairment. Secondly, several practitioners commented on the usefulness of pedagogical practices commonly associated with other 'difficulties' thus weakening the case for distinctive pedagogies. And thirdly:

'All contributors also linked the nature of the individual group with continua of effects or impacts on learning, implying that, even if hypothesized, group-related pedagogic strategies would need to be applied differentially. Thus even this position **places individual needs at the centre of pedagogic decision-making**. (Lewis and Norwich, 2005:207 added emphasis)

In other words, knowledge of an individual child was always thought necessary to see which particular group-specific pedagogical practice might be relevant to them, and to what extent. One example of a group-specific pedagogical strategy is the use of 'social stories'<sup>7</sup> to help children labelled autistic understand social situations and to provide guidance on how they and others might behave. Is this a different pedagogy from that used with more typically developing children or is it a strategy used more frequently and in a more formalised and more personalised way than reading a relevant published picture storybook when a child starts school, or where books are less common, older siblings describing their own early days at school? Lewis and Norwich describe this process of emphasising certain aspects of teaching and learning for certain groups as 'intensification' of pedagogy rather than a different pedagogy, although they also note that depending on 'the viewer's stance about learning and pupils' (2005:216) at the extreme end of the continuum of intensification, pedagogy might appear to differ in kind (i.e. be based on different principles) rather than degree. Lewis and

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<sup>7</sup> This involves a teacher or parent creating a story specific to the occasion and the individual child (National Autistic Society n.d.)

Norwich have called for further research 'to identify the different strands or dimensions along which teaching is intensified in curriculum and pedagogic terms' (Lewis and Norwich, 2005:220).

Taking the case of children with sensory and/or speech production impairments who might require sign language, Braille or other augmented or alternative communication, Lynch does allow for the collective experience of at least some disabled children in relation to an impairment:

... learners who are profoundly deaf and whose first language is sign language need media for sign language learning, but they also need a sign language community to provide a cultural seedbed and social context for their human interaction. (2001:3-4)

The extent to which teacher knowledge to support inclusion of children in these categories is pedagogical is not yet clear. For example Lynch and McCall (2007) in describing the role of itinerant teachers for visually impaired pupils in Kenya and Uganda include some non-pedagogical activities such as identifying and referring children to eye clinics for further assessment. Some knowledge of sign language or using communication equipment does not seem to be pedagogical in essence, and yet how to use this knowledge in the classroom while teaching might well be considered pedagogical. Hegarty and Florian (2004) argue that the 'support or accommodation' needed to address the barriers to learning associated with some impairments or conditions, such as visual impairment 'does not constitute pedagogy but is an element of it' (cited in Davis and Florian, 2004:34).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider in detail what the specialist pedagogical knowledge thought to be associated with various impairment-based categories is, but to extent that it exists, it appears to be much more limited than is often reflected in the structures of specialist teacher education programmes and special schools and units. Most of the research in this area is from developed countries, although some research, such as Lynch and McCall's research for Sightsavers is focusing on experiences of inclusion in developing countries. Stubbs research on an inclusive education programme from some time ago in Lesotho expresses something of the mix of general and specific knowledge and commitment to engage that can make a difference to a child's access to meaningful learning:

The pupils have benefited. Before we neglected them and now we are patient enough to help. We give more attention in leisure time, breaks, lunches; we give them special work and we are aware of them in class. 'Now we know not to put a visually impaired child near the sun.' (teacher comments, feedback session). (Stubbs, 1995:66)

Some specialist pedagogical knowledge can perhaps help a teacher know where to start in finding out some of the possible barriers to learning that a particular child might face, and then in considering ways of helping a child overcome these barriers. They are however only a possible shortcut, what Lewis and Norwich call 'orienting concepts', things to consider in conjunction with much other knowledge about a child and their educational context.

There is also a potential downside of 'specialist' pedagogical knowledge – that in recognising difference it labels and stereotypes a child (Norwich, 2008). Some indication of the relative prevalence of impairments might be useful to highlight the under-representation of disabled children in education and for national, regional and district-level planning (World Vision 2007), but impairment categorisation is of limited use at the level of the individual child.

Labels therefore while at times a convenient shorthand, at other times are essentialising and stigmatising. They vary in meaning across contexts and can be a shortcut around the necessary complexity of seeing children as having a range of strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes etc; in other words as rounded human beings. The assumption of specialist pedagogical knowledge, or that certain children have 'special educational needs', can lead mainstream teachers to think that they do not have the ability to teach particular children in their classes (Booth et al., 2000). Inclusive pedagogy on the other hand accepts that learners have individual differences but sees pedagogically significant differences as located in the interaction between the learner and the school and therefore within the teacher's influence and responsibility. As such is it clearly related to interactionist approaches to disability. Inclusive pedagogy can draw on the knowledge of support teachers, therapists or rehabilitation workers where it is available, but always with the aim of moving towards greater inclusion socially and academically.

In summary, therefore, inclusive pedagogy is not a particular state, but pedagogy informed by the guiding principle of supporting the 'the processes of children's learning, motivation and social interaction' (Florian and Kershner, 2009:178). Important principles within this process found in research in the United States and the United Kingdom include valuing social interaction in learning including the contribution of student voice. This necessitates the sharing of power in learning and an acceptance of student diversity so that everyone can contribute to the construction of knowledge. The next chapter will consider the challenges to developing this kind of pedagogy in low-income countries.

## **4. Challenges for inclusive pedagogy in developing countries**

### **4.1 Constructions of academic ability**

For education one potentially significant difference between pupils is academic ability. North American and UK mainstream societies, from which some donor technical advice on inclusive education originates, includes a strand of educational thought in which students have innate and therefore relatively fixed levels of ability (Alexander, 2000, Boaler et al., 2005). A belief in largely innate ability combined with a belief in the importance of individualism can lead to the conclusion that children should be allowed to learn in their own way and at their own pace. This was a key guiding principle of early interpretations of learner-centred education which have influenced some of the pedagogy recommended as a way of achieving EFA (Croft, 2002b)<sup>8</sup>. Looking across a ‘cultural fault-line’ towards Continental Europe as well as Asia, Alexander (2000) contrasts these Anglo-Saxon assumptions with the Confucian belief in human perfectibility and a consequent focus on student effort. The Japanese education system has had relatively little influence from the discourses of Western education, perhaps allowing the expression of a traditionally collective culture in a formal education system. This provides an alternative perspective from which pedagogy in developing countries can be viewed.

