

# The bedrock of inclusion:

why investing in the education workforce is critical to the delivery of SDG4



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## About the organisations that commissioned this report

**ActionAid** is a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. It works with over 15 million people in 45 countries, with communities, people's organisations, women's movements, groups and networks, social movements and other allies to overcome the structural causes and consequences of poverty and injustice. ActionAid connects work at community level with broader efforts and struggles for justice to make the greatest contribution towards a just, equitable and sustainable world.

The logo for ActionAid, featuring the word "actionaid" in a bold, lowercase, red sans-serif font.

**Education International** is the voice of teachers and education workers on the global level. It is the world's largest federation of education unions and associations, representing 32 million educators in nearly 400 organisations in over 170 countries and territories, across the globe. More information on Education International's work in inclusive education and decent work for persons with disabilities can be found [here](#).

The logo for Education International, featuring a blue stylized figure icon to the left of the text "Education International" in blue, with "Internationale de l'Éducation" and "Internacional de la Educación" in smaller blue text below it, and "Bildungsinternationale" in blue text at the bottom.

**Light for the World** is a global disability and development organisation enabling eye health services and supporting people with disabilities in some of the poorest regions of the world. We break down unjust barriers to unlock the biggest potential! We focus on the poorest and hardest to reach, because they need it most. We aim to change the entire system, because we want our impact to last. We work with partners, because together we are stronger. We work with underserved communities in countries including Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda.

The logo for Light for the World, featuring a yellow circle to the left of the word "LIGHT" in bold black uppercase letters, with "FOR THE WORLD" in smaller black uppercase letters below it.

# ABOUT THIS STUDY

**This report, which focuses on Ethiopia, is part of a multi-country study undertaken on behalf of ActionAid, Education International and Light for the World in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria and Tanzania.**

The research explores the current state of investment in the education workforce for disability-inclusive education, and the realistic requirements for putting inclusive education into practice. It was carried out using a combination of desk review and qualitative engagement, including consultation of peer reviewed and grey literature such as government reports, policy briefs and issue papers, and interviews with 96 key informants across the five countries.

Investing in the education workforce is the bedrock of inclusion and critical to ensuring all children, especially those with disabilities enjoy their right to education. Whilst well-trained and qualified teachers are at the forefront of this process, they cannot work alone. Support from equally well-trained and qualified education leaders, administrators, and support personnel (e.g. therapists, psychologists, community-based rehabilitation workers and specialists in braille and sign language) is key to an education system equipped to respond to children's diverse learning needs. As such, whilst much of the research centres on teachers, acknowledging their fundamental role in the education process, we have opted for a wider scope of analysis in order to understand the extent to which the broader education workforce is currently equipped to include all children, especially those with disabilities, and deliver on SDG4.

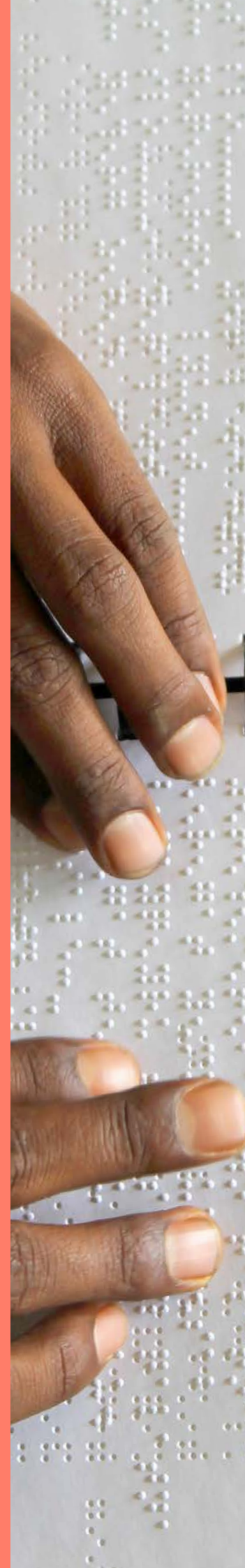
In addition, whilst recognising that, inclusive education aims to address the diverse needs of all learners, this study focuses specifically on disability-inclusion.

This report opens with an introduction, providing some background and highlighting key evidence from around the world that helped to shape the scope of the country studies. This is followed by the in-depth country study. It also highlights (often serious) gaps in knowledge and data, which hampered the achievement of the country studies.

A thematic analysis of the research findings was conducted, to inform the development of the report and develop actionable country-specific recommendations. This found:

- That implementing inclusive education requires investment in education sector financing and widespread change of structures, systems, policies, practices and cultures;
- That a long-term perspective is needed to achieve impactful and sustained change (inclusive education should not be funded through one-off, short-term initiatives);
- That existing structures and systems should be utilised and strengthened;
- That inclusive education involves a range of stakeholders including government at all levels and across ministries (including education, health, finance and social services), teacher training institutions, schools, civil society organisations and communities, and involves a shift in attitudes and beliefs about education and the rights of persons with disabilities.

The study acknowledges certain limitations. While recognising that provision of quality, public disability-inclusive education involves system-wide change at all levels, some important issues were outside of the scope of the research project. For example, strategies to address attitudinal barriers and discriminatory practices, and investments to improve access to school such as transport and accessible infrastructure. It is also important to note that the study focuses on public basic education and did not include the private education sector.



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# FOREWORD

**In recent years, Ethiopia has made great strides in promoting the inclusion of girls and boys with disabilities in education. However, millions of children with disabilities remain out of school whilst those in school continue to need improved support.**

Well-trained and qualified teachers are at the forefront of inclusive education, but urgent investment in the education workforce is critical to ensure all children, especially those with disabilities, enjoy their right to education.

This report, a collaboration between ActionAid, Education International and Light for the World, highlights obstacles to education workforce development and financing that stands in the way of delivering disability-inclusive education and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

The analysis uses data from Ethiopia to address the extent to which the broader education workforce can meet the needs of all children.

This report acknowledges the central role that teachers play in the learning process, highlighting that to fulfil this role to the best of their abilities, teachers need to be equipped to teach all children and have the necessary support to help them adapt their teaching practices to the different learning needs of pupils, including those with disabilities.

However, despite significant progress to date, the report finds that much remains to be done and unless the government commits to allocating adequate financial and human resources (including additional well-trained and remunerated teachers and education support personnel) and ensuring the required structures are in place from the federal to Woreda levels, millions of children's right to quality, inclusive education will remain unfulfilled.

We hope that the findings in this report are helpful to practitioners, activists and policymakers and other stakeholders who are united behind national and global efforts to ensure SDG4 is achieved and that no child is left behind.



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**ActionAid Ethiopia Country Director**



# GLOSSARY

*For the purpose of this study the following definitions were used by the project team.<sup>i</sup>*

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<b>Disability</b>	Following the WHO and UNCRPD social definition of disability as an “ <i>evolving concept</i> ” that results from the interaction between an individual with impairments and contextual factors such as attitudinal, social and physical environments, resulting in limitations of one’s ability to participate fully in activities and effectively in society on an equal basis with others. For the purpose of this study we will use the internationally comparable impairment categories - physical, intellectual, behavioural, sensory - unless disaggregated differently within country-specific data.
<b>Education support personnel</b>	Those trained in inclusive education, including itinerant teachers, resource centre staff, specialists in child development (including speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists) and special needs teachers.
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	Following the UNCRPD definition, <sup>1</sup> inclusive education is: (a) A fundamental human right of all learners and not, in the case of children, the right of a parent or caregiver. Parental responsibilities in this regard are subordinate to the rights of the child; (b) A principle that values the wellbeing of all students, respects their inherent dignity and autonomy, and acknowledges individuals’ requirements and their ability to effectively be included in and contribute to society; (c) A means of realising other human rights, and the primary means by which persons with disabilities can lift themselves out of poverty, obtain the means to participate fully in their communities and be safeguarded from exploitation. It is also the primary means of achieving inclusive societies; (d) The result of a process of continuing and proactive commitment to eliminating barriers impeding the right to education, together with changes to culture, policy and practice of regular schools to accommodate and effectively include all students. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on inclusive education as it relates to disability.
<b>In-service training</b>	Any learning opportunity for teachers who are already certified as per country qualifications and/ or teaching in practice.
<b>Pre-service training</b>	Includes “ <i>recognised and organised, private and public educational programmes designed to train future teachers to formally enter the profession at a specified level of education. Graduates receive a government recognised teaching qualification.</i> ” <sup>2</sup>
<b>Schools – Inclusive</b>	Schools designed so that children with disabilities attend regular classes with age-appropriate peers, learn the curriculum to the extent feasible, and are provided with additional resources and support depending on need.
<b>Schools – Integrated</b>	Schools that provide separate classes and additional resources for children with disabilities, which are attached to mainstream schools.
<b>Schools – Special</b>	Schools that provide highly specialised services for children with disabilities and remain separate from broader educational institutions, also called segregated schools.
<b>Special needs education</b>	Education for children with additional needs related to difficulties to learn or access education compared with other children of the same age, for example due to disadvantages resulting from gender, ethnicity, poverty, learning difficulties or disability.

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i. Unless otherwise noted, the definitions included here are direct text as presented in the World Report on Disability (WHO and World Bank, 2011)

# ACRONYMS

<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>ESDP</b>	Education Sector Development Programme
<b>ETB</b>	Ethiopian Birr
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEQIP</b>	General Education Quality Improvement Program
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NORAD</b>	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SN/IES</b>	Special Needs/ Inclusive Education Strategy
<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>UNCRPD</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



PHOTO: LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

...in most low- and middle-income countries, children with disabilities are more likely to be out of school than any other group of children.

# SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1. Rethinking inclusive education starts with strengthening the education workforce

### Despite global commitments, children with disabilities are being left behind

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) makes inclusive education an explicit global priority, and all member States have committed to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, in most low- and middle-income countries, children with disabilities are more likely to be out of school than any other group of children.<sup>4</sup> As the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report noted, "the promise of reaching the furthest behind first is not being kept", and "children with disabilities are particularly at risk of exclusion from education".<sup>5</sup>

A lack of data, comparable measurements and agreed definitions means that credible global statistics are lacking.<sup>ii</sup> But the best estimates are that, in low- and lower-middle income countries, around 40% of children with disabilities are out of school at primary level, and 55% at lower secondary level, although these numbers vary enormously between countries.<sup>6</sup> In many lower-income countries, even when children with disabilities do attend school, they are segregated from their classmates, receive a poorer overall quality of education, and are more likely to drop out than their peers.<sup>7</sup> In 10 low- and middle-income countries, children with disabilities were 19% less likely to achieve minimum proficiency in reading than those without.<sup>8</sup>

ii. This is also a global issue, as the UIS noted: "because of the scarcity of national data, it is currently not possible to generate statistics on the status of persons with disabilities with regard to education that are regionally or globally representative"



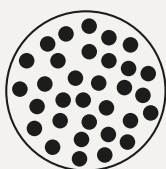
Far too little is known about how disability intersects with other disadvantages, but some studies suggest that girls with disabilities are among the most marginalised groups in society, as a result of social norms and cultural biases around gender and disability.<sup>9</sup>

In 2020, widespread school closures introduced in 194 countries in an effort to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic shed a harsh light on existing

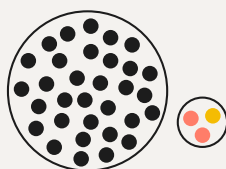
inequalities, both revealing and reinforcing patterns of disadvantage and discrimination in access to education. With an estimated 91% of the global school population affected by these measures, learners with disabilities are among those most likely to be excluded and face additional setbacks to their education due to factors such as a lack of accessible resources or technology to support continuous remote learning, or a scaling back of specialised support measures.<sup>10</sup>

### A summary of the evidence on inclusive education

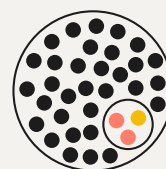
*Adapted from Principe T. (2018) Rethinking Disability: A primer for educators and education unions.*



**Exclusion** occurs when students are directly or indirectly prevented from or denied access to education in any form.



**Segregation** occurs when the education of students with disabilities is provided in separate environments designed or used to respond to a particular or various impairments, in isolation from students without disabilities.



