



Sightsavers

Sightsavers' Education Strategy

2013 – 2018



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Front cover

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Acronyms	
AO	Area Office
BPO	Blind People's Organisation
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CO	Country Office
CWD	Children with disabilities
CWVI	Children with visual impairments
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management and Information Systems
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESP	Education Sector Plan
IE	Inclusive education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
MOE	Ministry of Education
O&M	Orientation and mobility
PWVI	People with visual impairments
RO	Regional Office
SEN	Special educational needs
SENCO	Special educational needs co-ordinator
SWD	Students with disabilities
SWVI	Students with visual impairments
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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1 Executive summary

- a) Sightsavers will focus on promoting inclusive education for children and youth with visual impairments in low income countries, while supporting the education of other young people with disabilities whenever possible.
- b) We will only support education provision which leads to broader social inclusion for young people with disabilities.
- c) We will therefore support the development of inclusive education provision which is accessible, equitable, of good quality, and which forms a continuum of provision from early childhood onwards.
- d) We will particularly focus on creating educational opportunities for multiply-disadvantaged young people with disabilities, including girls with disabilities.
- e) We will ensure that students with disabilities have access to appropriate forms of educational technology, and are able to develop the skills to make best use of this technology.
- f) We will support locally-appropriate, locally-owned forms of education provision which are also aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We will place particular emphasis on the development of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and other forms of home- and community-based educational provision.
- g) Our principal partners will be Ministries of Education, but we will also work with the non-state sector when appropriate opportunities exist. Sightsavers will continue to work closely with Disabled People's Organisations and Blind People's Organisations.
- h) We will work at all levels of education systems in consultative and participatory ways, and we will continually learn from what we are doing.
- i) We will engage in three complementary, overlapping fields of activity: social development; system development; and policy development.
- j) Whenever possible, we will ensure the programmes we support achieve financial, technical, and institutional sustainability.
- k) The relationships between the various elements of the new strategy are outlined in the theory of change on page 14.

2 Introduction

This document outlines Sightsavers' strategic directions in education for 2013-2018. It begins by placing our work in the field of education in its various contexts. It then identifies the goal of our work, before identifying the approaches and fields of activity which will enable us to achieve this goal.

The key elements of the strategy were identified in an education summit held in December 2012, attended by staff from across the organisation and

external consultants. The strategy has since been developed through internal consultation and analysis of relevant research. It will be implemented at all levels of the organisation – internationally, regionally, and nationally.

3 Context

a) Organisational context

Over the past 50 years, Sightsavers has been at the forefront of development initiatives to improve educational provision for young people with visual impairments in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and India. At present, we support 23 education projects in 14 countries, from which thousands of children benefit every year.

We directly support service provision in these countries, while simultaneously strengthening education systems through training education personnel, linking education with health services, and other interventions. As a result of our advocacy, we have also persuaded Ministries of Education to devote more resources to the education of children with disabilities and to do so more strategically. At present, we are involved in shaping the post-2015 Development Agenda so it advances the educational rights of young people with disabilities from early childhood through to adulthood.

Through our efforts, we have developed a network of partnerships with state and non-state actors both internationally and in the countries in which we work. Many of our programme staff also possess significant expertise in the education of persons with disabilities. These assets provide a sound foundation for our future work in this field.

b) Legislative context

Our work in the field of education is grounded in the emerging framework of international agreements and legislation advancing the educational rights of persons with disabilities. The key agreements and pieces of legislation, and their principal recommendations and directives, are summarised below.

c) Development context

Despite significant progress in recent years, children with disabilities in low income countries are still “less likely to start school and have lower rates of staying and being promoted in schools”, according to the World Report on Disability.¹ The report also states that enrolment rates for children with disabilities are particularly low in certain countries, and for children with certain types of impairment, including those with sensory impairments. Girls with disabilities have even less access to education than boys with disabilities, and children with disabilities from socio-economically deprived backgrounds are also additionally disadvantaged.² Access to tertiary, vocational, and adult education for youths and adults with disabilities remains inequitable.³

It is imperative that Sightsavers rises to the above challenges. This strategy identifies how we will do this.

United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)	All children have a right to a free and compulsory education.
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)	Children with disabilities have a right to education based on equal opportunity.
World Conference on Education For All (EFA) (Jomtien, 1990)	This established 6 goals for the year 2000, including universal access to education, equity, and an emphasis on learning outcomes.
UN Standard Rules for the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (Rule 6) (1993)	Children, youths and adults with special educational needs should have access to the regular school system.
Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)	Education systems should be inclusive. Children, youths and adults with disabilities therefore have a right to education in ‘integrated’ and ‘general’ settings.
World Education Forum, Dakar (2000)	This reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to EFA.
Millennium Development Goals (2000)	All children – girls and boys – should be able to complete a full course of primary education by 2015 (Goal 2).
UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)	Governments should provide inclusive education for children with disabilities (see glossary for further discussion).

4 Goal

Sightsavers will support inclusive education provision which develops the capabilities of people with disabilities to participate in all forms of social life. To the maximum extent possible, we will therefore ensure this provision is:

- a) Accessible – both physically accessible and financially affordable for young people with disabilities in our programme areas
- b) Equitable – including young people with disabilities, irrespective of gender, ethno-linguistic identity, socio-economic background, or any other characteristic
- c) Of good quality – meeting the diverse, complex, and evolving needs of students with disabilities
- d) Continual – extending from early childhood onwards through to primary and secondary education to form a continuum of provision
- e) Sustainable – demonstrating significant levels of

community participation and securely funded by the state or non-state sectors

Sightsavers recognises that young people with disabilities will only receive the above if the following exist:

- Supportive communities and societies. Communities which encourage the active participation of people with disabilities in all forms of social life, and societies which uphold and defend the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Well-organised and managed education systems which provide students with disabilities and their teachers and families with the necessary levels and types of support.
- Appropriate legislation and policies. Legislation which upholds the educational rights of children with disabilities, and government policies which provide guidance and direction for stakeholders in education systems.