Mitchell and Desai describe the Japanese pedagogical approach to difference as one that sees all people as ‘born with equal capacities to achieve’ with rare exceptions (such as those with obvious impairments) and where ‘individual differences are created through cumulative effort not innate ability’ (2005:188). In their pedagogy teachers therefore generally pay little attention to individual differences and ‘see [almost] all students as being capable of succeeding in school’ (2005:188) and ‘Since all students are equal, any special attention is seen as discriminatory’ (op cit). Teachers expect effort from their students and view this as important as success, allied to this ‘Self-discipline is important and is moulded through experiencing hardship’ (2005:189). Finally, the more collective nature of society, where ‘the boundaries between self and other are not clearly distinguishable’ (Sato, 1998 cited in Mitchell and Desai, 2005:189) mean that education is also about social and emotional development through building relationships within the class and other school social groups such as afterschool clubs. Mitchell and Desai conclude that:

Taken together the cultural values that permeate Japan, to a greater or lesser extent, provided some understanding for the reluctance of Japanese schools to fully embrace a Western model of inclusive education. Such a model would, for example, challenge such notions as the relationship between individuals and the broader society, the rejection of innate differences, the importance of effort to achieve success, even if it means hardship, the importance of group identity and concern for the whole person’ (Mitchell and Desai, 2005:190).

This description of Japanese pedagogy raises questions about whether these attitudes are common in other relatively collective cultures, such as many developing countries (Ingelhart and Oyserman, 2004), and the implications of importing the individualism of either a neo-liberal or progressive approach (Alexander, 2000). Serpell (1993) looked at conceptions of

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<sup>8</sup> More recently however there have been attempts in England to expect more in terms of pace of learning and to combine this with personalised teaching (Sebba et al., 2007)

ability in a range of societies across sub-Saharan Africa and concluded that many societies valued a construct in which cognitive ability was used with social responsibility for which there was not an exact cognate in English. In later work he explained how this contributes to tensions in the role of education in rural communities in developing countries (see below).

#### **4.2 Assumption of homogeneity linked to grade system**

In education systems where pupils have to pass an end-of-year examination to be promoted, there is a particularly strong assumption that pupils, are, or at least should be, relatively homogenous in their existing level of academic achievement and in the academic challenges that they therefore need. This is perhaps related to the belief that it is mostly effort that matters rather than innate ability. In a similar vein to the Japanese pedagogy described above, Akyeampong et al. argue that:

What most research on African primary teachers' classroom practice seems to show, but which receives little commentary, is a form of whole-class teaching apparently based on the belief that every child in the classroom can achieve at the same level and that whole-group lessons led by the teacher are the way to achieve this outcome. (2006:156)

There are potential advantages in this kind of whole class teaching in terms of avoiding the low expectations, limited opportunities and disaffection often found in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of differentiating work by ability grouping (Boaler et al., 2005). Equity is understood as giving children exposure to the same curriculum, and a 'second chance' by allowing them to repeat a school year if they fail the end-of-year promotional examination:

Efforts to reduce repetition to increase the internal efficiency of the school system have been ill-understood by Malawian primary teachers, who see not allowing repetition as unfair to children (Wolf et al., 1999). Promoting a child before they are ready will set the child up to fail, and therefore discriminates against children who, through poverty, were not able to attend for the whole year. (Croft, 2006:105)

Keeping the class working together at the same level is important in this teaching style and appears to link into broader social values valuing the collective in Malawi and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (Croft, 2002b). Lesson transcripts often include the teacher asking 'Are we together?' This point is picked out in Alexander's five-country study of pedagogy and culture in which the captions for two photographs read:

'Growing apart? Different tasks, different outcomes (England)' Plate 19

'Staying together? Same task, different outcomes (India)' Plate 20

The degree to which individual effort relates to group effort, how a class is motivated to 'stay together' is little addressed in the literature on inclusive education in developing countries although some behaviour management aspects of this are dealt with in Croft (2002b). There is likely to be considerable pressure to conform with group expectations in relatively collective societies, for good or ill. The importance of being able to keep up with a particular pace of learning at a particular level also raises the question of whether providing access to the curriculum through a different medium (e.g. sign language or Braille) might be better understood than adapting the curriculum e.g. for those with learning difficulties.

The advantage of expecting all children to achieve the same and ‘stay together’, breaks down at a certain point however when some children appear unable to do this. They are either in and ‘with’ us, or not able to be ‘with’ us, and therefore out, hence the position of many Japanese disabled learners in special schools or classes (Mitchell and Desai, 2005). In developing countries where many children ‘drop out’ of school<sup>9</sup>, how much do teachers look at their own teaching or the curriculum or other aspects of the school system for a reason for this, and how much to they explain this through factors that may be located within the child or within their environment (describing children as poor, hungry, needed at home for work, ‘dull’, Croft, 2006). A student teacher interviewed in a study in Malawi seemed to locate the problem of under-achievement in children or their families, while still feeling some degree of responsibility to counter this. His comment that in Standard 1 he teaches them “until they know what they are doing”, whereas in higher standards “when pupils do not understand you may just go on”, suggest that teachers might use different pedagogy for different sections of the primary school (Croft, 2002b). Perhaps teachers felt able to be more inclusive when the selective pressures of examinations were further away.

Although there are other barriers to learning, pedagogy in many countries appears to fail large numbers of children, including disabled children, when an inflexible curriculum races ahead of what they have been able to learn, leaving them struggling to learn by rote sometimes through a language in which neither they nor their teachers are sufficiently fluent (Brock-Utne, 2007).

Such an assumption of pupil homogeneity proposes that the learning needs of all pupils are (or should be) the same. Thus children who were not within this perceived range of acceptable abilities were regarded as difficult to teach. (Singal, 2006:247)

For example, there is an assumption of homogeneity both within classes and across the nation in the minute-by-minute guide to teaching strategies in some curriculum documents studied in Malawi (Croft, 2002a). Although this assumption can usefully expect all pupils to achieve, it struggles to cope with the more diverse classes found in the era of EFA. It therefore becomes a barrier to further inclusion at the point when teachers and school systems locate the problem for underachievement within children, and feel limited responsibility or have sufficient autonomy to address this. For some teachers keeping to the curriculum for the grade becomes so important that “when pupils do not understand you may just go on’. Others however feel able to adapt the curriculum and reject the pace set by those higher up the educational system. One experienced teacher interviewed in a study of lower primary pedagogy in Malawi, took the teacher’s guide and pointed at the list of contributors saying “These people, do they know infants? They don’t!” (Croft, 2002b:331).