**Integration** is a process of placing persons with disabilities in existing mainstream educational institutions, as long as the former can adjust to the standardised requirements of such institutions.



**Inclusion** involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences.

*Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structured changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion.*

### Box 1. What do we mean by inclusive education in this study?

At its simplest, inclusive education means that all children learn together in the same schools. This requires education systems that can adapt to the different learning needs of all students. Inclusive education is widely seen as a philosophical approach to education which ensures that diverse students of all backgrounds learn together in the same classroom, and seeks to transform education systems in order to respond to these different needs - irrespective of abilities or disabilities.<sup>11</sup> For the purposes of this report, however, the authors focus on disability-inclusive education specifically, while recognising the broader understanding of “inclusive education”. Finally, because inclusive education is a process which can take time, the study also aims to situate current efforts by governments as part of a process of moving *towards* inclusive education.

## A well-trained education workforce is the bedrock of inclusion

Poor quality of teaching, inadequate teacher numbers, limited training for workforce development and lack of financing are all cited as significant barriers to the provision of inclusive education.<sup>12</sup>

Inclusive education begins with qualified teachers who are provided with the necessary support to address different pupil needs. In many low- and middle-income countries, teachers have no or limited experience of teaching children with disabilities, and are not trained in inclusive teaching or using accessible classroom tools and materials.<sup>13</sup>

The recent United Nations Disability and Development Report identified a number of actions needed to achieve SDG4 for persons with disabilities, including providing *“training to teachers and other education specialists to gain knowledge and experience in inclusive education for persons with disabilities”*. However, it found that many teachers lack the *“skills necessary to support children with more challenging learning needs, including those with severe physical or intellectual disabilities, in mainstream classrooms.”*<sup>14</sup> This echoes a 2018 study by Education International, which found that 72.5% of teacher union respondents from 43 countries believed pre-service and in-service training on inclusion to be insufficient, leading a small minority of teachers to pay for their own training.<sup>15</sup>

Teacher quality is the most important determinant of the quality of education and learning outcomes at school level,<sup>16</sup> and teacher preparation to respond to diversity in the classroom is key to ensuring that all children have a positive learning experience. As such, it is crucial to ensure that all teachers – new recruits as well as those already in classrooms – are trained in inclusive education.

However, given that in sub-Saharan Africa only 64% of primary and 50% of secondary school teachers are trained, most teachers lack even the most basic preparation to teach, let alone training in inclusive pedagogy.<sup>iii, 17</sup>

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In addition, training available in many lower-income countries is often based on the medical model<sup>iv</sup> or on special needs education (which segregates children), rather than the human rights-based framework on which inclusive education is based. Beyond increasing teachers' skills to modify their teaching strategies, training in inclusion also plays a crucial role in improving teacher attitudes, which are *“central in any reform design to improve inclusion.”*<sup>18</sup>

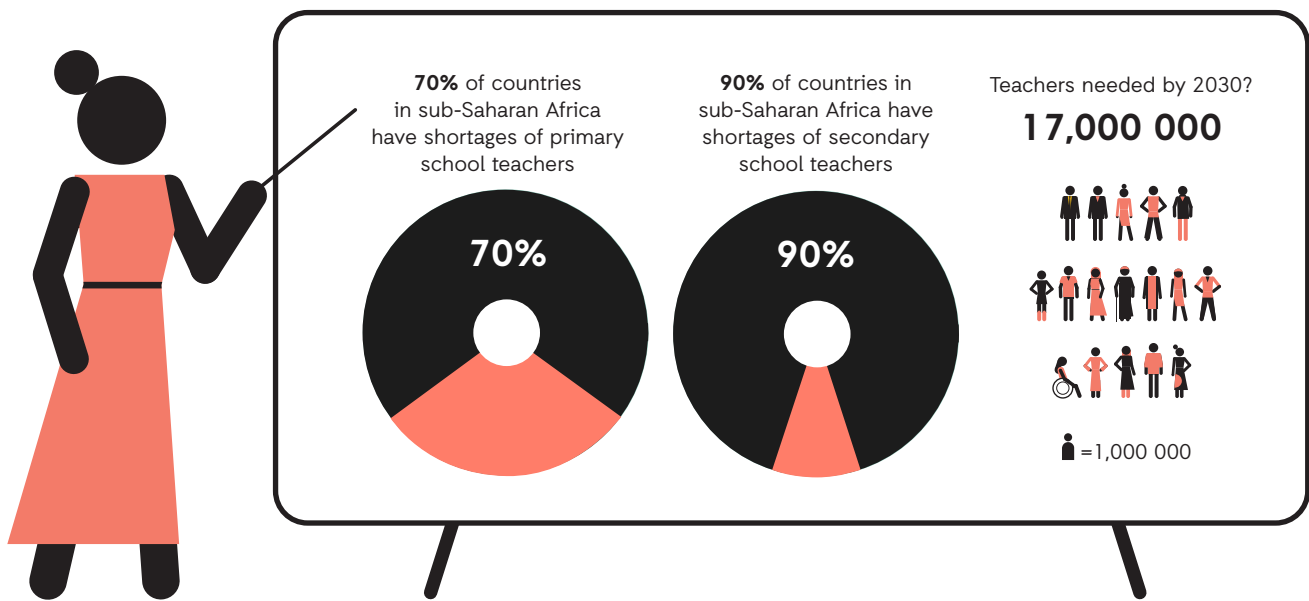
### Class size matters

SDG4 calls on countries and development partners to *“substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers”* by 2030. Not only are teachers a fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, but the equity gap in education is exacerbated by the shortage and unequal distribution of teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas.

Currently, in most low-income countries, teachers routinely deal with classes of over 40 pupils with a wide range of abilities, especially in the most marginalised and remote areas where classrooms are more often overcrowded due to huge teacher shortages. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, more than 70% of countries in sub-Saharan Africa face acute shortages of primary school teachers, and 90% have serious shortages in secondary education, the largest teacher gap in the world. To keep up with population growth, sub-Saharan Africa will need to recruit 17 million new teachers by 2030.<sup>19</sup>

iii. Across 10 francophone sub-Saharan African countries, just 8% of teachers for grades two and six had received in-service training on inclusive education.

iv. The medical model sets children with disabilities apart from the rest of society (i.e. the child has a “problem” that needs “resolving”). This was the predominant model of thinking around disability until a few decades ago, when the social model of disability shifted understandings of disability away from a charitable welfare-based and rehabilitative approach and towards a social justice, and human rights-based framework – on which inclusive education is based. In many cases, training for teachers is yet to integrate this model fully.



As noted in a report commissioned by Education International, *“Teachers need smaller class sizes in order to be able to teach to every student [and practice inclusive education]. Teaching to 35 diverse learners is significantly more challenging and complex than teaching to 16 diverse students”*. The report concludes that *“classroom materials and technologies are useful, but they cannot replace the value of a skilled teacher available to all her/ his students”*.<sup>20</sup>

### Teachers need support in the classroom

Providing more and better training for teachers is necessary but not sufficient to achieve inclusive classrooms. In many countries, teachers are not only in short supply, but are also *“isolated, and not supported to provide effective teaching and learning”*.<sup>21</sup>

Teachers require supportive working conditions to deliver inclusive education.

This may involve additional resources to provide specially designed learning materials and any necessary classroom adaptation.<sup>22</sup> Governments must also develop inclusive curricula that can help teachers break down barriers faced by children with disabilities

*Unfortunately, in many low- and lower-middle income countries, teachers are chronically underpaid, with salaries below the average for jobs requiring a similar level of skills. Rural and poor areas are the most understaffed, with few incentives for teachers to work there.*

in the classroom. This involves ensuring that curricula can adapt to the needs of a diversity of learners, while also better representing diversity.

To ensure inclusive education, teachers are critical. But they cannot work alone. As the Education Commission noted, teachers need leadership and support to be effective and help the learners with the greatest need.<sup>23</sup> Support from specialists in other sectors, such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, or specialist teachers experienced in teaching children with disabilities, is also essential.<sup>24</sup> Research has shown that these education support personnel play a key role in the learning team necessary to adequately support children and young people with disabilities.<sup>25</sup>

Also critical are adequate remuneration, decent working conditions and incentives for teachers to grow their skills and knowledge and stay in the profession. Governments need to ensure good systems of financial incentives, and improved distribution of teachers qualified in inclusive education. Education International research from 2018 considered that: *“As teachers’ skills and responsibilities increase, so too should their compensation”*.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, in many low- and lower-middle income countries, teachers are chronically underpaid, with salaries below the average for jobs requiring a similar level of skills. Rural and poor areas are the most understaffed, with few incentives for teachers to work there. For these reasons, Education International and national teachers’ unions continue to advocate for improved working conditions to support the shifts in strategies in the classroom needed to deliver SDG4.<sup>27</sup>



## 1.2. Increased public spending on the education workforce is critical to achieve inclusion

Equipping teachers with the right skills and support to teach inclusively requires significantly more resources, and an expansion of the workforce. Teachers are aware that a lack of resources acts as a major brake to ensuring inclusive education. Respondents to an Education International study carried out in 43 countries consistently highlighted budgets and funding as a barrier to creating more inclusive classrooms.<sup>28</sup>

Existing research shows that commitments to inclusive education and reforms to the workforce rarely make it from 'on paper' commitments into annual government budgeting processes. Budgeting for the education workforce in lower-income countries tends to rely on simplistic calculations in sector plans that are disconnected from ongoing budget discussions.<sup>29</sup> Rarely is significant financing for the recruitment, training, deployment and support of teachers to practice systemic inclusion reflected in budgets. Even where there are resources, they are well below what is needed.<sup>v</sup>

The Education Commission has pointed out that teacher salaries already represent a significant share of recurrent education budgets in most countries, and Ministers of Finance manage competing demands.<sup>30</sup> As such, requests for increased investment in the education workforce must be convincing, especially as a long-term investment, and a thorough cost-benefit analysis of any workforce reform is required for policymakers to change the status quo. This must be informed by dialogue with the workforce and trade unions.