5 Disability focus

Sightsavers has traditionally focused on the education of children with visual impairments, and this will remain the primary focus of our work in the field of education. However, we will also support the development of educational opportunities for other children with disabilities when appropriate opportunities arise. Such initiatives can take the form of joining disability-alliances in order to lobby governments to improve educational provision for all children with disabilities. It can take the form of

awareness-raising in local communities which highlights not only the particular needs of children with visual impairments, but the collective needs of all children with disabilities. It can take the form of promoting the principles of ‘universal design’ in school-construction, as recommended by UNCRPD. And it can also take the form of establishing partnerships with organisations with expertise in other areas of impairment or with broad ‘pan-disability’ expertise.

6 Blindness and low vision

Education providers in low income countries need to be able to meet the educational needs of both blind children and children with low vision. Sightsavers will therefore support model programmes which demonstrate cost-effective

ways of meeting the educational needs of both groups of students. We will also ensure that learning from these programmes is effectively generated, documented, and disseminated.

7 Educational provision

Sightsavers believes that the state should assume overall responsibility for the management of educational services, as well as being the primary provider of these services. However, we recognise that the non-state sector is an increasingly significant provider of education in many development contexts.⁴ Where appropriate

opportunities exist, Sightsavers will therefore encourage non-state providers to include students with disabilities in their programmes. However, this provision must be sustainable, accountable to parents and children, and include the most disadvantaged members of communities.

8 Educational model

Sightsavers supports the inclusion of young people with disabilities in mainstream schools wherever possible.

However, we recognise that educational inclusion can take a variety of forms, depending on the requirements of particular students and local circumstances. Given this complexity, Sightsavers will not seek to 'export' any 'preferred' model of mainstreaming to low income countries, but encourage governments to make their own strategic, evidence-based decisions.⁵

Sightsavers also recognises that young people with educationally complex impairments cannot always be swiftly and seamlessly included in mainstream systems of education – for instance, children who are deafblind.⁶ In many cases, these individuals will benefit from complementary support, and, in exceptional cases, alternative support provided in home and community settings.⁷ In summary, Sightsavers believes that young people with disabilities follow different 'trajectories for inclusion'.

Sightsavers further recognises that extensive and established systems of special schooling exist in many of the countries in which we work.⁸ These schools can also play a key role in supporting inclusion, both through providing students with the skill-sets which will enable them to succeed in mainstream education systems and through providing outreach services for mainstream schools.⁹ Where appropriate opportunities exist, Sightsavers will therefore assist special schools to contribute to the development of inclusive education systems.

Finally, Sightsavers acknowledges that ECCE of good quality is essential for all young children with disabilities as it provides the foundation for their future development. ECCE will therefore be a significant component of our future work in the field of education.

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9 Educational technology

Students with disabilities should have access to the necessary specialist educational resources, and also receive the individualised support which enables them to make best use of these resources.¹⁰

Relatively simple forms of technology remain appropriate in many development contexts – for instance, Perkins Brailers and writing frames and styluses for blind students. However, more sophisticated forms of information technology are

becoming increasingly available and affordable in low income countries. Sightsavers needs to be at the forefront of promoting the application and use of such technology in these countries.

This technology should not only assist students with disabilities to succeed educationally, but be ‘technology for life’ – assisting people with disabilities to participate in a full range of community activities during successive stages of their lives.

10 Gender focus

Girls and young women with disabilities are particularly likely to be excluded from, or marginalised within, education systems. It is therefore essential for us to develop approaches, particularly in the field of advocacy, that ensure girls and young women with disabilities not only

access these systems, but receive high quality educational and post-educational opportunities. In short, Sightsavers needs to promote gender equity as well as gender parity (see glossary of educational terms at the end of this document).¹¹



11 Strategy

In order to achieve our goal in education, Sightsavers will adopt certain ways of working and engage in particular fields of activity. As a result, we will be able to make best use of our ‘comparative advantage’ – particularly, the experience and expertise within the organisation, our established presence in the various countries in which we work, and our international engagement with policy.

A Ways of working

i A programme-based approach

Sightsavers will adopt a programme approach in the field of education. This means we will support a small number of multi-layered programmes (approximately 10) in selected countries.

- Our work will have a ‘vertical’ impact because we will work at all levels of education systems – national, intermediate, and local.
- It will have a ‘horizontal’ impact because we will promote system-wide change.
- It will have a ‘lateral’ impact because we will work in homes and communities as well as schools and colleges. We will also seek to integrate education services with related services (for instance, health and social services).
- It will have a ‘temporal’ impact because we will seek to develop continua of provision for young people with disabilities. It will also have this impact because of the sustainability of our work, which will be underpinned with partnerships with Ministries of Education.
- It will have a ‘global’ impact because we will ensure our programmes complement one another and that learning from one programme is transferred to other programmes. Programme learning will also enable us to contribute to global educational discourse and policy change.