Looking at India, Sriprakash writes about the shift in terminology in the Nali Kali programme in Karnataka from labelling pupils as ‘dull’ or ‘bright’ to ‘fast’ or ‘slow’ learners. While this is potentially more inclusive ‘a slow learner is still a learner’ (2009:633), there remains a norm-referenced view of child development and ‘foregrounding the *pace* of knowledge acquisition which may expose new pathologies of ability’ (op cit). The ‘problem’ is still essentially located within the child rather than in their interaction with schooling.

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<sup>9</sup> The latest UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report Summary notes: ‘In twenty-two countries, 30% or more of young adults have fewer than four years of education, and this rises to 50% or more in eleven sub-Saharan African countries (2010:6).

### **4.3 Understandings of differentiation and curriculum**

In response to perceived diversity between pupils, education systems give students different educational experiences. This differentiation can be expressed structurally, for example with different schools or classes for pupils according to ability or disability, or by allowing pupils to repeat a school year. In the inclusive pedagogy described above, differentiation largely happens within a class and is expressed pedagogically rather than structurally thus potentially allowing responsiveness to pupils' fluctuating differences in interaction with the learning goals. Alexander (2000) described and analysed differentiation in five countries including India. His analysis yielded the following main ways in which teachers differentiated at the level of the lesson: by task, by seating or grouping, by teacher time and attention and by outcome. All teachers probably differentiate the curriculum pupils experience to a greater or lesser extent, and more or less consciously, but as described in the previous section, where there is an assumption of certain background knowledge and pace of learning for a particular grade, this differentiation can be limited.

UNESCO has produced several guides to support the implementation of inclusive education (2001; 2004a) which encourage teachers to recognise and respond to individual differences between students:

In order to be fair to our students and facilitate learning of all students, we need to adapt or modify the curriculum so it 'fits' the students' learning needs. Teachers differentiate the curriculum so they do not discriminate and teach to only a select group of students (ie only those students who are at, or near, year (grade) or age level ability in the prescribed curriculum (UNESCO, 2004a:14).

While this guide shows understanding of the physical context that many teachers work in (an example of a lesson for grade 6 pupils has 80 students in the class) it does not obviously take account of the pedagogical context in a broader sense – to engage with teachers' existing understandings of the significance of difference between pupils, with their understanding of their role, with how they see equity for their pupils. It does however recognise limited teacher autonomy over curriculum content; 'for many teachers, content is simply what is prescribed by the ministry of education' (UNESCO, 2004a:14). But whether this is the best way to develop the pedagogical knowledge teachers need for inclusion is another question. The earlier UNESCO *Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the classroom* places less emphasis on strategies for teachers and more on participatory teacher development:

Our concern is to find approaches that encourage teachers to learn from their own experience, taking note of evidence from elsewhere certainly, but recognizing the importance of the inarticulate component of practice that is developed through a more intuitive form of learning....What is needed is for each teacher to seek deeper understandings of the nature and outcomes of particular educational events and situations....we wish to promote forms of teacher education that encourage teachers to take responsibility for their own professional learning.(Ainscow, 1994:30-31).

UNESCO (2005) is aimed at policymakers and planners and acknowledges the key role that curricular flexibility can play in allowing schools to successfully include more children in education:

It is important that the curriculum be flexible enough to provide possibilities for adjustment to individual needs and to stimulate teachers to seek solutions that can be matched with the needs and abilities of each and every pupil. Many curricula expect



all pupils to learn the same things, at the same time and by the same means and methods. But pupils are different and have different abilities and needs. (UNESCO, 2005:25)

Suggested strategies to achieve this include giving teachers some control over teaching methods and the time allocated to subjects and as well as including pre-vocational training. Some of this is reflected in recent curricular changes in Albania:

...the new curriculum is more flexible; it provides teachers with several ideas and suggestions on how to work with children in accordance to their needs and difficulties; it provides teachers of compulsory education with the alternative of using 15-20% of the total annual working hours in accordance to the needs and problems that might be faced during the education process. (Nano, 2007:5)

In some places, this seems harder to achieve. Pridmore and Son Vu argue it is difficult to challenge 'deep-seated cultures of curriculum design' and 'persuade Ministries of Education and their Curriculum Development Units to make adaptations that require considerable flexibility in delivery and trust their teachers to make good decisions' (2006:188). They acknowledge that 'accepting the principle of diversity requires a change in the philosophical, sociological, psychological and pedagogical theoretical base' (op cit) of the curriculum. Tafa argues that:

the 'sticky' authoritarian teaching methods in junior secondary schools [in Botswana] are rooted in the dominant positivist view of curriculum knowledge as uncontested 'facts' to be 'installed' into the passive students (2004:757).

This is a long way from the fundamental move towards greater democracy in the construction of knowledge and consequently in school relations implicit in inclusive pedagogy described above.

Some of the tensions involved in including disabled children in education are exposed by the Namibian Government's publication of a separate curriculum for 'learners who are intellectually impaired', raising questions such as the selection of students for this 'different' curriculum that are likely to be particularly difficult in a country living with the legacy of Apartheid. Overall, however, in a recent study looking across developing countries, World Vision argue that although disabled students are increasingly taught in mainstream schools 'this is more a form of 'integration' [where the child must adapt to fit in] than 'inclusion' as there are few adaptations to accommodate diversity' (2007:9). Grimes et al (2009) found that teachers in the long-running Lao PDR Inclusive Education project found it a significant challenge to provide differentiated curricular activities for disabled children. Sefa Dei argues that difference itself is problematic for state education in sub-Saharan Africa:

It is contended that Ghanaian, and for that matter, African education, since historical times, has been approached in terms of its fundamental contribution to national development. In emphasizing the goal of post-independence national integration 'postcolonial' education in Africa has denied heterogeneity in local populations as if difference itself was a problem. With this orientation education has undoubtedly helped create and maintain the glaring disparities and inequities; structured along lines of ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender and class, which persist and grow. (2005:1)

This comment on why state education generally assumes homogeneity leads to a consideration of the aims of schooling.