Inclusive education requires both system-wide change and a transformation of the education workforce. Yet without substantial new funding for education, the financing required to transform education systems, and the teaching force in particular, for inclusion is likely to remain out of reach. Evidence suggests that States which have historically invested in segregated schools tend to lack the political will to move towards inclusive education systems.<sup>31</sup> However, while costly in the short

term, investment in inclusive education is more cost-effective over time than building two separate systems, *and* brings additional benefits associated with more trained teachers on the ground.<sup>vi</sup>

Study after study has evidenced that, in the long-run, investing in inclusive education makes economic sense, because inclusive teaching can be synonymous with quality, and also because it precludes the need to invest in two parallel education systems.<sup>32</sup> In lower income countries, a fairly strong body of research points to the inefficiency of multiple systems of administration, organisational structures and services.<sup>vii</sup>

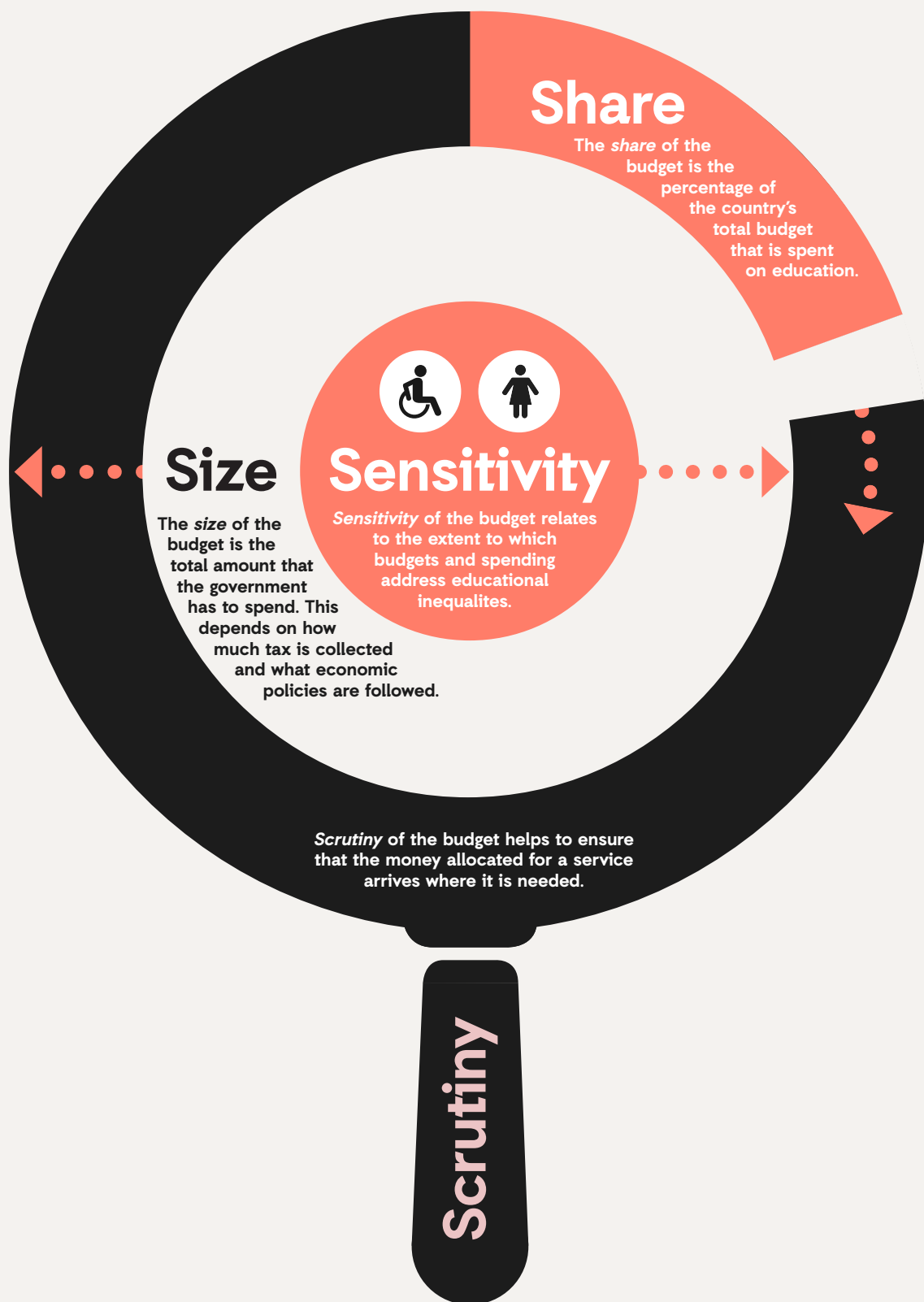
In other words, in many lower-income countries it is necessary to increase investment in education in order to transform an education workforce equipped to deliver inclusive education. Yet the gaps are vast. The 2015 Global Education Monitoring Report estimated that achieving targets for inclusive and quality education up to secondary level for low- and lower-middle income countries by 2030 would require a tripling of public funding for education.<sup>viii</sup> This increase is required not only to deal with increased demand, but, crucially, to meet commitments to quality and inclusion.

As such, transforming the workforce to deliver system-wide inclusive education requires substantial increases in public budgets. This can be supported by applying ActionAid's "4S education financing framework" (see Box 2) which clearly identifies four principles of education financing to ensure that countries are allocating and spending adequate resources to meet SDG4.

*...in the long-run, investing in inclusive education makes economic sense, because inclusive teaching can be synonymous with quality, and also because it precludes the need to invest in two parallel education systems.*

- v. Evidence on this is limited. However, a number of studies suggest this to be the case and build a picture. For instance, Light for the World (2016) Costing Equity: The case for disability-responsive education financing, showed a lack of funding overall, and specifically on teaching. The UN Global Education Monitoring Report 2020 also notes a lack of budget for inclusive education overall. Finally, the Education Commission (2020) noted a lack of budgeting for workforce transformation.
- vi. In the long run, it has been noted that setting up separate systems costs more. For example, an OECD report estimated that the average cost of putting students with special educational needs in segregated placements is seven to nine times higher than educating them in mainstream classrooms. However, in the short term there is a need for initial up-front investment.
- vii. Quoted in World Bank 2004, Inclusive Education: An EFA Strategy for all Children. This was based on common conclusions across a number of studies: Primary sources include OECD, 1994; OECD, 1995; OECD 1999; OECD 2000; O'Toole & McConkey (1995) Innovations in Developing Countries for People with Disabilities; EURYDICE, 2003.
- viii. Education for All (2015) Global Monitoring Report. Pricing the right to education: The cost of reaching new targets by 2030. Note: if lower-middle income countries are included, the minimum cost rises to \$403 per student.

## Domestic Financing for Education: *The 4 Ss*



## Box 2. ActionAid's 4S education financing framework

ActionAid's 4S framework identifies four clear principles that must be applied to ensure that countries meet the SDG4 twin promises of quality and inclusion:

1. A fair **SHARE** of the budget is spent on education - meeting or exceeding UNESCO benchmarks of 20% of national budget or 6% of GDP - with a particular focus on marginalised groups, including children with disabilities.
2. A good **SIZE** of overall budget is raised through a progressive tax base, maximising the availability of national resources for investment in public services, ensuring that those most able to pay (the wealthiest) support those least able (the poorest) to do so. This also requires macroeconomic policies which can support budget increases, such as reducing debt servicing or limiting austerity policies.
3. Budgets are **SENSITIVE**, with a focus on equity in public expenditure in order to redress broader inequalities in society (such as stipends for the education of children with disabilities, or greater investment in inclusive teachers in poor rural areas).
4. Public **SCRUTINY** of budget expenditure to ensure that funds arrive on time (especially in disadvantaged areas) and are spent effectively. This may require, for instance, enabling civil society groups to have oversight of budget development and expenditure.

### SHARE: International public spending benchmarks must be met

The UNESCO Education 2030 Framework for Action<sup>33</sup> establishes a target for countries to allocate up to 20% of their national budget or 6% of GDP to meet SDG4 by 2030. Countries with the furthest to go to meet SDG4 targets and indicators will need to meet or exceed the higher targets for budget allocations to the sector. High levels of investment are needed to provide more trained and well paid teachers to deal with increased pupil demand,<sup>34</sup> whilst meeting commitments to quality, equity and inclusion.<sup>35</sup> Yet many countries are presently falling short of these targets, as public education expenditure is, on average, 4.4% of GDP and 13.8% of total public expenditure.<sup>ix</sup>

When an insufficient share of the budget is allocated to education, governments tend to look for ways to cut back on spending on teachers, and the financing for teachers' wages, training and support gets squeezed. This can mean that not enough teachers are employed, or that funding for mechanisms to retain teachers and incentivise appropriate deployment, class sizes, and so on is insufficient.



PHOTO: EPHREM TAYE/LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

ix. The Global Education Monitoring Report 2020-21 provides data for latest available year (2017), although as the report notes, data were missing for 54% of countries.

### Box 3. International financing institutions restrict the expansion of public budgets for workforce capacity

Currently the capacity of many countries to increase the education share of their budget and invest in a workforce able to deliver commitments to quality, inclusive education is under threat. For many decades, the prevailing economic wisdom has been antithetical to the kinds of investment required to expand the education workforce. In 2007, research by ActionAid in 17 countries showed that, between 2003 and 2005, a prominent International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programme loan criterion was a wage bill ceiling that limited the number of public sector workers (such as teachers) that could be hired.<sup>36</sup> The IMF later removed the criterion; but there was still pressure on governments behind the scenes to reduce spending on public sector wages.<sup>37</sup>

With debt levels now spiralling, IMF advice again risks limiting investment in the education workforce. According to the Jubilee Debt Campaign, external debt payments by developing countries grew 85% between 2010 and 2018, from 6.6% to 12.2% of government revenue.<sup>38</sup> In this context, the advice of the IMF becomes even more powerful as they negotiate new debt relief programmes. Evidence from ActionAid in 2020 shows a spike in IMF programmes carrying similar conditions to the structural adjustment programmes, with countries struggling to maintain budgets for essential services, and limiting workforce investment.<sup>39</sup>

#### SIZE: Financing an inclusive education workforce requires increased public budgets

The 2014 Global Education Monitoring Report noted that: “Countries that require additional teachers will have to increase their overall budgets for teacher salaries”. The report went on to state that US\$ 4 billion additional funds were required annually in sub-Saharan Africa to pay the salaries of the additional primary school teachers required by 2020, after taking into account projected economic growth.<sup>40</sup> Given chronic shortages in teaching staff in all countries in this study, and with many teetering on the edge of debt crises, this is a huge problem for achieving SDG4 in all countries (see Box 3 above).

Public taxation is the most effective source of long-term, sustainable funding for recurrent budgets such as workforce costs, and with only a decade to go to meet the 2030 targets, many countries need to increase overall revenue and availability of domestic resources.

In 2010, the UN estimated that a minimum of 20% tax-to-GDP ratio would be needed to deliver on the MDGs.<sup>41</sup> More recently, research from the IMF and World Bank<sup>42</sup> indicates that tax-to-GDP ratios lower than 15% are insufficient to finance even the most basic state functions.<sup>43</sup> As an example, in 2017, the average tax-to-GDP ratio in OECD countries was 34.2% whilst in

sub-Saharan Africa, the average ratio was just 17.2%.<sup>44</sup> In other words, whilst the appropriate level of taxation depends on each country’s characteristics, a sizeable increase tax capacity is likely to play a significant role in countries’ ability to deliver basic public services and attain the SDGs. Indeed, in 2019, the IMF estimated that most low income countries would need to spend an additional 15 percentage points of GDP or more to reach the SDG targets, suggesting that increasing tax to GDP ratios by 5% in the medium-term (around 5 years) would constitute an ambitious yet realistic way forward.<sup>45</sup>

Taking action to remove harmful corporate tax incentives, tackle tax avoidance, evasion, corruption and illicit financial flows are key, if governments are to raise new funds for education relatively quickly.<sup>46</sup>

#### SENSITIVE: Budgets must address equity and inclusion

It is not enough to spend *more* money on disability-inclusive education,

*Public taxation is the most effective source of long-term, sustainable funding for recurrent budgets such as workforce costs, and with only a decade to go to meet the 2030 targets, many countries need to increase overall revenue and availability of domestic resources.*

education budgets also need to be spent *better* and with greater sensitivity. A greater focus on equity is required in the deployment of resources– both human and financial – to benefit all learners, including those with disabilities, and ensure that the education workforce is available and able to manage inclusion. This process must start by identifying where financing and teachers are required, to target the needs of children with disabilities, and support system-wide inclusion more broadly.

In all five countries included in this study, it proved difficult to assess spending in relation to equity of teacher deployment compared to the need for teachers for inclusive education across the country. This is, in part, due to a lack of data to assess needs (i.e. numbers of teachers trained in inclusion or where they are deployed). Without more coherent baselines, effective planning and budgeting for inclusion is impossible.