Sightsavers will only support small-scale, innovative projects when there is a clear and compelling rationale for such initiatives – for instance, the need to pilot a particular educational approach or piece of educational technology.

ii A partnership-based approach

Sightsavers will work with a variety of partners in order to maximise the impact of our work.

At *country level*, our primary partnerships will be

with Ministries of Education as they have primary responsibility for the management of educational systems. We will also work with other government departments when and as appropriate in order to promote ‘joined up’ services for persons with disabilities.

Where appropriate, we will form partnerships with national non-governmental organisations with appropriate levels and types of expertise, developing this expertise when and as necessary.

We will continue to develop alliances with disabled people’s organisations and blind people’s organisations advancing the educational rights of people with disabilities at all levels of society.

We will work closely with local communities, especially the most marginalised members of those communities.

We will work with non-state education providers when it leads to the development of sustainable educational provision of good quality for young people with disabilities, including young people additionally disadvantaged by various factors.

Our partnerships will include partnerships with teacher-training institutions, given the significant role that TTIs can play in strengthening education systems.

At *country and international level*, we will develop partnerships with organisations with high levels of technical expertise which complements or augments our present technical capacity.

We will collaborate with mainstream international development agencies in order to ensure these organisations advance the educational rights of persons with disabilities in their activities.

We will also develop partnerships with advocacy-based organisations in order to shape policy at global, national, and local levels.

iii A participatory approach

We will provide local stakeholders, especially people with disabilities, with meaningful opportunities to participate in all stages of the programme cycle, as is their right. This will mean they will have a strong sense of ownership of Sightsavers-supported programmes.¹² It will also mean these programmes will be informed by local knowledge.¹³

It is particularly important that children with disabilities should be provided with opportunities to participate in our programmes, as they need to be at the centre of our educational work. However, Sightsavers recognises that it is not always easy to create such opportunities.¹⁴ Sightsavers therefore acknowledges its need to develop a nuanced and responsible position and associated guidelines on this sensitive and complex issue.

iv A 'twin-track' approach

Sightsavers has traditionally worked in the field of visual impairment, and the development of educational provision for children with visual impairments will remain the primary focus for our work in the field of education. However, Sightsavers has broader responsibilities to support the development of educational provision which meet the needs of all young people with disabilities. Sightsavers will therefore adopt a twin track approach in the field of education which combines a specific visual impairment focus with broader 'pan disability' orientations. Section 4 of this strategy identifies some ways in which we can do this effectively. When adopting a twin track approach, we will avoid creating inappropriate disparities between the types of provision available to students with visual impairments and the types of provision available to other students with disabilities.

Sightsavers further recognises that children with disabilities have numerous educational needs that they share with their non-disabled peers.¹⁵ Sightsavers therefore will participate in national and international education coalitions which advance the educational rights of all young people.

v A learning approach

Our work in the field of education should be evidence-based, drawing upon good quality situational analyses of the contexts in which we are working and internationally recognised good practice in the field of education. We will also identify ways in which we can more effectively learn from our programmes, ensure this learning feeds into programme design and development, and ourselves contribute to global learning.¹⁶ The new Sightsavers' Research Strategy 2013-2018 identifies ways in which we can promote educational research and ensure our programmes are informed by this research.

The above ways of working will be applied to the following complementary and inter-related fields of activity.

B Fields of activity

i A social development focus

Negative attitudes and practices towards people with disabilities often prevent them from accessing education systems. Concerns about the future employability of children with disabilities may also mean their parents are unwilling to invest in their education. Those children with disabilities who attend school may experience bullying, intimidation, and other forms of violence, leading to them under-achieving or 'dropping out' from school.¹⁷

When these disabling attitudes and practices exist, Sightsavers and its partners will seek to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and to develop structures of support in local communities. Persons with disabilities should play a leading role in this process, as should their family-members, friends, and community-leaders. Including children with disabilities in schools will not only reflect changing social attitudes, but will itself contribute to attitudinal change.¹⁸

As well as working at community level, Sightsavers will promote broader social change – for instance, through organising national media campaigns and supporting the development of 'umbrella' organisations of BPOs and DPOs.

Given the significance of attitudinal and behavioural change for the promotion of inclusive education, social development will be of central importance for our work in the field of education. Our work in the thematic areas of education and social inclusion will therefore be closely integrated.

Some illustrative social development activities are listed in the theory of change on page 14.