#### **4.4 Aims of schooling**

The Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All declares that all children, young people and adults have the right to:

...an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies (UNESCO, 2000:8).

This is an inclusive definition of the aims of education – inclusive of the diversity of learners and the diversity of social and economic circumstances in which they might find themselves and which they might strive to create. The aim of education here is not only individual development for individual benefit; education is also about learning to live together and to transform society. This vision is however not always easy to see in education systems around the world.

Ballard describes education systems that increase existing inequalities:

In this context disabled and other minority children ... seem likely to be further disadvantaged...especially where a government sees differential outcomes from schools as part of a natural order of inequalities in society that it is not their wish to change (1999:168)

These differential outcomes from schooling occur where education is largely concerned with the selection of a limited number of students for the best opportunities for further study and ultimately the rewards of the most highly-prized employment. Lloyd attributes difficulties in achieving the greater inclusion of children with SEN (Special Educational Needs) to this instrumental view of education with its underlying 'market ideology', which 'is unlikely to ensure any sort of entitlement to genuine educational opportunity' (2000:139-140). The 'exclusive tendencies' of education systems are noted in a developed economy such as the UK (Lloyd, 2000; Clough, 2005), but in developing countries the effect of this is arguably considerably more extreme due to limited opportunities for formal sector employment and substantial economic rewards for those who achieve most academically and so schooling becomes a 'narrowing staircase' (Serpell, 1999).

Under this 'narrowing staircase' model, in order for education to legitimately appear to be a meritocracy, all children should be given the same opportunities, which precludes much adaptation to the needs of individuals or sub-groups within classes, or for that matter between cultural or linguistic groups, or urban or rural schools. Starting from students' current knowledge and understanding – a central tenet of learner-centred pedagogy – is unwelcome as it means accepting diversity, which might highlight learners' differential access to the kind of knowledge that is valued in schooling. Efforts to include local knowledge in curricula are sometimes also contested as the point of schooling is to learn about the 'modern' world (Lai, 2010). 'Selection of the few' seems to compromise the inclusion of many children in an education relevant to their future lives. As Booth noted in 2000, several contributors to a review of inclusive education commented that their education systems were more 'exclusive' than inclusive.

#### **4.5 Legacy of medical and psychological approaches**

Turning now to broader influences on pedagogy and inclusive education, in many developing countries there are limited existing educational support services for children with impairments, and where they exist they often have a legacy of medical and psychological orientations to educational difficulties which are also reflected in teacher education programmes. Naicker describes a situation where:

South Africans historically have been exposed to very conservative theories and practices. In most cases an understanding of teaching and learning has bracketed out sociological considerations (2005:247).

This reflects the traditional views of disability discussed in chapter 1 that individualise the issues, locating the ‘problem’ within a disabled person with impairments, and avoiding the sociological i.e. recognising and challenging how existing institutions have the power to include and exclude (Tomlinson, 1982; Thomas, 2004). In this tradition of special education there is therefore a focus on impairment, on recognising and categorising difference. For example, in a four page unit on physical impairments in a Malawian student teacher handbook almost all space was taken up with defining and categorising impairments, and only four suggested teaching strategies were given e.g. avoid drawing attention to disability, without further explanation or justification (Croft, 2006). Medical knowledge generally has limited utility for educational purposes, and given the typically-crowded curriculum of initial teacher education (Lewin and Stuart, 2003), what teachers need at this stage needs to be carefully selected<sup>10</sup>. In a similar vein, Naicker argues that while:

‘some barriers... exist within children: for example, neurological impairment<sup>11</sup> .....these barriers need to be addressed through pedagogical responses, not by carrying out psychometric tests that offer little in terms of programme planning’ (2005:246).

Models of supporting disabled children in education have sometimes been copied or imported from other countries rather than adapted to local conditions or developed in response to these conditions. In contrast, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) has developed in low-income countries often with the involvement of organisations of disabled people and parents of disabled children (Werner, 1987) and so might provide useful support for the education of disabled children (Eleweke and Rodda, 2002) and insights for the development of education more broadly such as redefining its aims (Serpell, 1999).

The emphasis on medical and certain kinds of psychological knowledge risks either absolving teachers for responsibility for their disabled pupils or disempowering teachers as it erodes their confidence in finding solutions to increasing the inclusion of all the children in their class in learning. Lynch and McCall (2009) studied itinerant teachers who supported the education of visually-impaired pupils in mainstream schools in Malawi by visiting them at

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<sup>10</sup> This is a complex issue and as with many other aspects of access for disabled children, ultimately depends on local and national contexts. For example, it is often useful for teachers to be able to spot signs of sensory impairments, and particularly where health services are inadequate, it might be useful for primary teachers to carry out simple screening for these (as detailed in Werner 1987). In a worst case scenario, even if no other help is then available, with a problem-solving orientation, a little knowledge of simple strategies to support communication, and some confidence to apply these, teachers can make a difference to the educational progress of those who see or hear less well than others in the class (see conclusion).

<sup>11</sup> Thomas’ (2004) three-way distinction between impairments, impairment effects and disability appears useful but there is insufficient space to explore this here.

school. Lynch and McCall found that the mainstream teachers sometimes saw the role of the itinerant teachers as relieving them of responsibility for a pupil, rather than enabling them to learn ways of including the pupil in learning. This particularly happened when the itinerant teachers withdrew a pupil from class for individual teaching. When the itinerant teachers worked in the class however they were able to help the visually-impaired child and other pupils to access the mainstream curriculum, felt more 'welcomed' as a teaching peer, and the mainstream teacher learnt more about Braille and how it is taught.

One final influence of the psychometric tradition is the favouring of quantitative research, which when applied to inclusive education sees researchers frequently resorting to surveys of attitudes to inclusion as mentioned above. A broad view of pedagogy as the ideas that surround teaching and learning practices suggests that more ethnographic research on inclusive education exploring the experiences of disabled students, their classmates, and their teachers would be useful (Ghesquière and Van der Aalsvoort, 2004; Robson and Evans, 2003; Jeffery and Singal, 2008).