As the Global Education Monitoring Report notes, a larger share of resources needs to be allocated to compensate for disadvantage, so that *“even as marginalized groups are mainstreamed, a twin-track approach targeting them is needed, since the cost of serving their support needs is much higher, especially for students with disabilities”*.<sup>47</sup> This means that school funds need to positively discriminate in favour of more vulnerable learners, so that everyone can be on a more equal footing. This is particularly true for children with disabilities, who may require additional support such as assistive devices, specialised resources, or referral to medical support.

To do this, it is vital to put equity and inclusion at the heart of government financing formulae. These must address individual disadvantage such as disability, but also broader horizontal inequalities such as geographical inequality, and may require extra teacher incentives or support for deployment to remote areas.

### **SCRUTINY: Ensuring that education expenditure meets inclusion needs**

Even where funds *are* allocated to inclusive education, improving oversight, scrutiny and accountability is crucial to ensure that budget allocations are properly targeted, arrive in full and on time, and are effectively and transparently spent.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, some small allocations can be traced for *“special education”* that can reinforce segregation. This echoes the findings of a study which found that only 31 of a sample of 76 country budget documents from low- and low-middle-income countries had any mention of *“special education”*, and this was often a separate line in the overall education budget, rather than under the appropriate age or level of education, or in ministry budgets other than education, with no plan for integration into the education sector.<sup>49</sup>

Governments should also create the conditions to enable non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to monitor the fulfilment of government commitments and stand up for those excluded from education.<sup>x</sup>



PHOTO: LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

x. For instance, according to the recent UNESCO GEM report 2020-21 a 2001 NGO campaign in Armenia resulted in a new legal and budget framework to roll out inclusive education nationally by 2025.





PHOTO: EPHREM TAYE/LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

## SECTION 2. COUNTRY STUDY: ETHIOPIA

### Background to the Ethiopian education system

Ethiopia has an estimated population of 105 million, and is ranked 173 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index.<sup>50</sup> It has a federal system of governance, with ten regional states and two city administrations. Regional states have considerable authority and responsibility, underwritten by the constitution, which they exercise through councils at region, zone, woreda and kebele levels. Education is the shared responsibility of these administrative tiers. The school system consists of six years of primary schooling, followed by two years of junior high school and four years of high school.

Ethiopia has made significant progress on access to education over a very short timeframe. Under three million pupils were in primary school in 1995, but by 2018 this figure had increased to 19.4 million.<sup>51</sup> Significant inroads have also been made into improving access to secondary school. This progress has taken place despite having one of the fastest growing youth populations in the world.

The 2015 Education for All review highlighted some key measures to improve access, including abolishing school

fees, increasing expenditure on school construction and maintenance, and hiring and training thousands of new teachers, administrators and officials. Complementing this was a shift to mother tongue instruction and the gradual decentralisation of the education system to progressively lower administrative levels.

However, quality remains a major concern, and completion and retention (even in primary school) is low, especially for the most marginalised. Ethiopia has responded to this with investments to improve quality and completion through the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP), with a strong focus on improving teacher training and increasing spending per school.

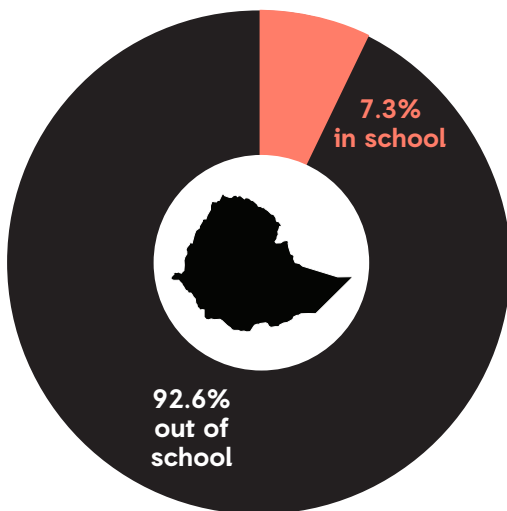
In 2019, UNESCO noted that Ethiopia is now making the fastest progress towards the 2030 goal for primary completion of all sub-Saharan African countries.<sup>52</sup> However, as our own findings reveal, Ethiopia must continue to build on its successes to ensure that the many children with disabilities who are out of school are brought into mainstream education.

## 2.1. Current state of disability-inclusive education

### Data on disability

Historically, there has been a lack of accurate and credible government data on persons with disabilities in Ethiopia, which has had significant implications for national planning, particularly concerning disability inclusion.

The fifth Education Sector Development Programme 2015-20 (ESDP V) identifies special needs and inclusive education for learners with disabilities as a cross-cutting issue, but notes that the exact number of children with disabilities in Ethiopia was not known at the time of planning. Instead it used the World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that 15% of people in any population have a disability, and applied this to the school-aged population.<sup>53</sup> **Based on this extrapolation, it estimated that there were five million school-age children with disabilities (4-18 years) in Ethiopia.**



The most recent estimates from the Government (2019) put the total number of children with disabilities at 369,683 (roughly 7.3%) of the estimated total.<sup>54</sup> These figures break down as follows:<sup>xi</sup>

- 15,944 children with disabilities in **pre-primary school**, with an estimated gross enrolment ratio

of 1.3%. This had doubled from the previous year, but showed wide differences between regions, with the highest gross enrolment ratio in Addis Ababa of 16.8%, compared to 0% in Somali, Amhara and Gambella. There were also significant gender differences, with 21% of boys and only 12% of girls enrolled in Addis Ababa.

- 316,271 children with disabilities in **primary school**, with an estimated gross enrolment ratio of 11%. There were also wide regional disparities, with 30% enrolment in the Southern Nations (SNNP) region and 18% in Addis Abba, compared to 0% in the Somali and Gambella regions. Nationally, 42% of these children are girls, demonstrating gender inequities at primary level.
- 37,468 children with disabilities in **secondary school**, with an estimated gross enrolment ratio of 2.8%.

These enrolment figures are significantly off-track from the Governments' own targets. The Federal Ministry of Education's five-year sector plan (ESDP V) sets a goal of increasing the enrolment of children with disabilities in primary school from a baseline of 4% in 2015 to 61% in 2018, and 75% by 2020. At secondary level the target was 37% by 2018 and 45% by 2020.<sup>55</sup> These targets are highly ambitious, and despite gradual improvements, are still far from being reached.<sup>56</sup> One interviewee noted, "currently children with disabilities in schools is about 5%,<sup>xii</sup> but the Government's plan is to reach 75% at the end of the year. This shows you how big the problem is and also it questions whether the government plans are feasible." However, while significantly under the targets, there is evidence of sustained progress in recent years, particularly at primary level.

It should be noted that the above figures are all drawn from the ESDP V baseline, which uses the imprecise WHO calculation of 15% of the total population

xi. Please note all Gross Enrolment Ratios by the Ministry of education are calculated for each level by using population figures based on the assumptions in the ESDP V that 15% of the population would be classed as having special needs.

xii. Note that this is different than the number reported above from 2013/14 which could reflect an increase in enrolment or reflect the lack of reliable information available on enrolment of girls and boys with disabilities.

with disabilities. The Government has committed to improving the availability of credible data and has been piloting efforts to use the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability to help to better identify children with disabilities.<sup>57</sup>

Education is compulsory for all children up to grade eight. However, the sector is characterised by low retention rates (particularly in rural areas), with widespread attrition wherein up to 20% of children drop out by grade two and only around half of students remain in school until grade eight.<sup>58</sup> Evidence suggests that children with disabilities are less likely to access or remain in school, or complete their primary education. Anecdotal evidence has shown that, in some cases, children with disabilities are enrolled (often with the support of resource centres and itinerant teachers) but rarely attend. In other cases, teachers were unaware which of their pupils had been identified as having disabilities and were therefore unable to provide special support or assistance. A 2015 review of inclusive education found that, in one school, an itinerant teacher had identified 127 children with disabilities and impairments, but that teachers were not able to identify the children and there was no plan of support for them.<sup>59</sup>

### Government commitments to inclusive education

Ethiopia is a signatory to key international conventions, and has enacted several laws, providing a strong enabling environment for inclusive education (see table 1). However, as one interviewee noted *“Ethiopia is very rich in terms of laws, but it’s the implementation that is a problem, that is a challenge.”*

Over the last decade, the Government of Ethiopia made movements towards inclusive education, with the goal of mainstreaming children with disabilities in regular schools and making education accessible for all. Until 2005, there was limited attention to education for children with disabilities, and the Government accepted that its special needs education programme *“... was conducted in a fragmented and arbitrary manner. This was primarily due to the absence of a nationally governing strategy for the program.”*<sup>60</sup> To address this issue, the Ministry of Education designed the first Special Needs Education Program Strategy in 2006, under ESDP III (2015-2011), based on the Constitution and current education policy.

Since this, the Government has progressively increased its commitment to education for children

with disabilities. ESDP IV (2011-2015) included a specific acknowledgement of the educational needs of children with disabilities, and ESDP V (2015-2020) included commitments to tackle equity in access, and introduced the concept of inclusive education. This enabled the development of a specific Special Needs/ Inclusive Education Strategy (SN/IES) in 2012,<sup>61</sup>

However, a note of caution is required, as the recent Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-2030)<sup>62</sup> only references girls and boys with disabilities twice, in terms of: *“introduce training for instructors on gender and disability support mechanisms”* and *“disability centres and other service centres that provide service to disabled students must be led by professionals who face the challenge [assigning] leaders and experts who themselves have the same challenges so that they can understand the problem.”* The Roadmap does not provide any specifics related to inclusive education. For example, when describing teacher training it notes *“the courses related to inclusive and multicultural education are stand alone and very general. As a result, there is still a widespread culture of intolerance, negative attitude toward difference, and lack of interest in accommodating those with special needs.”*<sup>63</sup>

*Ethiopia is a signatory to key international conventions, and has enacted several laws, providing a strong enabling environment for inclusive education*



PHOTO: GONZALO GUAJARDO/ACTIONAID

**Table 1:** List of laws and policies related to disability-inclusive education

Policy/ Law	Issuance Date	Relevance
<b>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>	14 May 1991	Ratification is indicative of the Government's commitment to ensuring the basic human rights of children including:  Article 28 - the right of every child to education.  Article 23 - education of children with disabilities.
<b>The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia</b>	1994	Article 25 - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.  Article 41(5) – The State is responsible for the provision of necessary rehabilitation and support services to <i>'the physically and mentally disabled.'</i>  Article 90 - All persons are entitled to education and should have access to education.  Article 41 (4) - Provides for rehabilitative assistance to children with disabilities.
<b>Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education</b>	1994	Reaffirms inclusion as the ideal model for education delivery for children with disabilities and support to accommodate the diverse needs of learners and promotion of participation of all children in education.
<b>Ethiopian Education and Training Policy</b>	1994	Expansion of basic education and training for all, the development of physical and mental potential and problem-solving capacity of individuals including those with special needs <i>"To enable both the handicapped and the gifted learn in accordance with their potential and needs."</i>
<b>Developmental Social Welfare Policy</b>	1997	Promote and create inclusion, participation and independence of persons with disabilities, including children.
<b>African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child</b>	1999	Article 1 - Commitment to the protection and promotion of survival and development of children including a right to education.
<b>Special Needs/ Inclusive Education Strategy</b>	2006 (Revised in 2012)	Guides education sector transformation into an inclusive education system that provides quality, relevant and equitable education for all children, youth and adults with special education needs.
<b>Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan</b>	2010	Identifies disability as an intersectional development issue, with a focus on education and training, rehabilitation and equal access to services and opportunities for persons with disabilities.
<b>Education Sector Development Plan V (2015-2020)</b>	2010	Special needs/inclusive education for learners with disabilities is recognised as a cross-cutting issue for the education sector with disability-specific strategies and indicators.
<b>UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</b>	Ratified 2010	Article 24 - Obligates States to ensure that <i>"persons with disabilities can access inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in communities in which they live."</i>
<b>National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities 2012–2021</b>	2012	Policy framework that aims to mainstream disability issues in all fields of society. It makes provision for comprehensive rehabilitation services, equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in education, skills training and work etc.
<b>Master Plan for Special Needs Education/ Inclusive Education in Ethiopia 2016-2025</b>	2016	Aims to serve as a complete policy to guide provision of special needs education in order to give more visibility to inclusive and special needs education and to strengthen the structures and environment enabling inclusion.