ii A system development focus

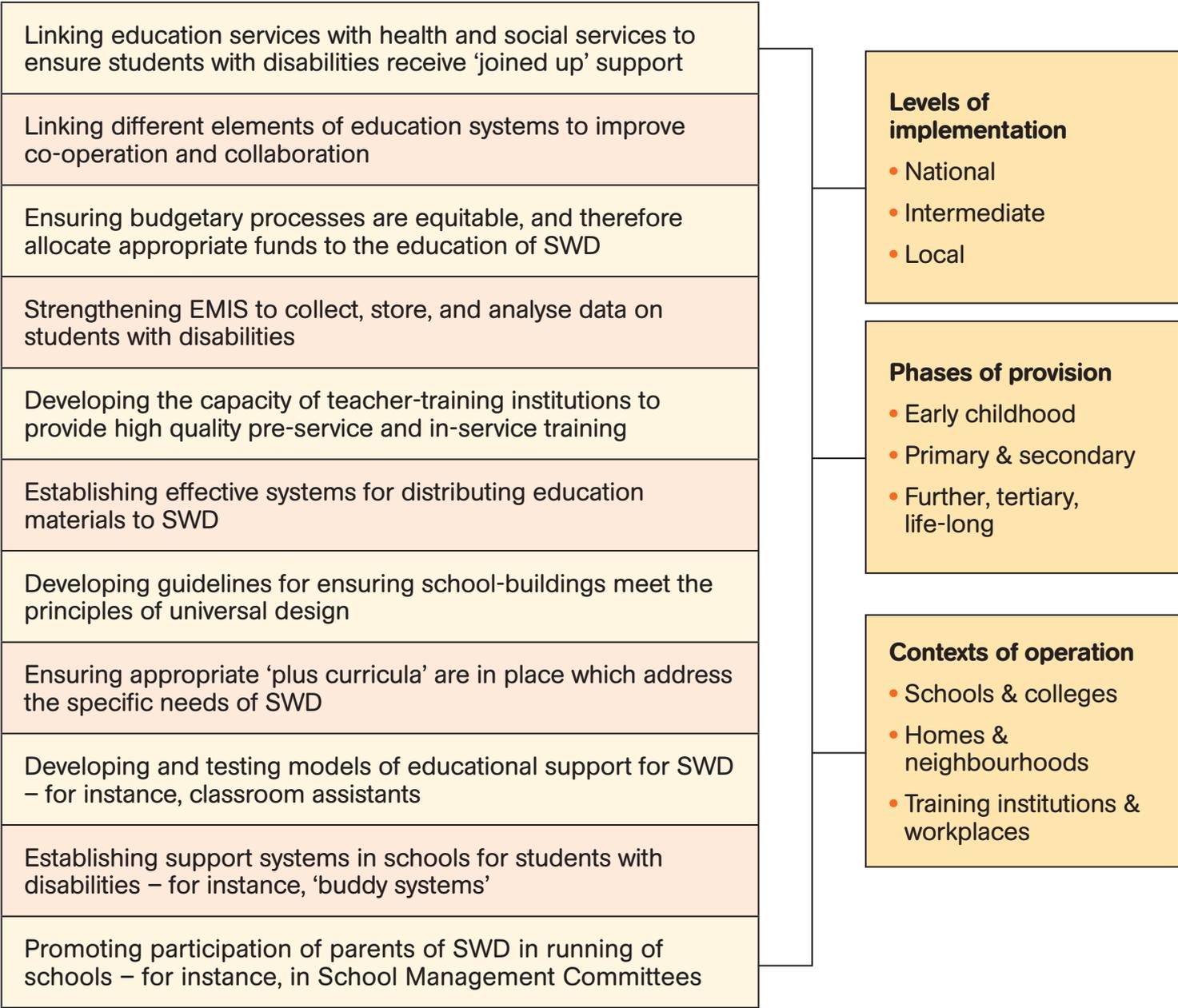
System development focuses on increasing the capacity of education-systems to provide education of good quality for young people with disabilities. System development therefore provides us with opportunities to increase/improve educational provision for students with disabilities. System development can take various forms, and can be carried out different levels and in different contexts (see Figure 1).¹⁹

Sightsavers has traditionally focused on setting up and supporting pilot projects in selected schools. These sorts of pilot projects contribute to system development when they demonstrate innovative approaches which are then replicated more widely within education systems. These sorts of projects will therefore remain an important way of working for Sightsavers – although it may sometimes be a better option to develop existing systems of educational provision, rather than establish new ones.²⁰

However, it is essential that pilot projects

demonstrate good practice, and therefore deserve to be scaled up.²¹ They also need to be cost-effective, and therefore ‘scalable’.²² From the outset, education authorities should also be expected to take significant levels of responsibility for these projects, including financial responsibility. Finally, these projects need to be combined with advocacy activities and broader system-development activities. Otherwise, education authorities will be unable/ unwilling to scale up these projects (again, see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Illustrative examples of system development



iii A policy development focus

A third field of activity will be policy development (again, see theory of change on page 13). Policy development involves supporting legislation advancing the educational rights of people with disabilities. It also involves assisting education authorities to identify ways of embedding those rights in education systems. Policy development therefore, like system development, provides us with significant opportunities to develop educational provision for people with disabilities.

In order to work effectively in this field, we need to ensure that education systems have the capacity to implement these policies (hence system development supports policy development, as well as vice-versa). We also need to ensure policy recommendations are practical, command widespread support, and are 'owned' by people with disabilities.²³ Finally, we need to closely monitor the implementation of policies, as too