#### **4.6 Fragmentation of services**

Following on from the recognition above that there remains a strong tradition of viewing disability through medical and psychological lenses, it is also important to recognise that there are other understandings of disability held by stakeholders. Services for disabled children are in many places particularly subject to organisational and also related ideological fragmentation. In some countries disabled children have only recently become the responsibility of the ministry of education (Miles and Singal, 2010), and are often at least partly the responsibility of other ministries such as health and social services. As well as two or more ministries there is also much third sector involvement in the disability sector such as charities, faith groups, and other local, national and international non-governmental organisations including self-advocacy groups of disabled people (Disabled Peoples' Organisations – DPOs) and self-support groups run by parents of disabled children. All of these are likely to have varied and sometimes conflicting approaches to disability and inclusion such as charity, welfarist, religious, and human rights approaches, both within and between organisations.

Alur (2000) describes the many actors involved with disabled children in India and argues that this, together with differences between the two ministries involved, has led to 'conceptual fragmentation'. There is a similar need for co-ordination of provision in other countries and as this paper has shown stakeholders coming from a variety of Western and non-Western societies are also likely to have potentially conflicting assumptions about education and other concepts of relevance to the development of more inclusive pedagogy. An understanding of the different approaches to disability outlined in chapter one could perhaps help stakeholders understand their own and each other's rationales for choosing particular policies and practices and contribute to more coherent provision in places where material resources are often limited.

#### **4.7 Teachers and teaching and learning conditions**

It is important to acknowledge the extremely difficult teaching and learning conditions experienced by many teachers and pupils in developing countries. Large classes, frequent teacher and pupil absence, limited teaching and learning materials, inadequate shelter etc. cannot but constrain pedagogical options and pupils' ability to learn (Croft, 2002a; UNESCO,

2005) Viewing teachers as ‘potentially competent but struggling to cope in difficult circumstances’ (Akyeampong et al., 2006:170) challenges the commonly held deficit view of such teachers. There are also teacher shortages in many developing countries, and in response to this large numbers of unqualified teachers. While some show considerable commitment and imagination in teaching, others struggle with a weak grasp of subject matter and the language of instruction, and perhaps feel less than confident in displaying the flexibility needed to teach more inclusively. In response to the 18 million primary teachers needed over next decade to meet universal primary education goals (ID21, September 2007) there is pressure for initial teacher education to be shorter (Lewin and Stuart, 2003). This raises questions about what kind of knowledge to support more inclusive education can usefully be included in initial teacher education. Many systems also have frequent teacher transfer and unfilled posts that affect school development. There appears to be little or no research evidence, but all of this is likely to affect how inclusive pedagogy can be. Although writing about the UK, Clough’s comment seems very relevant here:

We have to understand more about the ways in which inevitably limited resources may be correlated – sometimes quite subtly – with attitudes, and we have to find a way of understanding teachers’ resistance to inclusive practice without pathologizing, or even demonizing it. (Clough, 2005:80)

Holding on to a view of inclusive education as a process is important in the face of what could be seen as overwhelming physical and related conceptual challenges as described in this chapter. Inclusive education is about continuing to take the next step towards greater participation of all children in learning, including disabled children. This discussion of some of the socio-economic and cultural-historic structures likely to operate in low-income countries has analysed how they might act as barriers to inclusion following the social model of disability. Using the interactionist approach to disability introduced in chapter 1, and the approach to inclusive pedagogy discussed in chapter 2, there is also space however to recognise the agency of all those involved in constructing and deconstructing disability within classrooms. It is argued that the barriers or challenges described above are part of the framework within which teachers negotiate their practice, but that aspects of this framework are evolving, and there is the possibility that at some levels at least, teachers might be able to influence this evolution. A structuralist analysis of disability therefore has strengths as well as limitations in this context.

#### **4.8 Teachers moving towards inclusion**

There are some accounts of teachers moving towards greater inclusion of all learners ahead of broader systemic change. Ainscow argues that ‘scrutiny of the practice of what we sometimes call “ordinary teachers” provides the best starting point for understanding how classrooms can be made more inclusive (1999:56). As part of a larger study of pedagogy and teacher education, Croft (2002a) interviewed lower primary teachers in rural schools in Malawi whose practice was locally-respected. Various potentially pedagogically-significant differences between pupils came up in these discussions, such as wealth, gender, age, socio-economic status, ability, absence rate, access to pencils and notebooks, and behaviour in class. A silence within the discussions with these teachers, however, was any mention of impairment. Teachers appeared to think of their class as composed of sub-groups with the above characteristics, and discussion and observation of their teaching found that they used a range strategies to address the needs of some these groups (collectively and sometimes individually), such as code-switching into the local language on occasion so that children who

were frequently absent would be able to understand the lesson (see appendix for more detail on the teaching strategies). All four means of differentiation in Alexander's framework were used to a limited degree. The student teachers in the study seemed to mainly learn these practices from experienced teachers, and at times what they did went against official policy, or was a style of teaching, such as using aspects of oral culture, that was largely unrecognised by teacher education (Croft, 2002b; 2006).

Johnstone and Chapman studied the impact of teacher education promoting inclusive education in Lesotho and found that this helped teachers to have 'goodwill' towards students with disabilities, and to be able to informally screen pupils for academic and sensory functioning, but that:

the Ministry's training placed little emphasis on how differentiation or accommodation of diverse learners' needs can be met in large group settings. This lack of emphasis in training created a lack of emphasis in teaching (2009:139).

From classroom observation, Johnstone and Chapman did however find that the most common response to disabled students who were not benefitting from the whole class teaching in lesson time was to teach the children after lessons in their 'spare time' (see also Stubbs, 1995). This practice appears common in school cultures where keeping the whole class 'together' in formal lessons is important. Croft (2006) found that several Malawian student teacher educational autobiographies mentioned how staying behind after class as pupils had helped them. Similarly, Arbeiter and Hartley's research in Uganda found teachers who stayed after school to help pupils:

...teachers who were clearly opposed to integration showed little concern about different needs in their classes and had negative opinions about children with disabilities. Teachers who had a positive opinion about integration responded to different needs in their classrooms and showed concern about children with all kinds of special needs, even after the lessons. (Arbeiter and Hartley, 2002:74).

Another form of help outside lessons is supplementary education run by NGOs. A community development programme focused on disability issues that has been running for over three years in Karnataka in Southern India has helped disabled adults and the parents of disabled children set up village committees that run inclusive afterschool clubs and vacation schemes alongside support for income generation. These aim to provide an enjoyable and responsive supplementary education that helps children succeed in the more traditional schools. One unexpected consequence of these developments was that school teachers were interested in what was happening in the clubs and asked the programme to provide them with professional development on learner-centred teaching (Anand, 2009).