## Current state of inclusive education provision in Ethiopia

The move from segregated education towards inclusive education has seen more special classes (also called unit classes) emerge in mainstream school settings.<sup>xiii</sup> For children with visual and hearing impairments or intellectual disabilities, these unit classes serve as transitional programmes and back-up support. Generally, children who attend unit classes are placed in inclusive classes after they complete the first cycle and progress to grade five.<sup>64</sup> This is more often the case for children who are blind, deaf or deemed 'able to cope', with children with intellectual disabilities tending to remain in unit classes. Some special schools persist for learners who are blind or deaf, usually up to Grade eight.<sup>65</sup> After this, qualified students can progress to secondary school, subject to admission processes.

The report submitted by Ethiopia to the 2015 Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities highlighted the Government's orientation and commitment towards inclusive education, with special schools being discouraged. It does note, however, that, *"most parents prefer to send their children to special schools due to lack of facilities in their localities"*.<sup>66</sup> This is reflected in the figures, which show wide variations between regions, and point to the need for more action at local level to progress towards government enrolment targets. More efforts are required to ensure support from federal to class level for more inclusive teaching in Ethiopia. This is particularly important in Ethiopia's federal system, where school education is administered by local authorities in districts or Woredas (the most local authority in the country's federal system).<sup>67</sup>

In 2006, under the initial Special Needs Education Strategy, Woreda education offices were assigned the responsibility for providing primary education for all school age children, including those with special educational needs.<sup>68</sup> However, ESDP V noted that lack of knowledge, skills and commitment challenged the implementation of activities to support special needs education, and that a lack of clear structures for coordination and administration of special needs education from federal to woreda and school levels had hampered progress during the ESDP IV phase.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, school managers and inspectors need better guidance and training on school improvement planning.

Interviewees noted the tendency to address physical barriers (for example building ramps), while ignoring other important issues related to inclusivity.

## Gaps and challenges in the provision of inclusive education

The SN/IES (2012) reviewed the experience of implementing the first special needs education strategy and identified several gaps, including lack of data, finance, screening tools and appropriately trained teachers, echoed by disability advocates and education practitioners.

The Government has made significant strides to address chronic and acute teacher shortages, reducing average pupil teacher ratios at primary level from a high of 67:1 in 2000 (after free education was introduced), to 55:1 in 2011<sup>70</sup> and 39:1 in 2018.<sup>71</sup> This means that, **on average, the Government's own target primary pupil-teacher ratio of 50:1, and the UNESCO recommended maximum of 40:1, have been met. However, there are significant regional disparities, with averages ranging from 24:1 in Addis-Ababa, to 46:1 in Oromia, and 104:1 in the Somali region.**<sup>72</sup>

In many respects, the Government has made remarkable progress, especially when compared to countries that have failed to keep up with similar rises in pupil demand. Ethiopia more than doubled primary enrolment since 2000, while simultaneously reducing class sizes. The number of adequately qualified teachers has also risen, with 73% of teachers qualified for grades 1-4 and 95% for grades 5-8 in 2017.<sup>73</sup>

This has undoubtedly contributed to improving quality,<sup>74</sup> but crowded classrooms continue to be an issue, especially for managing diverse student needs and enabling inclusive teaching. Moreover, it is well established that those living in poor rural areas are most affected by the shortage of qualified teachers - in two of the most remote rural regions of Ethiopia, the percentage of trained primary teachers was 1% in 2014, compared with 43% in urban Addis Ababa.<sup>75</sup>

According to one interviewee, *"In all the schools I have visited you can find fifty to sixty students in one classroom and when you think about bringing a child with a disability, it is impossible for that child to*

xiii. Unit classes are classes set aside in mainstream or special schools to cater for the needs of learners with special needs. Moll et al. (2016).

*learn because everything is against the child, there is not proper care that can happen. You cannot blame anybody, teachers or principals.”* This illustrates the challenges that girls and boys experience in the classroom, and the need to continue efforts to reduce pupil-teacher ratios if the Government’s ambitious goals of increasing enrolment of children with disabilities at primary and secondary levels are to be achieved by the end of 2020.

This will require more teachers to be recruited and retained. In 2016 UNESCO estimated that **although Ethiopia had enough teachers to achieve universal secondary education between 2020 and 2030, it needed to recruit an estimated 7.4% (roughly 37,200)<sup>xiv</sup>**

**more primary school teachers per year by 2030 to address demand from a growing primary-school age population.<sup>76</sup>**

In addition, the challenge of low pay still needs to be addressed. In 2019, research published by UNESCO indicated that low salaries in relation to the cost of living, and compared to other similar professions, have led to high levels of dissatisfaction and turnover amongst teachers.<sup>77</sup> According to the latest salary scales endorsed by the Ministry of Education, entry-level monthly salaries ranged from ETB 2,404 (US\$ 70.95) at primary level and ETB 3,137 (US\$ 92.59) at secondary level.<sup>xv</sup>



PHOTO: LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

xiv. Author’s estimate based on current total numbers of primary school teachers as per the 2018/19 Education Statistics Abstract (i.e. 502,738) and the UNESCO recommended increase of 7.4% per year  
xv. As per the revised salary scale implementation guidelines for teachers and other staff endorsed by the Ministry of Education in July 2020. US\$ conversions made using the average exchange rate for 2020.

## 2.2. Workforce Development in Inclusive Education in Mozambique

More teacher training on inclusive education will also be necessary, to equip teachers with skills to manage the large classes that are a common reality in the Ethiopian context, whilst responding to a diversity of learning needs.

### **The number of teachers trained in inclusion is unclear**

The 2012 SN/IES noted that: *“there is major uncertainty about the number of teachers working in special needs education as they are not ... accurately defined in the annual school census.”*<sup>78</sup> It considers that much of this uncertainty is because special needs education teachers are not included in the public service standard, which prevents the Regional Education Bureau from recruiting them as counsellors, advisors or itinerant teachers for inclusive education resource centres, or dedicated special needs education teachers.<sup>79</sup>

In recent years, **Ethiopia has made sustained efforts to ensure that all teachers have some training in inclusive/ special needs education, and to better record their numbers. Now, all in-service training includes a common element of inclusive/special needs education.** As a result, in 2013/14, an estimated 70% of primary level teachers held the required special needs education qualification, as part of the main teacher training programme. Further, almost 100,000 primary teachers and around 17,000 secondary teachers had either completed or were in the process of completing relevant diploma and degree-upgrading summer programmes.<sup>80</sup>

The Government reports on special needs/ inclusive education in their annual education statistics. In 2018, the Federal Ministry of Education reported that a total of 3,225 primary school teachers had been specially trained in the degree-level special needs education qualification, amounting to just 1% of the national education workforce. This was highest in Tigray and Addis Ababa at 2% and below 1% in many of the poorest rural areas, such as Somali or SNNP.<sup>81</sup>

There is limited data on the numbers of teachers *with* disabilities. The latest education statistics on training do note that, in 2018, a total of 2090 teachers with special needs were enrolled in Colleges of Teacher Education.<sup>82</sup> However, one interviewee drew attention to the need for placement of teachers after graduation, noting *“the employment law is not being implemented as per proclamation of the law. There is an accommodation problem, an access problem .... so even after graduation they encounter the same challenges.”* Another explained that *“there is a lack of awareness, there is a knowledge gap in this area... there are principals who report a teacher as half a person – a principal who reported of having so-so number of teachers and a half and implying a half is a teacher with disabilities.”*

### **Itinerant and specialist trained teachers are a central tool in mainstreaming inclusive education**

In Ethiopia, itinerant teachers play a significant role in workforce development for inclusive education. Introduced in 2006 as part of the first Special Needs Education strategy, itinerant resource teachers with the relevant knowledge, skills and experience were to support and advise teachers and management of both mainstream and special classes through ‘cluster centre’ schools.<sup>83</sup>

Nine Resource Centres were established during the implementation of the 2006-2012 Special Needs Education Strategy, to provide teaching expertise to support children with special educational or medical needs, supply equipment, materials and assistive devices, support screening and referral, liaise with local schools and communities, and provide training on inclusive education and disability adaptation for teachers in surrounding satellite schools.<sup>84</sup> One study noted that cluster resource centres have increased teacher motivation and improved practices.<sup>85</sup>

To qualify as an itinerant resource teacher, a diploma or degree level qualification is required. Some training is also provided on the management of Resource Centres.<sup>xvi</sup> The Ministry of Education provide a full list of the services provided by these teachers,<sup>86</sup> which include:

xvi. Personal communication from representative of the Federal Ministry of Education, August 2020

- screening, identification, assessment and referral to medical facilities if needed;
- supporting parents with referrals;
- supporting teachers through information sharing and provision of support to learners with special needs;
- assessing a child's educational needs and coordinating their educational goals with other providers and therapists;
- supporting the implementation of a child's Individual Education Plan;
- providing guidance and counselling for special needs students and their parents;
- organising awareness-raising; and
- ensuring the resource centre provides skills development in braille and sign language.

These responsibilities imply that the itinerant teacher, not the classroom teacher, is mainly responsible for the child's teaching and learning. This could be problematic for developing the skills of the class teacher and implementing inclusive education in its true sense.

**With increasing numbers of teachers trained in special needs education, it is vital they are better supported to work within the system and that there are clear standards to support their work.** For instance, it is unclear the amount of direct instructional time that these teachers should provide, compared to supporting teachers with students with disabilities in mainstream classes through resource centres and satellite schools.

The Master Plan noted the need to revise incentives for special needs and inclusive education teachers and support staff as a strategic priority in order to retain them over the long-term, noting that *"most special needs education graduates end up working as regular teachers"*.<sup>87</sup> Given such a severe lack of teaching staff with specialist skills to support inclusive education, much more needs to be done to make better use of itinerant teachers, ensuring their distribution to areas of greatest need and ensuring their role and career structure is established and recognized.

Moreover, **better incentives to both train and retain teachers in special needs education are required.** An evaluation of Finnish support to Inclusive Education in Ethiopia concluded that whilst 20 resource centres had a structure in place to identify, screen and support

children with disabilities, the role and career structure of itinerant teachers had not yet been defined and their work was not monitored.<sup>88</sup> Some Regional Education Boards use a proportion of available regional funds<sup>xvii</sup> to provide financial incentives to special needs education teachers, but no additional incentives are offered at a national level. Finnish support had previously ensured itinerant teachers were receiving a small incentive on top of their salary, but this stopped when the project ended in 2017.<sup>xviii</sup>

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play an active role in training and supplying specialised teachers, particularly to support deaf learners in regular schools. In rural areas, community-based rehabilitation workers also provide support to teachers and assist families and children with enrolment in schools.<sup>89</sup> This points to the need to support a broader workforce for inclusion. Noting the crucial role these workers play in ensuring the successful implementation of inclusive education in Ethiopia, one interviewee stated *"we also need evidence-based approaches and engagement with community-based workers who require investment and recognition because they know how to ensure that parents have a buy-in and have a way to take the child to school, it's not about announcing but it is about evidence-based implementation."*



PHOTO: GREG FUNNELL/ACTIONAID

xvii. The General Education Quality Improvement Programme for Equity (GEQIP-E)

xviii. Personal communication from representative of the Federal Ministry of Education, August 2020





## 2.3. Workforce training for inclusive education in Ethiopia

Currently, 18 colleges of teacher education provide special needs education teacher training diplomas, and eight universities provide undergraduate and graduate degrees and in-service teacher training courses.<sup>xix</sup> All first year student teachers in Ethiopia are required to take a module on inclusive and special needs education, and can then choose to specialise in special needs education.