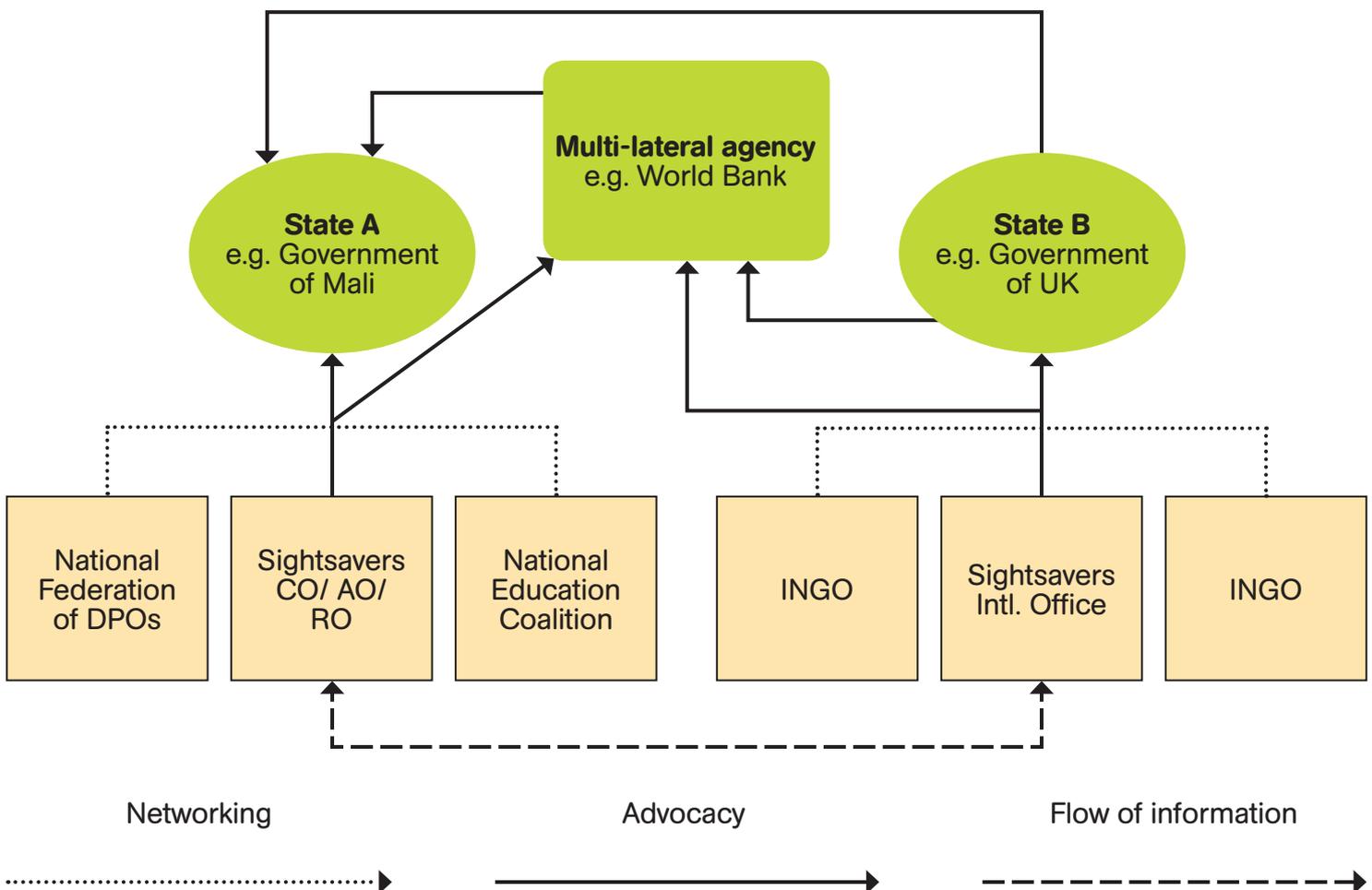
often policies have little or no impact on educational realities.

Advocacy provides a valuable tool for influencing policy and practice. However, in order to be effective, we must adopt co-ordinated advocacy strategies. This will involve:

- Identifying appropriate advocacy issues and targets (agencies/institutions)
- Identifying appropriate advocacy strategies and partners
- Integrating our advocacy work at different levels²⁴

Figure 2 provides an illustrative example of a 'joined-up' advocacy strategy in education. In this example, Sightsavers offices at various levels work with different partner organisations to influence the policies of a particular multi-lateral agency and two national governments – one from the North, one from the South.²⁵

Figure 2: Illustrative example of joined-up advocacy strategy in education



12 Pathways to sustainability

Sightsavers will support the development of sustainable educational provision – in other words, provision which is not dependent on continual inputs from Sightsavers, but is sustained by in-country support.

This strategy has identified a number of ways in which Sightsavers and its partners can maximise the sustainability of this educational provision. They include:

- a) Promoting *technical sustainability* through increasing the capacity of education providers at all levels to implement and scale up education services for children with disabilities
- b) Promoting *financial sustainability* through ensuring Sightsavers-supported education programmes are as cost-effective as possible, and that the recurrent costs of these programmes are met by governments

c) Promoting *institutional sustainability* through ensuring education authorities take as much responsibility as possible for education programmes, and that this commitment is embedded in legislation and policy

d) Promoting *community sustainability* through maximising stakeholder-support for education provision for children with disabilities, and also maximising stakeholder-participation in this provision

However, Sightsavers also recognises that it is not easy to set up and support sustainable education programmes in some development contexts – particularly in fragile states. In such circumstance, it is not reasonable to expect these programmes to achieve sustainability rapidly. Instead, we should seek to develop the sustainability of these programmes over a period of time.

13 Making the change

The new education strategy will provide us with opportunities to increase the effectiveness of our work in the field of education.

We will support the education of growing numbers of young people with visual impairments, while simultaneously advancing the educational rights of other young people with disabilities.

We will increase the participation of local stakeholders – in particular, people with disabilities – in Sightsavers-supported programmes.

We will assist people with disabilities to make their voices heard at all levels of society and government.

We will critically engage with education systems in all their complexity and diversity, and identify appropriate and sustainable ways of developing those systems.

Along with our partners, we will contribute significantly to educational policy-making at local, national, and international levels.