There are few accounts of what teachers actually do during lessons to promote inclusion in low-income countries, although Croft's method of interviewing teachers after observing teaching seemed to access some of the teacher thinking and decision-making that can expose pedagogy. What these examples also show is that where there appears to be limited space to manoeuvre within current pedagogy, teachers and others have found space to be more inclusive outside the formal structures of lessons. How sustainable this is, and how broadly inclusive of all teachers and all children needs to be considered.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

### **5.1 Is the pedagogy needed to include disabled children in mainstream classes in any way ‘special’?**

Thinking about pedagogy as much more than teaching practices allowed a consideration of the broader context of education and some of the issues of culture and power that affect how and why schooling includes and excludes. Lewis and Norwich's (2005) unique differences and general differences positions helped analyse the degree to which ‘special’ pedagogy for particular groups of pupils (often impairment categories) might exist. Their concept of ‘intensification’ where general pedagogical approaches are used more intensely with some pupils also seems useful and linked to this the idea that rather than seeing a dichotomy between common or specialised teaching, it is more useful to see these as either ends of a continuum. For certain groups of pupils, knowing the likely the areas of intensification – ‘orienting concepts’ - might be a useful starting point in planning teaching and learning, but seeing disabled children as rounded human beings means that orienting concepts can only ever be a limited part of the pedagogical knowledge needed to teach them. Pedagogical practices that differed in kind from general pedagogy, rather than only in intensity of use, appeared to be very limited if present at all, although as an exploratory study definitive conclusions were not drawn. As Lewis and Norwich point out, it is not always easy to say when a particular use of a strategy becomes so intense that it could be considered to differ in kind.

Seeing ‘specialised’ pedagogy as one end of a continuum with common pedagogy will mean that what is special will differ from place to place depending on what pedagogical approaches are common in a particular context – if all teaching of reading is via the ‘look-and-say’ approach, then a phonic approach more helpful to some children would be ‘special’, but if mixed methods were commonly used, phonics would be ‘nothing special’. Calls for general education reform to implement inclusive education recognise that common pedagogy (for reasons not necessarily within the control of teachers) is not meeting the individual needs or the common needs of many children, and that developing a pedagogy that was more responsive to the diversity of all children would necessarily include disabled children. For example, Kimani's interviews with deaf teachers of deaf children in Kenya yielded specific insights into textbook design features that they thought would promote their pupils' understanding of the curriculum<sup>12</sup>. Arguably, these features, such as short sentences and paragraphs, multiple illustrations and use of bullet points, would help many other children struggling to access the curriculum.

Miles and Singal (2010) argue that the current international focus on EFA presents a considerable opportunity for general education reform including the purposes of education; ‘an opportunity to engage in debates which are otherwise seen as being the prerogative of philosophers’ (2010:11). In the consideration given to the aims of schooling, and more generally to the essence of inclusive education, this paper has attempted to outline some of these debates. Inclusive education is concerned with recognising and accepting the full humanity of all children, moving in the direction of responding to all of who they are and what they bring to the learning process. Some children however need more support than others to make their contribution and when this is not available in the class they have

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<sup>12</sup> Unpublished internal report on doctoral fieldwork, C W Kimani, University of Sussex, June 2010

difficulty learning (Kershner and Florian, 2009). Some, but by no means all, of these children will have long-term mental or physical impairments that interact with the school context in various ways to construct disability. While much can be done to make learning generally accessible, there are probably limits to what it makes sense to provide in every class at all times. For example, it is unlikely in the foreseeable future that all teachers will be fluent in the local sign language. The focus for action here in promoting inclusion is higher up the education system, so that the support for communication is available when it is needed.

There is therefore the dilemma of how much to focus limited resources on general education system improvement (risking disabled pupils being ‘mainstreamed into invisibility’), and how much to provide the organisational structures (perhaps including district-level support teachers, teacher education, and after school clubs) that address specific pedagogical needs of disabled children that are not currently met in schools. The general push to reform curricula, assessment and teaching strategies to respond better to diversity is a major undertaking as some of the challenges highlighted in chapter 3 show. This suggests taking up *as well* the more manageable task of incorporating smaller changes into existing schools to counter the particular disadvantages often faced by disabled children:

In this context [valuing a broad and learner-centred curriculum] what seems to be masquerading as a SEN-specific approach may be concealing a position that (ideally) would be applied to all learners but, perhaps because of perceived system features, is articulated in relation to the less constrained special needs context (Lewis and Norwich, 2005:211-212).

This then is a ‘twin-track’ approach to providing greater equality for disabled pupils, as has also been used for promoting gender equality and for disability more generally (DFID, 2000). This is not an easy compromise to make in education (Miles and Singal, 2010) as any form of distinct provision risks among other things, disempowering mainstream teachers and creating difference. Inclusive education is not only about including everybody today, but is also the preparation of children and young people to create and live in a more inclusive society in the future. The question perhaps is whether some form of transition structures, such as resource centres or units attached to mainstream schools, help or hinder the process of inclusion in a particular locale at a particular time<sup>13</sup>. A ‘twin-track’ approach at present appears a pragmatic way forward while holding on to the principle of always seeking to move towards greater inclusion.

## **5.2 How can pedagogy become more inclusive?**

In both the unique differences and in the general differences positions, responding to pupils’ individual needs is foregrounded. While individualising teaching and learning highlights existing tensions in the purposes of schooling, as well as being practically challenging, for mainstream teachers in economically developed societies, this issue seems to have an even more uneasy position in the pedagogies of more collective cultures and in poorer countries where class sizes are often large and education is even more selective and ‘high stakes’. Ainscow (1999) advocates moving away from the individualised teaching that is the pedagogical heritage of special education and finding ways of personalising education within whole class teaching, for example where common presentation allows for personalised

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<sup>13</sup> The use of resource centres and units is widespread and controversial, for example, as with all specialist provision there is the risk of creating vested professional interests in certain structures continuing and for inclusion to stall. There is unfortunately insufficient space in this paper to discuss the many aspects of this issue.



responses. The knowledge needed to teach disabled learners within a diverse mainstream class is not therefore likely to be found in special schools (Croft, 1987). Special education professionals can however have some relevant knowledge to contribute to the process of developing this knowledge where they work with their mainstream colleagues as Pinnock and Lewis (2008) note occurred in a Save the Children programme in Mongolia. Pinnock and Lewis also argued that it is good to involve existing special educators, where they exist, so that they do not feel 'shut out' of inclusive education.