An evaluation of inclusive education in Ethiopia carried out by the Finnish Government noted that *“A strong teacher training program has resulted in a remarkably swift shift in attitudes about the potential support that inclusive schools can provide children with disabilities. Virtually all school-level personnel interviewed stated their view that inclusive education would bring important benefits to children with disabilities”*.<sup>90</sup> However, it also concludes that, though the training programmes are well-designed, the structures put in place do not appear scalable because of weak government follow-up and monitoring, lack of multilateral support and commitment, lack of clear job descriptions and accountability for itinerant teachers, and insufficient financing, including for teaching staff. Thus, there is a real concern that training is not leading to more staff able to deliver the vision for inclusive education.

Despite these new broad-based skills in the workforce, there is still a lack of specialised skills to *“address the demand extensively”*.<sup>91</sup> The Master Plan identifies the following priorities with respect to workforce development for inclusive education:<sup>92</sup>

- Expand the teacher development policy to cover inclusive and special needs education;
- Implement teacher pre-service and in-service training with a focus on inclusive education and special needs education;
- A three-year teacher diploma pre-service programme for special needs education;
- A licensing system as part of quality assurance to ensure that all teachers are competent;
- Assessing and accrediting colleges of teacher education (with the focus on special needs and inclusive education);
- Training specialised in special needs education for Early Childhood Care and Education teachers

and other facilitators (all programmes should incorporate special needs education).

### Pre-Service Training

A three-year pre-service Special Needs Education Teacher Diploma was introduced in 2006, shortly after the first Special Needs Education strategy was designed. This diploma was expected to replace the cluster programmes for special needs education, in response to the problem of the teacher education system not producing enough special needs teachers, especially at primary level.

A common course of three credits (48 hours) is included in regular teacher education for the three-year teacher diploma. The course aims to serve as an introduction to inclusiveness, but the approaches and concepts used are outdated, and do not provide skills to identify the learning barriers and facilitate sufficient support for learners with disabilities and learning difficulties.<sup>93</sup> The course acknowledges the medical approach, familiarising trainees with eight disability categories.

The common course was scheduled for renewal during 2015-2016 under the special needs education technical support programme and<sup>94</sup> a draft syllabus for teacher education (for grades one to eight) was developed, based on principles of inclusive education for all students in line with the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All policies.<sup>xx</sup> This 36-hour course comprises three interrelated units: building understanding of disablement, disability, exclusion and inclusion for teaching and learning; building blocks for inclusive schools and classrooms; and building and sustaining curriculum, teaching and assessment for all.

As one interviewee noted, most teachers know the theory but need training in the practical aspects of teaching learners with disabilities or special needs. All pre-service practice teaching should include a practical skill-based component related to teaching in a diverse class. This means, at pre-service level, reviewing and strengthening the existing module on inclusive education with information on the identification of learners' strengths/ abilities and challenges, as this provides more preparation for the teaching and learning process.

xix. Personal communication from representative of the Federal Ministry of Education, August 2020

xx. No information is available on whether course has been approved

## In-Service Training

The in-service teacher training programme is offered in two modalities; a residential summer programme which can be face-to-face or remote, and a workplace training modality involving distance learning coupled with face-to-face sessions.<sup>95</sup>

In-service training for special needs and inclusive education is undertaken through a programme of continuing professional development designed to support teachers' individual needs and improve professional practice.<sup>96</sup> This is delivered at the levels of external expertise, school networks and clusters and school-based training. Inclusive education resource centres also provide in-service support to strengthen teacher awareness and skills related to inclusive and special needs education built during pre-service

training. Additionally, in-service training is undertaken at university and colleges of teacher education through regular and summer programmes.

NGOs and donors have had a significant influence on in-service training in Ethiopia. Interviewees regularly cited the Finnish Government for its vital contribution to teacher training. While this is beneficial, there is scope for greater coordination with the Government. One education stakeholder noted that in-service training was not a coherent programme, stating that *"Other donors come in to help with special needs training. From special courses and materials, we have resource centres that assist in orientation to satellite schools and ... as a means to reach other schools. Initially it was meant to be a specific school but now the focus is on trying to decentralise and allow other schools. The Finnish government sponsored the programme."*

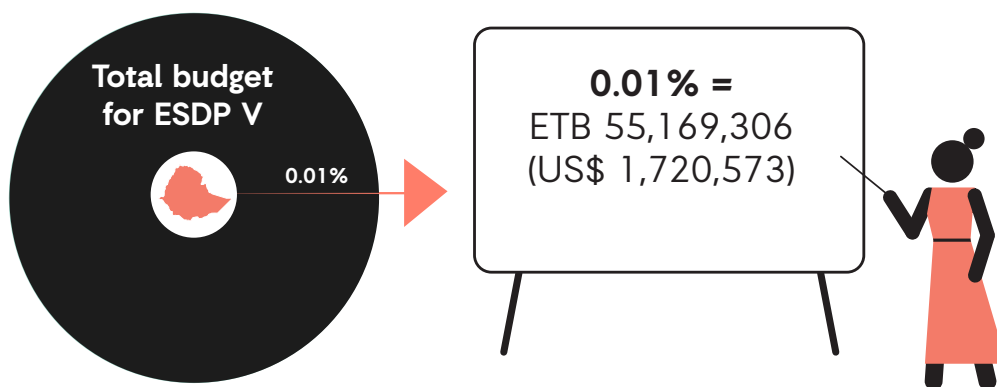
## 2.4. Financing Workforce Development in Inclusive Education

### Resources are not sufficient to deliver inclusive education.

ESDP V warns that *"very small amounts continue to be assigned to non-typical education, which includes special, adult and alternative education."*<sup>97</sup> The total amounts spent on inclusive education are difficult to access, in part as much of the funding is in school grants. However, approximately ETB 55,169,306 (US\$ 1,720,573)<sup>xxi</sup> was allocated to teacher development for inclusive education over the course of the ESDP V five-year period, including training of specialised teachers and development of education and training curricula

(see table 2). This amounts to around 0.01% of the total budget for ESDP V.<sup>xxii</sup>

This reflects the low level of investment in inclusive education overall. Previous analysis carried out by Light for the World and International Disability and Development Consortium has shown that, under ESDP IV, 0.2% of the entire education budget was allocated to specific interventions aimed at learners with disabilities.<sup>98</sup> One interviewee noted a 'budgetary barrier' to improving investment in inclusive education and workforce development, adding that really no funds were allocated after planning.



xxi. This was converted from the ESDPV 2015-20 (over time) using a 2020 conversion rate – i.e. it is only a crude conversion to current rates.

xxii. Based on authors own calculations. See table from the ESDP V

## Inclusive education plans/strategies lack credible costings

Overall, Ethiopia must develop better costing models for inclusive education. The Global Partnership for Education noted that Ethiopia plans to conduct research to explore the cost-effectiveness of inclusive education. The study will analyse inequalities in education and gather evidence to develop a comprehensive, cost-effective strategy to address learning and teaching resources for special needs education.<sup>99</sup> This will be a welcome effort to better understand the needs.

**Table 2:** Investment in Public Inclusive Education

	Details
<b>National budget</b>	ETB 386.9 billion (2019/20) <sup>100</sup>
<b>Proportion of GDP spent on public education</b>	4.7% (2017) <sup>101</sup>
<b>Proportion of budget spent on public education</b>	27% (2017) <sup>102</sup>

## SHARE: Ethiopia allocates a good proportion of its budget and GDP to education

In 2017, Ethiopia dedicated 27% of its total budget to education, the second highest proportional share of any country in the world.<sup>103</sup> This is far greater than the international suggested benchmark of 15-20% and the regional average of 16.6%.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, this has stayed at above 25% for a substantial period of time (see Figure 1).<sup>105</sup>

ESDP V commits to a 70% increase in education spending in real terms over the period 2010-2019, to cover expansion of the education system and increases in school enrolment (up to Grade 12) from 10 million to 19 million, and the expectation of recurrent spending, mostly teacher salaries, doubling during this period. It also reinforces commitments to maintain a share of 24-25% of the public budget for the education sector over the five-year period of the Plan.<sup>106</sup>

This sustained investment in reaching goals has been credited as part of the Ethiopian education success story in expanding enrolment. A recent review of Ethiopian progress towards SDG4 noted that *“Much of the money it spends on education is matched to the education commitments it made in SDG4: teacher recruitment and school infrastructure...this means that, as its school population has grown, it has not seen its class sizes grow (and its learning rates decline) as a result.”*<sup>107</sup> This echoes a recent comment by the World Bank, that *“The progress Ethiopia has made in the education sector is commendable. Unlike most other countries, Ethiopia has been able to avoid the deterioration in quality of education that often accompanies a rapid expansion of access.”*<sup>108</sup>

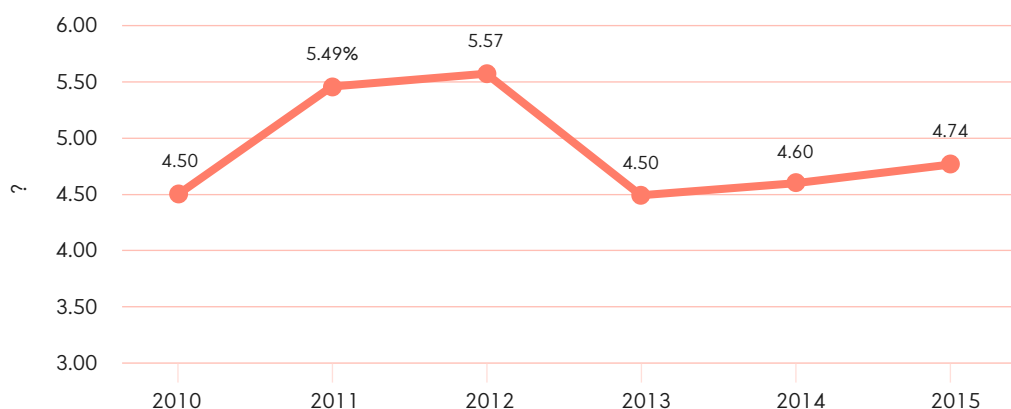
*In 2017, Ethiopia dedicated 27% of its total budget to education, the second highest proportional share of any country in the world.*

Ethiopia has also managed to secure significant resources from donor partners to boost its domestic spending. Ethiopia was the twelfth largest recipient of official development assistance in 2018, and the third largest in sub-Saharan Africa In the 2015/16 fiscal year.<sup>109</sup> Approximately 16% of the education budget was funded by donors and external loans;<sup>110</sup> this amounts to approximately ETB 8 billion per year (roughly US\$ 400 million in 2015/16 constant prices), equivalent to 50%-65% of the annual funding gaps presented in the ESDP V upon which the Master Plan is based.<sup>111, xxiii</sup>

In the current context, the implications of this reliance on overseas aid should be considered with caution. New findings from UNESCO show that aid to education will be more important than ever to mitigate against the global financial downturn brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic and ensure that progress towards SDG4 date is not irrevocably reversed. However, the pandemic is also expected to put significant pressure on aid to education as donor governments struggle to respond to the economic crisis.<sup>112</sup> As a result, the Government of Ethiopia must work harder to protect education spending, by raising more funds through progressive domestic resource mobilisation and tackling debt.