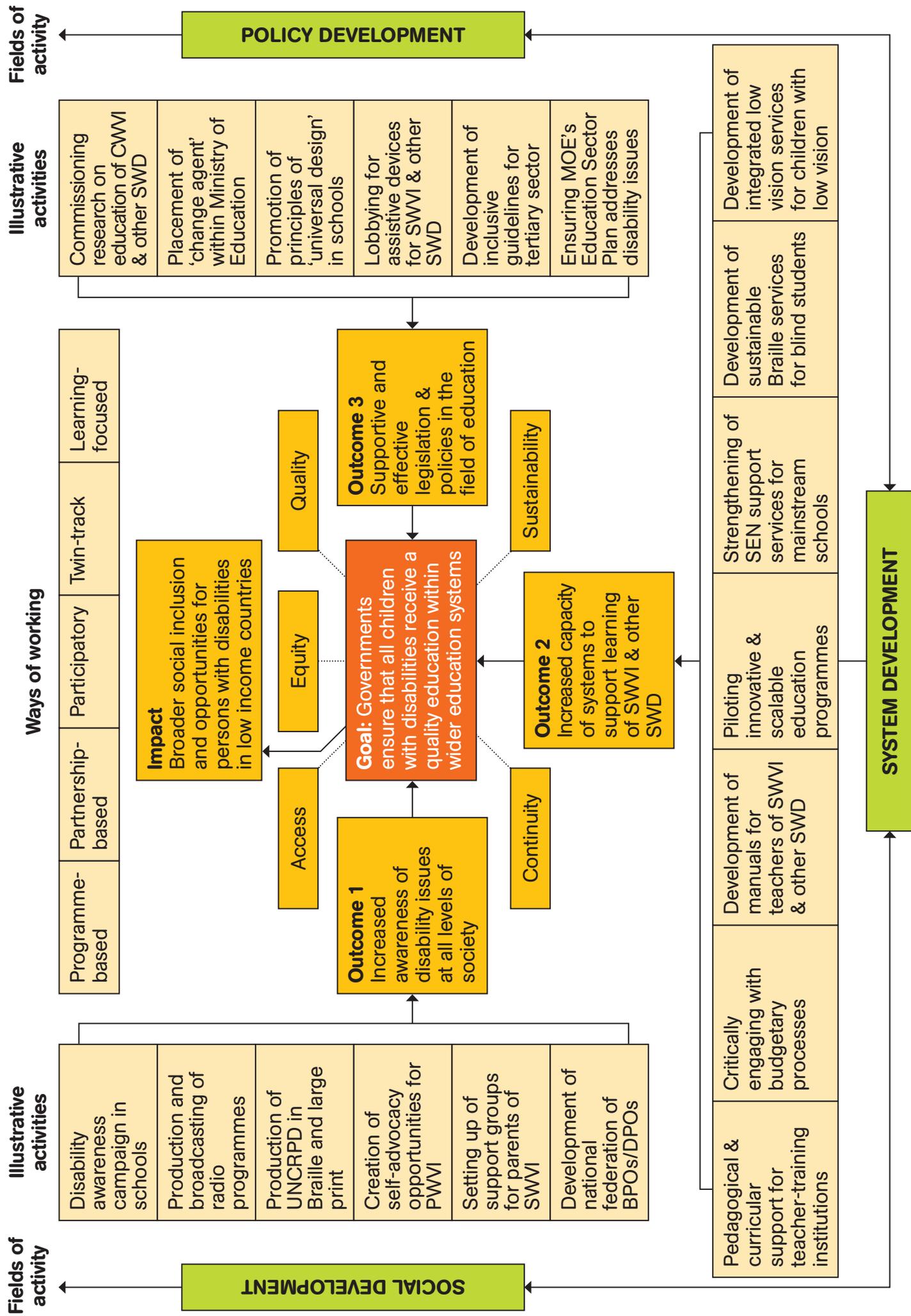
We will co-ordinate our work at all levels of the organisation, recognising we have a collective responsibility to promote educational opportunities for young people with disabilities in low income countries.

We will ensure our programmes are not only learning-based, but generate learning.

In order to work in these ways, we will need to adopt new approaches and engage in new fields of activity. We will also need to further develop the capacity of our staff in selected country offices. However, we already have significant assets – in particular, the experience, expertise, and commitment of our staff, and our networks of partnerships with diverse organisations. This strategy has also identified a clear pathway for achieving our goal and is underpinned by a coherent theory of change (see Figure 3 on page 14).

We can therefore be confident that we will successfully rise to the challenges we face.

Figure 3: Sightsavers' theory of change in education



Annex 1 Glossary of educational terms

Assessment	Assessment can take various forms (e.g. educational, medical, psychological), be carried out in different contexts (e.g. the home, the school, the health centre), and involve a variety of procedures, instruments and actors. Skilled and sensitive assessment can provide valuable information about students and lead to improved educational provision, as long as schools have the capacity to make good use of this information.
Attainment and achievement	Attainment refers to the knowledge and skills which students have acquired, as measured in formal educational assessments (i.e. tests and examinations). Achievement refers to both the attainment of students <i>and</i> the progress they have made, given their initial starting points and capabilities.
Braille	A form of written language for blind people, in which letters, words, numbers, punctuation marks, and mathematical symbols are represented by patterns of raised dots that are felt with the pads of fingers.
Child-friendly schools	An important concept developed by UNICEF, which has become the basis of UNICEF's work in education. Child-friendly schools provide safe, supportive, and stimulating learning environments for students. In short, child-friendly schools are inclusive.
Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)	"CBR is a strategy within general community development for the rehabilitation, equalisation of opportunities and social inclusion of all people with disabilities... CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of people with disabilities themselves, their families, organisations and communities, and the relevant non-governmental, health, education, vocational, social and other services" (ILO, UNESCO & WHO 2004, p.2).
Curriculum/ Plus curriculum	Curriculum refers to the full range of learning opportunities available to students. 'Plus curriculum' refers to the additional learning opportunities sometime required by students with disabilities. For instance, children with visual impairments require access to good quality orientation and mobility training – a right recognised in UNCRPD.
Early childhood care and education (ECCE)	The provision of good quality learning opportunities and other forms of support for young children (aged 0-8). ECCE is provided in the home and the community by family members and community workers.
Education For All (EFA)	The Education For All Goals were accepted at the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000. Amongst other things, the EFA Goals committed the international development community to achieving high quality early childhood and primary education for all children, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or any other factor.
Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)	EMIS are systems for the collection, storage, processing and analysis of educational and education-related data – for instance, data on student enrolment, transition, and retention rates. EMIS should be used to inform policy making and implementation at all levels of education systems.