Other responses to the challenge of learner diversity were the Malawian lower primary teachers' giving individual help outside lessons and supplementary education organised by a local NGO. There is a much still to be done however, and three ways of researching and developing inclusive pedagogy are suggested below, although in practice these are likely to overlap.

### **5.2.1 Disabled people's involvement in research**

Emancipatory research, whereby within and through the research process, existing power relations in society are challenged, is a strong tradition in Disability Studies (Barnes, 2001; Stone, 1999). Within the field of International Development participatory research methods have a long history and similar methodological concerns. Participatory research and development with children and young people in a range of developing countries is described in Johnson et al. (1998), and Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010). Although not always easy to achieve (Arbeiter and Hartley, 2002), participatory methods have been used successfully on related equality issues, such as Leach et al.'s (2000) work on girls' inclusion and exclusion in schools. Echoing comments in chapter 1 about the importance of recognising the lived experience of disabled people, Koistinen (2006) used a life history approach to research the educational experiences of young disabled people in Zambia working with some of her participants as research assistants. Writing more generally about the Education for All agenda, Alexander (2008) also suggests using pupils' views as an alternative definition of pedagogical quality. The DFID-funded Disability Knowledge and Research programme involved 'collaborative working between disabled people in the North and South and the active involvement of Southern DPOs' (n.d.) at all levels of the research process. As part of this programme, Choudhuri et al. (2005) consulted many disabled children and young people in their research in Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam and South Africa. Listening to what children have to say is a core principle of inclusive education and so participatory research has a key role to play in its development. Where disabled children and young people have very little agency (Ghai, 2002) efforts to include them as active participants in research, supporting them to have some choice and voice, might become emancipatory.

### **5.2.2 Reflective practice and action research**

There is an inevitable connection between assuming that pupil diversity is pedagogically significant and that knowledge for teaching and learning can only, in the final analysis, be constructed locally, facing the diversity of today's class. This implies a largely constructivist pedagogy for teacher education and development in which teachers develop the knowledge they need. Adding the role of other people to this process, such as fellow teachers, disabled adults and pupils, parents, advisors, support teachers, curriculum developers, teacher educators and researchers, leads to a social constructivist approach (Stuart et al., 2009). For example, linking back to the previous section, disabled children and young people have 'expert knowledge' on their own experiences, and will very often know which seat in class is

most suitable for them. Most if not all teachers are likely to think back over their lessons from time to time, either alone or in discussion with others, thus potentially learning from their own and others' experiences more or less consciously. Promoting reflective practice via teacher education aims to enhance and perhaps formalise this process (Zeichner and Liston, 1987). Samuel and Pillay (2002) wrote about an initial teacher education programme in South Africa that aimed to develop student teachers' 'critical reflective practice' as a way of preparing them for the diversity of multilingual and multicultural educational settings. Action research is a more structured way of analysing practice and usually involves investigating a specific problem, experimenting with solutions, refining practice from the results of this experimentation, and reporting on the research in some way (Stuart et al., 2009). Miles and Kaplan (2005) and Miles (2009) report on the innovative use of images in action research to promote inclusive education in Zambia and Tanzania.

### **5.2.3 Researching and sharing pedagogy and process across contexts**

It is possible to take analyses of pedagogy from one context and see if this offers avenues to explore in another context how teachers understand and respond to difference among their pupils, and how they learn to do these things. As Alexander explains:

The vocabulary of possibilities is vastly increased and enriched if we extend it beyond the boundaries of one school to others, one region to others, one culture to others and one country to others. (2000:27)

This paper is itself an attempt to do this although it is acknowledged that it is limited by the constraints of available time and apparent lack of detailed literature on inclusive pedagogy in developing countries.

Examples of strategies teachers have used to respond to pupil diversity in whole class teaching in similar situations might be of use to teachers as they consider their pedagogical options. In education systems where a lot of pedagogical decisions are embedded in curriculum documents such as teachers' guides and textbooks, then the focus for pedagogical change is also higher up the education system with curriculum developers. As inclusive pedagogy is a process however, examples of how teachers have learnt about their pupils and incorporated this in their teaching might be more informative than looking at the products of this process for teachers and teacher educators. As noted earlier, the Index for Inclusion developed in the UK by Booth et al. (2000) details a process of school self-development to promote inclusive cultures, policies and practices and includes aspects that are relevant to pedagogy such as a set of self-review questions on how lessons respond to student diversity. Booth and Black-Hawkins (2001) explored the role of the Index for Inclusion to help develop inclusive education in Brazil, India and South Africa. They concluded that the participative process, key concepts and framework of the Index were useful internationally, but that particularly in resource-constrained schools and where universal education had not been achieved; considerable local adaptation of the detailed review questions would be needed. Engelbrecht et al. have continued the process of developing an Index for Inclusion for South Africa (2006) and Grimes et al (2007) detail developments based on the Index in Lao PDR.

More work is needed on mapping the kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes that would be useful to teachers in developing inclusive education in particular contexts. How much of this is considered essential to all teachers and how much needs to be available to certain teachers as and when they need it (for example if they have a Braille user in their class) should also be

addressed. A related issue is the point in a teacher's career when they need certain kinds of knowledge – in initial teacher education (where available) or as part of continuing professional development. There is a wide variety of practice in coverage of inclusive education and teaching children with 'special educational needs' in initial teacher education, with some curricula focusing on medical conditions rather than teaching to address difficulties in learning (Croft, 2006). Information and communications technology is increasingly accessible and offers opportunities for teachers and other education professionals to share ideas, such as through the Enabling Education Network (EENET)<sup>14</sup>. The greater the pedagogical distance between contexts, the more cautious pedagogical borrowing probably needs to be (Croft, 2002a; Rose et al., 2005; Stuart et al., 2009). Knowledge from other contexts is however, only a support to teacher learning through practice and experimentation in consultation with others around them who understand the specifics of their teaching situation.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

With the increasingly diverse classes found in the era of EFA, existing pedagogy contributes to the exclusion of many children including disabled children, and repetition as the major form of differentiating the curricular journey that pupils take through the school system is no longer affordable for individuals or for societies. It is possible to hold a broad view of inclusive education while recognising that many disabled children experience particularly pronounced exclusion. Some of what excludes disabled children excludes many others as well, and indeed, children have multiple identities and can for example, be excluded by the interaction of their impairment and gender.