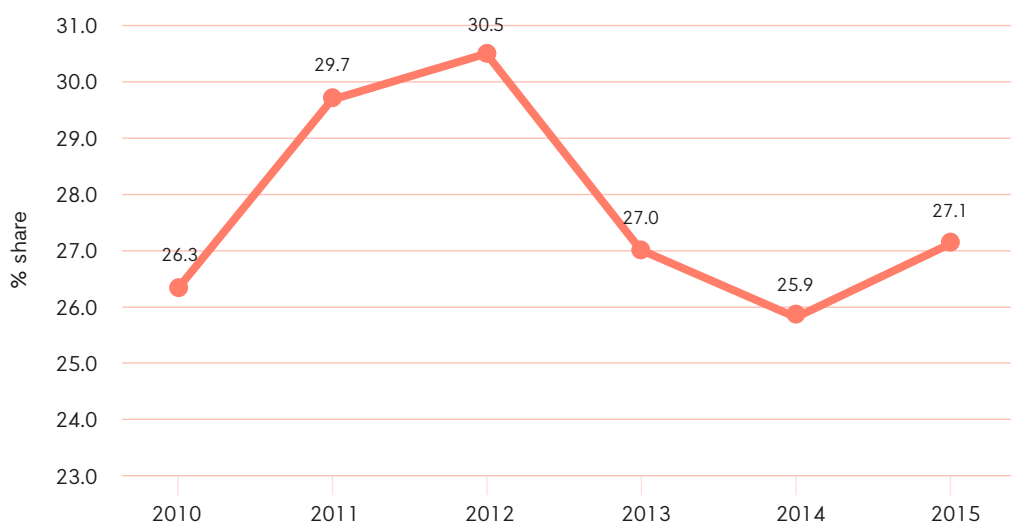
xxiii. There is an expectation by the Government that communities and parents fill the remaining funding gap but persons with disabilities are disproportionately poor and therefore the least able to afford additional costs. (From personal communication)

**Figure 1:** Share of GDP 2010-15, Ethiopia



Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP (%), based on UNESCO Institute of Statistics

**Figure 2:** Share of budget 2010-15, Ethiopia



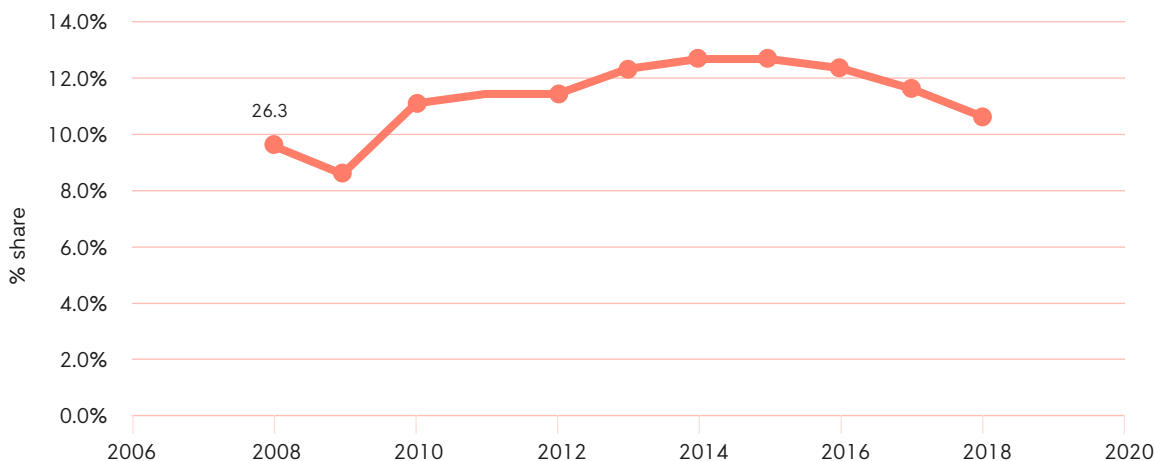
Expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure (%). Based on UIS statistics

**SIZE: Low revenue collection prevents Ethiopia from allocating sufficient domestic resources to fund inclusive education**

To ensure sufficient levels of education investment, Ethiopia needs to focus not only on education spending (funding), but crucially also on the overall amount of revenue (financing) available. Like many countries which already spend a large share of their budget on education, Ethiopia cannot bring an end to the education crisis if the overall size of the government budget is too small. The answer lies in taking action to address the small size of its annual public budget, which is constrained by very weak tax collection rates.

**For Ethiopia, increasing the actual amounts allocated to education will be incredibly difficult unless it increases its tax-to-GDP ratio.** In 2018, the average tax-to-GDP ratio across 26 low-income countries in sub-Saharan was 17.2%.<sup>113</sup> A recent IMF country report noted that Ethiopia still lags behind other countries in the region in this regard.<sup>114</sup> As figure 3 shows, although the country's tax-to-GDP ratio rose from 8.6% in 2008 to 12.7% in 2014, by 2018 it had declined to 10.7%.<sup>115</sup> Considering that tax-to-GDP ratios lower than 15% are deemed insufficient to finance even the most basic state functions<sup>116</sup> it is critical for the government to address this situation.

**Figure 3:** Ethiopia, tax as % GDP



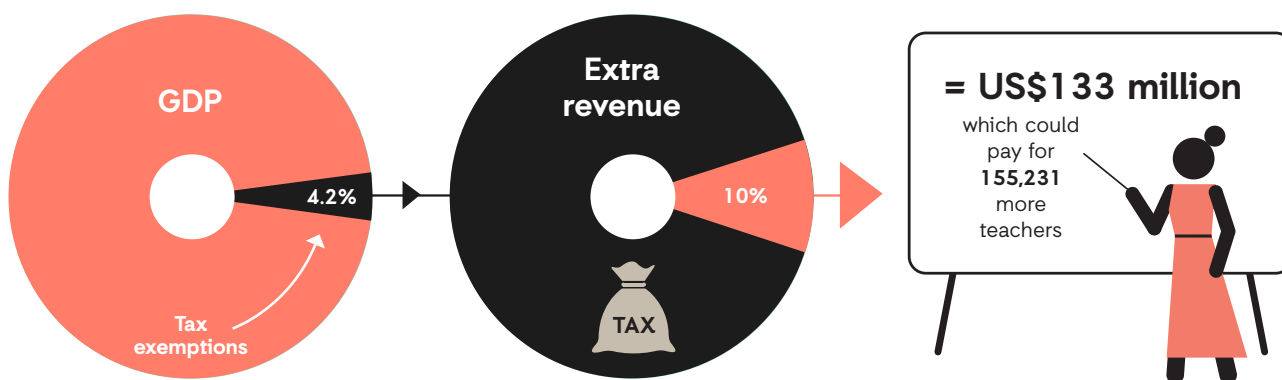
Based on ICTD/UNU-WIDER Government Revenue Dataset

While such a low tax-to-GDP ratio is maintained, increases to the education budget would require Ethiopia to cut back on other vital public services such as health, social welfare, or support to agriculture, the judiciary and police. However, by taking concrete and progressive measures to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio, the country could generate significantly more revenue.

The IMF has repeatedly called for Ethiopia to raise more domestic revenue by eliminating some corporate tax incentives, a strategy which would allow the country to rapidly raise new funds.<sup>117</sup> One estimate in the 2014 Global Education Monitoring Report suggests that tax exemptions amounted to 4.2% of GDP, and if just 10% of this revenue were allocated to basic education

an additional US \$133 million could be invested in education. At current rates, that would cover the annual salaries of an additional 155,231 entry-level teachers at primary level, or 118,960 at secondary level.<sup>xxiv</sup> Such new resources could also enable better targeting of education to the needs of marginalised groups, including children with disabilities, in line with the Government’s current education spending priorities.

**Measures to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio are especially important given Ethiopia’s debt servicing commitments, which currently absorb 12% of all government revenue, and are set to rise to 20% in the next few years, above what the IMF calls “moderate risk”.<sup>xxv</sup>**



xxiv. This estimate, for advocacy purposes, is based on entry-level salaries for teachers and other staff outlined in the revised salary scale implementation guidelines endorsed by the Ministry of Education in July 2020, and using the average US\$ to ETB exchange rate for 2020.  
 xxv. Based on calculations by ActionAid (2020) Who Cares? Paying for care work through transforming the financing of gender responsive public services. The IMF recommends that countries aim for at least “moderate” level of debt risk with a capacity to absorb shocks, which using their figures would mean between 9% and 15% of government revenue – ActionAid took the median of this to identify which countries are “at risk”.

## **SENSITIVE: Budgets need to address equity to support inclusion**

Ethiopia has made a number of attempts to strengthen the sensitivity and equity of its funding allocations, and address inequities in education. However, it is not until very recently this has begun to target disability.

In Ethiopia, education funding is shared across different levels of government, with the federal Government channelling 50-60% of funding through non-itemised block grants to regional governments and direct grants to schools.<sup>118</sup> There are several provisions in the decentralised spending formula used to transfer funding to the regions, including a 10% supplement for hilly terrains and a higher per capita transfer for pastoral populations. Hardship allowances, averaging 30%, are also built into salary cost estimates for staff working in remote areas.

Regions' financing requirements are estimated on the basis of the per capita funding required to achieve the national education sector strategy target of full universal primary schooling. Because the formula takes into account the gap between current and target enrolment levels, it includes an implicit premium for regions with large out-of-school populations.<sup>119</sup> Since the introduction of the third phase of GEQIP (GEQIP-E),

this now includes provisions for estimates of disability.<sup>xxvi</sup> The aim of this supplementary fund is to improve education quality for children with special educational needs by establishing resource centres in cluster schools.

Over the past decade, GEQIP has made positive progress, significantly improving the quality of teaching and learning conditions in 40,000 primary and secondary schools across the country. GEQIP I (2008-2012) and GEQIP II (2013-2018) provided nearly 250 million textbooks and teaching materials to schools, upgraded the qualifications of 300,000 teachers, provided for school level expenditure on quality improvements, and improved accountability through a sound inspection system.<sup>120</sup> Under GEQIP II all regions received an additional 1% of their total allocation to support school facilities and resources for children with special educational needs in mainstream settings. In 2016 this was raised to 2%, and then to 4% in 2018. While this is still low compared to the scale of the problem, it represents a welcome increase.<sup>121</sup>

*Under GEQIP II all regions received an additional 1% of their total allocation to support school facilities and resources for children with special educational needs in mainstream settings. In 2016 this was raised to 2%, and then to 4% in 2018.*



PHOTO: EPHREM TAYE/LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

xxvi. Ethiopia's General Education Quality Improvement Programme for Equity (GEQIP-E) is a pooled fund supported by development partners that provides grants to support Alternative Basic Education centres and non-salary recurrent expenditure in government schools.

As GEQIP moved into its third phase (2018-2020), there was an increased focus on equity (thus renaming it to GEQIP-E). It aims to enhance equity and address the needs of female students, pastoralists and those with special needs by providing them with specialised support, particularly in the poorest and most deprived regions. Equity indicators were developed to promote increased allocation of school grant resources for children with disabilities, as well as curriculum reform and implementation. Among other things, **GEQIP-E will promote the inclusion of children with special needs in education by providing supplementary school grants to transform 687 schools into inclusive education resource centres.**<sup>122</sup> Although it is too early to see the outcomes of GEQIP-E, the focus on equity demonstrates Ethiopia's commitment to addressing inequity in education, including those affecting children with disabilities.<sup>123</sup>

**Equity in education spending is adversely affected by disproportionately large allocations to higher education.** In Ethiopia, higher education accounts for 42% of education spending, equal to spending on primary and secondary combined (with 32% and 10% shares respectively). UNESCO reports that, in 2012, the Government spent US\$ 98 per child in primary education, and US\$ 3,938 per student in tertiary education.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, there are large inequalities in Ethiopia by wealth, for instance, the richest households receive 72 times more government spending on secondary education than the poorest households.<sup>125</sup> Ultimately, tackling inequity in education spending in Ethiopia includes tackling low levels of per capita funding at primary level.