Education Sector Plans (ESPs)	These are developed by Ministries of Education, in association with their development partners, and identify MOEs' aims and objectives in the field of education, the measures which will be adopted to achieve these aims and objectives, and the financial implications of these measures. ESPs are based on Education Sector Analyses (ESAs).
Enrolment	When someone is registered in a formal programme of education.
Formal/non-formal/informal education	Formal education occurs within the established education systems and leads to formal accreditation and progression from one type of learning institution to another. Non-formal education occurs outside mainstream systems of education and often complements the learning provided through formal education. Informal education is a natural accompaniment to everyday life, and may not be recognised by the learners themselves as contributing to their self-development.
Gender parity/ equity	In terms of schooling, gender parity means the same proportion of girls and boys enter and complete school. Gender equity is a broader and more significant aspiration, as it is concerned with the provision of educational and post-educational opportunities of good quality for both sexes.
Impairment/ disability	According to the World Health Organization, "An impairment is a problem in body function or structure." In contrast, "Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions... Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers." See: http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/
Inclusive education (IE)	For UNESCO, inclusive education involves the presence, participation and achievement of all students in regular, community schools. In other words, students must not only be present in schools, but participate in a full range of school activities to achieve their potential. UNESCO also sees IE as a process involving continual school improvement.
Individual education plans/programmes (IEPs)	IEPs describe in detail the extra educational support that children with special educational needs should receive. They describe: what forms this support should take, who should provide it, where it should be provided, what resources will be involved, and how the progress of the child will be measured.
Integrated education	Integrated education occurs when children with special educational needs (SEN) attend mainstream schools, but do not participate fully in the life of these schools. For instance, they might be withdrawn from certain subjects in order to receive specialist tuition. It has been argued that integrated education is opposed to inclusive education. But it has also been counter-argued that integrated education of good quality can develop the skills and self-confidence of students with disabilities and thus contribute to their future inclusion in mainstream schools and society.
Itinerant teachers	Itinerant teachers are teachers who travel from school to school, providing support for students, their teachers, and their families.

Low vision/ blindness/ visual impairment	A person with low vision has an impairment of visual functioning – not correctable by glasses, contact lenses, medicine, or surgery – that interferes with the person’s ability to perform everyday activities. These individuals have a reduced visual acuity (poor detailed vision) in the range of less than 6/18 to better than 3/60 as measured on a distance eye chart, or a reduced visual field (poor peripheral vision) of less than 20 degrees in diameter. Someone who is blind has a visual acuity of 3/60 or worse, or a visual field of less than 10 degrees in diameter. The term visual impairment includes both low vision and blindness.
Low vision aids	Devices which assist students with low vision to make best use of their residual vision. Low vision aids can be optical. For instance, magnifying devices which make it easier for some low vision students to read print. Alternatively, low vision aids can be non-optical. For instance, students with low vision may benefit from reading-stands as it means they can sit up straight to read books.
Mainstreaming	The enrolment of students in mainstream schools. It is important to note that mainstreaming does not necessarily lead to educational inclusion for children with disabilities, as these children may not be fully included in the lives of the schools they attend.
Orientation and mobility (O&M)	Children with visual impairments need to learn orientation and mobility skills. These skills enable these children to travel from one place to another safely and easily, either independently or accompanied by another person. As part of their O&M training, blind children need to learn white cane skills – i.e. a particular set of skills which enables them to make effective use of a white cane.
Pan-disability	Pan-disability educational initiatives seek to address the needs of all children with disabilities, not just the needs of children with particular impairments.
Para-professionals	Individuals with limited training who support the work of more fully-trained professionals. In education, para-professionals are sometimes employed to provide supplementary support for students with special educational needs in schools and communities. Sometimes they are even employed as teachers.
Pedagogies	Teaching approaches and strategies, and the educational beliefs upon which these approaches and strategies methods are based.
Reasonable Accommodation	The adaptations and adjustments schools and colleges must make to accommodate students with disabilities. These should not impose “a disproportionate or undue burden” on the learning institution, according to UNCRPD. For instance, classroom teachers must provide blind students with plenty of opportunities to learn through their non-visual pathways. They must also provide sufficient opportunities for students with low vision to make best use of their residual vision.
Resource rooms	Students with special needs may be taught separately from the other students in resource rooms by resource teachers either for part or the whole of the school day. (For instance, blind students might be taught Braille in the resource room for one hour every day.) Resource rooms are often associated with integrated education.
Social inclusion	Social inclusion is much broader than educational inclusion, and refers to the inclusion of disabled people into every aspect of social life.