Developing inclusive pedagogy involves hard choices about the degree to which it might be useful at times to identify difference and respond to this in a way that is pedagogically distinct from what the majority of pupils in a class experience. In the centralised education systems typical of many developing countries where teachers, and sometimes head teachers, have limited autonomy (Alexander, 2008), the significant sites of reforming pedagogy might at least initially be as much outside individual classrooms as inside them. Curriculum development, teacher education, other teacher support structures and in many cases more teaching and learning materials are likely to help teachers develop inclusive pedagogy but cannot prescribe 'recipes' for inclusion which is a process of responding to particular children. Researching pedagogy and the processes of its development can help share knowledge about possible forms that inclusive pedagogy can take in particular contexts, such as in the resource-constrained and traditionally collective societies of many developing countries. This could contribute to the contextually-sensitive development of inclusive pedagogy, for example by teachers' action research and by including the perspectives of disabled children and adults.

Although teachers and pupils have some agency in developing inclusive schools, the analysis of the barriers to developing inclusive pedagogy showed how broader socio-economic forces operated to construct disability at school level. This mirrors Ogbu's comment about the experiences of ethnic minority students in US schools: 'While the classroom is "the scene of the battle" (Roberts, 1971), the causes of the battle may well lie elsewhere' (1981:13). The exclusion of disabled children from schooling in many countries therefore throws down a challenge to current constructions of education – a narrowly conceived utilitarian view of

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<sup>14</sup> [www.eenet.org.uk](http://www.eenet.org.uk)

schooling progressively excludes more and more children through the schooling cycle, and aims more or less consciously to select the few. It is ill-designed to cope with the pressure to give more children meaningful access to learning in the era of EFA. Similarly, too great a focus on individualised responses to disabled children importing strategies from special education is unlikely to be practicable or desirable in mainstream classes in creating more inclusive education. The uncomfortable position of teachers who in their work express the tension of an education system being pulled in opposing directions needs to be recognised, and last, but by no means least, the effect on all children of these competing forces needs to be recognised in order to better prepare them for their lives together in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Pedagogy affects not only what teachers do, but crucially what they can imagine themselves doing as teachers. While there are undoubtedly many challenges to the greater inclusion of disabled children in education, where little has been attempted before, as is the case in many areas of developing countries, successful inclusion for some children can be achieved more easily than is sometimes imagined:

*Simenda was a secondary school pupil in rural Namibia with moderate hearing loss, struggling to cope in Grade 8 and at the bottom of his class academically. One or two of his teachers suspected he might have hearing impairment and when regional officials visited asking if there were any pupils who should be tested for this, preliminary results suggested that Simenda might well have hearing impairment. He was referred to the hospital, but in the meantime, his teachers were briefed on supportive strategies to help him in class, such as allowing him to select the seating position in class that he found most helpful, and checking periodically that he was looking at the correct page of the textbook and otherwise appeared to be following the lesson. After two terms his results in class tests had substantially improved - to having the eighth highest results in a class of around thirty.<sup>15</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> This example comes from the author's experience as a regional advisor on special and inclusive education working for the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture in northern Namibia, January 1995 to July 1997.

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## Appendices



## **Appendix 1 Strategies used by Malawian lower primary teachers in response to pupil diversity**

- Code-switching into local language to support the frequently absent
- Finding a pencil or two for some of those who had not brought one
- Giving permission to fetch pencil/paper from siblings in other classes
- Organising drawing/writing on ground for those with no pencil or paper
- Calling on volunteers and non-volunteers
- ‘Concentrating’ on ‘duller’ pupils not only ‘clever’ ones from ‘clever families’
- Not calling on ‘shy girls’ because waiting for answer delayed lesson
- Making sure younger pupils were involved and not disturbing others, eg writing in sand at back of class, addressing questions to young pupils
- Varying methods to alleviate boredom (group method, discussion, avoiding too much lecturing)
- Eliciting choral response and choral repetition by groups not only whole class for involvement and assessment
- Using songs instead of punishment for class control, encouraging participation and building positive relationships
- Using older children as group leaders and class monitors
- Giving extension tasks for children who completed written work
- ‘Learning from friends’ during whole-class teaching – more able pupils answering first
- Discrete ‘coaching’ comments to child needing support to answer in front of the class
- Using little negative verbal feedback, - if child did not give correct answer, teacher then asked a second child and then back to first for another chance to answer correctly
- Team-teaching (amalgamating classes and taking it in turns to lead lesson while other helps keep children on task)
- Staying behind after class to give pupils extra help



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### Report summary:

This is an exploratory study suggesting ways of analysing challenges for developing countries in the move to greater inclusion of disabled children and young people in learning. The paper focuses on pedagogical challenges to realising more inclusive education. Pedagogy encompasses not only the practice of teaching and learning, but also the ideas that inform practice held at various levels of the education system and in broader society. This paper therefore examines aspects of teaching and learning and ideas about the social purposes of education. It is based on a review of relevant literature drawing together insights from developing and developed economies. The paper is divided into five chapters. After a brief introductory chapter, Chapter 2 looks at analyses of the concepts of disability and inclusive education in order to explain the rationale for looking at challenges to educational access for disabled children and young people. Chapter 3 considers the relationship between pedagogy and inclusion. Chapter 4 considers some of the pedagogical challenges to inclusive education and Chapter 5 concludes the paper by looking at the implications of the review for future research. This paper aims to be an introduction to some current work on disability and educational access for those working more generally in education and development and thus seeks to contribute to mainstreaming disability in educational research, policy and practice.

### Author notes:

Dr Alison Croft is a Lecturer in Education at the Centre for International Education, University of Sussex. Alison's research interests focus on primary education, teacher education, special education and inclusive education. These are linked through looking at the processes of responding to pupil diversity at various levels in education systems. She previously worked on the DFID-funded MUSTER (multi-site teacher education research) project. Before coming to Sussex, Alison undertook research on UK government policy on special and inclusive education at the RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People). Her previous professional experience includes working as a regional advisor supporting the education of disabled children in Namibia, and as a mainstream class teacher and a support teacher in schools where disabled children were taught in mainstream classes in England. She has also worked as a trainer on disability, development and education for non-governmental organisations.

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