**SRUTINY: Budget allocations to inclusion are difficult to analyse**

Ensuring that budgets are allocated and spent according to real needs depends on accurate and reliable information:

on children with disabilities, on budget lines and expenditure on their education, and on the workforce needed to ensure inclusive education. There is limited awareness of funding amounts for special education, and uncertainty around its disbursement. This is of concern for monitoring investments in inclusive education to ensure accountability. One interviewee stated, *“we are not aware of the exact amount allocated in the budget [to pre-service teacher training in inclusive education], we do not have separate amounts specifically for disabilities”.*

Data, skills, and awareness are crucial to enable education stakeholders to understand what funds have been allocated, if and how they have been spent, and whether such disbursements are leading to better outcomes. Until recently, there were major restrictions on civil society advocacy in Ethiopia. The disability movement is relatively vibrant, but a lack of transparency, the multisectoral nature of disability inclusion and a lack of technical expertise in budget tracking hampers strategic advocacy and effective scrutiny and analysis of the budget. An extended Education Technical Working Group on inclusive education, comprising national and international NGOs, meets regularly to exchange information and has the potential to fulfil a more significant role in ensuring accountability and providing guidance.



PHOTO: GREG FUNNELL/ACTIONAID



PHOTO: GREG FUNNELL/ACTIONAID

*Ethiopia has made impressive gains in education in the last two decades, with some of the highest enrolment rates and fastest progress towards the 2030 target for primary completion in sub-Saharan Africa.*

## SECTION 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethiopia has made impressive gains in education in the last two decades, with some of the highest enrolment rates and fastest progress towards the 2030 target for primary completion in sub-Saharan Africa. However, these impressive results are yet to be replicated for children with disabilities.

For Ethiopia to continue its progress, it needs to ensure that the 93% of children with disabilities who are currently out of primary school are brought into mainstream education. The Government should be commended on the progress made to date to embed its commitment to inclusive education, but this has not yet translated into action on the ground.

**The Government must work harder to reach its own goal of achieving a 75% enrolment ratio, and set new ambitious goals, monitoring implementation and adapting plans as it rolls-out a new sector development plan in 2020.**

Inclusive education systems must no longer be seen as a marginal policy issue supported by donors and NGOs, but as central to the achievement of high-quality education for all learners, and the development of more inclusive societies. This requires more teachers trained in inclusive methodologies, supported by a system aligned to delivering on a bold vision for inclusive education.





## Recommendations

### 1. Continue to embed inclusive education into policy planning, budgeting and monitoring.

- Embed commitments to inclusive education (in stand-alone strategies or policies) into general education sector plans and budgets. As ESDP V comes to an end, and the new education strategy is developed, the Government of Ethiopia has an opportunity to mainstream commitments to inclusive education, reflect on progress, redouble efforts, and set more realistic (but ambitious) goals.
- Ensure national inclusive education strategies/policies include commitments to transform the workforce to deliver inclusion and are accompanied by appropriately costed budgets.
- Establish action plans and accompanying monitoring and evaluation frameworks with SMART indicators to measure progress towards the delivery of ambitious, yet realistic targets.
- Ensure the voices of organisations working on disability inclusive education, disabled people's organisations, academics, and professionals working on the ground are considered in education sector planning.
- Embed commitments to inclusive education (in stand-alone strategies or policies) into general education sector plans and budgets. As ESDP V comes to an end, and the new education strategy is developed, the Government of Ethiopia has an opportunity to mainstream commitments to inclusive education, reflect on progress, redouble efforts, and set more realistic (but ambitious) goals.
- Ensure national inclusive education strategies/policies include commitments to transform the workforce to deliver inclusion and are accompanied by appropriately costed budgets.
- Establish action plans and accompanying monitoring and evaluation frameworks with SMART indicators to measure progress towards the delivery of ambitious, yet realistic targets.
- Ensure the voices of organisations working on disability inclusive education, disabled people's organisations, academics, and professionals working on the ground are considered in education sector planning.

### 2. Ensure more robust and accurate data to improve planning and budgeting for inclusive education and monitoring change.

*The Government of Ethiopia has made notable efforts to gather enrolment data for children with disabilities, disaggregated by region and sex. However, good planning requires better baseline figures, including of the total number of children with disabilities. Improvements in data should focus on:*

- Ensuring standardised, comparable data collection methods that meet international standards, using the Washington Group child-functioning module and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys which collect information on disability at the household level, school attendance and other relevant demographic data for planning purposes. This should be harmonised with the Ethiopian Population and Housing Census and health management information system.
- Strengthening the Education Management Information System (EMIS) using the Inclusive EMIS guidance by UNICEF on rights-based language and appropriate data to inform policy, financing and the allocation of resources.
- Committing to use EMIS to collect better data on the availability of educators and education support personnel, their preparedness and support to practice disability-inclusive education.

### 3. Improve alignment of federal, Woreda and district level systems behind inclusive education.

*Currently, the overall education system is not aligned to deliver on inclusive education. This can be improved by:*

- Clarifying the structures for the coordination and administration of inclusive education developed by the Federal Ministry of Education, including support for special needs/ inclusive education at the Woreda and sub-district levels.
- Increasing understanding at all levels of government, and within the education sector more broadly, of the concept of inclusive education (as separate from special needs education) as an integral part of all education planning and implementation.
- Building commitment to inclusive education within

the broader education community, by raising awareness and championing the implementation of existing national inclusive education policies and strategies.

**4. Address high pupil-teacher ratios which prevent teachers from practicing inclusion in the classrooms.**

- Recruiting and training significantly more teachers and education support personnel (including those with disabilities) to continue working to address the education workforce shortage and reduce teacher-pupil ratios in areas where these exceed national and UNESCO targets.
- Attracting, retaining and motivating teachers and education support personnel by ensuring better pay and incentives. Inclusive education plans must address teacher training needs and deployment to underserved districts by reviewing compensation, incentives, wage structure, and career progression for special needs education, to ensure system-wide change.

**5. Develop a workforce that can practice inclusion, including a focus on transforming training to equip teachers to practice inclusion.**

- Providing clear criteria on qualifications related to special needs /inclusive education (in terms of years of study, skill sets, course duration, time in classroom instruction) with the view to develop a licensing or registration system for teachers. This should include a certification system to ensure high levels of competency amongst teachers using braille and sign-language.
- Reviewing the qualifications required for special needs/ inclusive education support personnel and developing training courses to enable support staff to fulfil their teacher support role and work in the resource-centre cluster system for inclusive education delivery.
- Reviewing compensation, incentives, wage structure, and career progression for special needs/ inclusive education support personnel to ensure better staff retention.
- Ensuring all pre- and in-service subject training embed inclusive education principles and cover differentiation for children with different learning styles and abilities, including how to adapt these skills to large classes:

- Review and strengthen the existing pre-service module on inclusive education with information on identification of strengths/ abilities and challenges, and include a practical skill-based component related to teaching in a diverse class (dispelling the myth that practical competencies are mainly about learning braille and sign-language).
- Strengthen in-service continuous professional development for teachers, with a revised course on inclusive education. This should include sensitisation of practicing teachers to address attitudinal barriers related to the inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Place special attention in the training of class zero, pre-school educators on including universal design for learning, and embedding play-based learning (synonymous with inclusive education) in all training.
- Strengthen the theory and pedagogy of lecturers by providing refresher courses with technical experts in inclusive education with exposure to practices in schools.

**6. Support teachers through improving the resource centre cluster system of inclusive education delivery.**

- Support special schools to transition to resource centres, to operate as hubs of expertise providing guidance to education personnel on how to effectively deliver and support disability-inclusive education.
- Strengthen resource centres to help teachers embed inclusive education, providing subject teachers with more and better technical support for inclusive education.
- Include additional cadres currently being trained, such as speech therapists and occupational therapists, within the education system.

**7. Carry out credible costings for supporting inclusive education, which include education workforce development.**

- Carry out a costing exercise in line with plans and strategies (which include the required workforce transformation) to develop credible budgets for inclusive education provision. This should take into account system-wide investments required for inclusive education, in recurrent expenditure for an increased and better remunerated workforce.
- Costing exercises should show current levels of

spend against need, to highlight financing gaps for scaling-up inclusive education. This must make the case for reforms through detailed, long-term financial plans that demonstrate benefits as well as costs.

- All costing exercises should be developed collaboratively alongside representatives of the education workforce and unions, as well as other civil society allies, to both inform needs and champion the outcomes (i.e. generate political will for the implementation of the costing plan).

#### 8. **Raise significant new funds to transform the education system, and the teaching force in particular, for inclusion.**

*Transforming the workforce to move towards system-wide inclusive education requires substantial increases in public budgets, which can be supported by applying ActionAid's "4S education financing framework" for SDG4. In Ethiopia this requires:*

- **Maintaining the share of the budget at current high levels of over 20%.** This is a required frontloading of the investments needed to meet the 2030 education targets, particularly in the workforce capacity to deliver it. Pressure from debt servicing must be managed so that it does not erode these investments. This in turn will require the IMF to ensure its advice to the country does not counter their commitment to social spending.

- **Increasing the size of domestic revenue, and the overall government budget.** This can be done by adopting measures to build more progressive tax systems and increase the tax-to-GDP ratio, e.g. by stopping the allocation of harmful corporate tax incentives and tackling tax evasion and avoidance.
- **Improve the sensitivity of the budget to support inclusion.** Monitor the disbursement of GEQIP-E school grant top-ups for children with special educational needs, to see if this is adequate, and raise allocations where necessary. Guidance on the use of the special needs education grant, based on empirical evidence and child rights principles, should be provided.
- **Enable greater scrutiny of future allocations and expenditure by making education budgets publicly available.** The Ethiopian Government should improve transparency to increase monitoring and accountability at every level and ensure that budget allocations are properly targeted, arrive in full and on time, and are effectively spent.

With crisis comes opportunity and against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, we hope that the practical recommendations outlined in this report will support the implementation of sustainable measures, not just to perpetuate the status quo, but to invest in the skilled education workforce needed to build back education systems that are better, more inclusive and leave no child behind.

## A Call to Action

Billions of dollars are lost each year to harmful tax incentives, double taxation agreements and debt, meanwhile governments lack the funds to recruit, train and deploy the teachers they need to achieve SDG4. With only 10 years to go before 2030, Covid 19 must not be an excuse for retrogression.

**We call on governments to act now** to safeguard education financing and invest in the education workforce needed to deliver quality education for all children, including those with disabilities by:

- increasing the size of their overall budgets through progressive taxation
- spending at least 20% of budget and 6% of GDP on education
- addressing amounts lost each year to debt servicing and
- ensuring funds allocated to education arrive on time where they're needed most.

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**Light for the World** is a disability & development organisation enabling eye health services and supporting people with disabilities in some of the poorest regions of the world. We are proud to be part of the global fight to ensure children with disabilities receive quality, inclusive education.

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**Education International** represents organisations of teachers and other education employees across the globe. It is the world's largest federation of unions and associations, representing thirty million education employees in about four hundred organisations in one hundred and seventy countries and territories, across the globe. Education International unites teachers and education employees.

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**ActionAid** is a global movement of people working together to achieve greater human rights for all and defeat poverty. We believe people in poverty have the power within them to create change for themselves, their families and communities. ActionAid is a catalyst for that change.

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