Special education	A particular approach to the education of certain groups of children. It says these children (blind children, deaf children etc.) learn differently from other children in certain ways (e.g. the visual pathway is obscured for blind children), and that they therefore require an adapted programme of instruction (e.g. blind children need to learn to read and write Braille).
Special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs)	SENCOs are based in individual schools and provide educational support for all children with SEN needs in their schools. SENCO-based special educational support is therefore one alternative to itinerant teacher-based support.
Special/specific educational needs (SEN)	Children with SEN are regarded as having particularly complex or distinctive learning requirements. They may therefore require additional assistance, special equipment, adapted pedagogies and curricula, and individual education plans (IEPs) etc. For many people, the term 'specific needs' is preferable to the term 'special needs' as it is less stigmatising.
Special schools	Schools reserved for students with special educational needs. Traditionally special schools have been residential and have tended to cater for students with particular types of impairment.
Transition	This refers to the movement of students from one academic year to the next academic year. It can also refer to the movement of students from one level of schooling to another level of schooling (e.g. from primary school to secondary school).
Twin track approach	This is a combined approach which recognises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for societies recognise and respect the rights of all persons with disabilities • The need to ensure that the specific needs of people with disabilities are also met
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006)	UNCRPD says that children with disabilities should have access to “an inclusive, quality and free” primary and secondary education. “Reasonable accommodation” and “effective individualised support measures” should be provided for students with disabilities. People with disabilities should also have access to tertiary, vocational and adult education and lifelong learning “without discrimination” (Article 24). Schools and school facilities also need to be accessible (Article 9).
Universal design	Article 2 of UNCRPD defines universal design as “the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. ‘Universal design’ shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.” Universal design is therefore ensuring educational infrastructure (classrooms, school corridors etc.) is accessible and ‘learning-friendly’ for all. More broadly, it is making sure every aspect of educational provision meets the needs of all learners.

Annex 2 References

- 1 World Health Organization and World Bank (2011). *World report on disability*. Geneva: WHO & World Bank, p. 206.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 For instance, Sabur and Ahmed describe both the growing role played by the non-state sector in the field of education in Bangladesh and the increasing extent to which non-state provision is interwoven with state provision. Sabur, Z., & Ahmed, M. (2010). Multiple providers and access to primary education. *Prospects*, 40, 393-415.
- 5 Pereira dos Santos highlights the need for systems of educational provision to be locally appropriate. See: Pereira dos Santos, M. (2001). Inclusion or integration: the debate is still on in Brazil. *Disability & Society*, 16(6), 893-897.
- 6 WHO & World Bank (2011).
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 According to Singal (2006), there were an estimated 2,000 special schools in India in 2000, many of which received government funding. Singal, N. (2006). Inclusive education in India: international concept, national interpretation. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 53(3), 351-369.
- 9 For instance, a recent evaluation of Sightsavers' education work in Sierra Leone (McCall, 2012) describes how a Sightsavers-supported special school is facilitating the inclusion of secondary-aged students in mainstream schools in Freetown.
- 10 *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (Article 24) (2006).
- 11 These issues are extensively discussed in Aikman and Unterhalter (2005). Aikman, S., & Unterhalter, E. (Eds.) (2005). *Beyond access: Transforming policy and practice for gender equality in education*. Oxford: Oxfam.
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- 14 Numerous papers in the journal *Childhood* discuss the challenges of 'child-voice' research. They include the following. Komulainen, S. (2007). The ambiguity of the child's 'voice' in social research. *Childhood*, 14(11), 11-28.
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- 17 See, for instance, the following. Braathen, S.H., & Kvam, M.H. (2008). 'Can anything good come out of this mouth?' Female experiences of disability in Malawi. *Disability & Society*, 23(5), 461-474. Moswela, E., & Mukhopadhyay, S. (2011). Asking too much? The voices of students with disabilities in Botswana. *Disability & Society*, 26(3), 307-319.
- 18 See, for instance, the following. Arbeiter, S., & Hartley, S. (2002). Teachers' and pupils' experiences of integrated education in Uganda. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 49(1), 61-78. Parasuram, K. (2006). Variables that affect teachers' attitudes towards disability and inclusive education in Mumbai, India. *Disability & Society*, 21(3), 231-242.
- 19 UNESCO has produced a 'thematic think-piece' recommending that education system-building should be incorporated within the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This can be downloaded from: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/4_education.pdf UNESCO has also produced 'a discussion paper' defining education system-building, explaining its importance, and identifying some strategies for achieving it. This can be downloaded from: http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Info_Services_Publications/pdf/2012/GIZ_Strengthening__Ed_Systems.pdf
- 20 For instance, as a result of working with the Government of Bangladesh's integrated education programmes for children with visual impairments, we were able to support the education of 494 children in 2012-13.
- 21 See *The Sightsavers SIM Card* (Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Card)
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ophiyah Massah, himself a person with albinism, describes the way in which people with disabilities are systematically marginalised within development processes in Malawi and the calamitous consequences of this practice. Ophiyah Massah, B. (2011). *An exploration of the involvement of people with disabilities in poverty-reduction strategies in Malawi*. Unpublished Masters dissertation, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.
- 24 It should be emphasised that Sightsavers, as an international non-governmental organisation, has particular opportunities to influence bilateral and multilateral donors, both at national and global levels. Indeed, it is vital that Sightsavers strategically selects bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors that it wishes to influence, and works in coordinated ways at national and global levels to change donor policy and practice, in ways that help to realise the educational rights of people with disabilities.
- 25 Figure 2 is adapted from a diagram in Keck, M.E., & Sikkink, K. (1998). *Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in International politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Sightsavers works in developing countries to combat avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for disabled people

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