
motivation
India
Better Together
BETTER TOGETHER
Disability Inclusion a Practical Guide

Disability Inclusion a Practical Guide

A. DISABILITY INCLUSION

Disability inclusion is about ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate, contribute and benefit on an equal basis with others. It is not a stand-alone activity or a special project for a few people. It is a way of planning and delivering education, skills, livelihoods, digital inclusion, community and other development programmes so that no one is unintentionally left out.

B. BETTER TOGETHER-INCLUSION FOR ALL

Better Together – Inclusion for All is an initiative of **Motivation India**, supported by **BT** and the **British Asian Trust** (BT-BAT). Through this initiative, **Motivation India** works with the partner organisations of BT-BAT to strengthen disability inclusion across their organisational systems, programmes and practices.

The initiative aligns with BT's vision of empowering adolescent girls and young people to realise their full potential through digital technology, education, skills and agency, while promoting online safety, equality and inclusive social change through transformative partnerships.

C. CONTEXT

Persons with disabilities are more likely than others to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes, such as less education, poorer health, fewer employment opportunities, and higher poverty rates.

D. WHAT IS DISABILITY

Disability is a broad term that describes the limitations a person may experience in carrying out activities and participating fully in society. It arises from the interaction between a person's impairment and the barriers they encounter in their environment, attitudes, communication, services and systems.

Disability is therefore not just about an individual's impairment, but also about how society enables or restricts their participation.

E. APPROACHES TO DISABILITY INCLUSION

The social model shifts attention from “What is wrong with the person?” to “What is preventing the person from participating, and what can we change?”

A wheelchair user may be excluded by steps at a venue, not by the wheelchair. A child who is deaf may be excluded when information is only spoken, not because they cannot learn.



A PRACTICAL TEST FOR EVERY ORGANISATION

Do persons with disabilities have the information, access, support, choice and opportunity to participate in the same programme as others? Are they involved in shaping decisions, or are decisions being made on their behalf?

Disability inclusion requires moving beyond treating everyone in the same way to ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to participate.



Equality means providing everyone with the same support, regardless of their individual circumstances.

Equity recognises that people have different needs and provides appropriate support to enable equal participation.

Justice goes a step further by identifying and removing barriers within systems, policies and environments so that everyone can participate fully, independently and with dignity.

Together, these principles call for a shift from expecting individuals to adapt to existing systems towards making systems inclusive and accessible to all.

F. THE LEGAL & RIGHTS FRAMEWORK



The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 recognises 21 specified disabilities and defines disability through the interaction between impairment and barriers.

The Act provides a framework for equality and non-discrimination, accessibility, reasonable accommodation, inclusive education and participation in society.

G. LOOK FOR BARRIERS, NOT JUST INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Disability is diverse. People may have physical, sensory, intellectual, psychosocial or multiple disabilities, or other conditions recognised in law. Do not assume what a person can or cannot do based on a diagnosis or appearance. Ask the person what support or adjustment would help them participate. Use the language the person prefers, and avoid pitying or dismissive terms.

MAKE ACCESS PART OF THE DESIGN

Accessibility removes barriers. It does not give an unfair advantage or amount to special treatment

Remember: exclusion can happen even when no one intends to discriminate. A programme designed without considering different access needs may unintentionally exclude

Accessibility means ensuring that people with disabilities can access, use and participate in places, services, information, communication, technology and opportunities on an equal basis with others.

Universal Design promotes designing these spaces, services and programmes from the outset to be accessible and usable by everyone, rather than making changes only when someone asks for support.

H. DIMENSIONS OF ACCESSIBILITY

01 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

02 COMMUNICATION ACCESS

03 INFORMATION ACCESS

04 DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

05 TRANSPORT ACCESS

ACCESSIBILITY AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION ARE RELATED

Acccessibility: Designing environments and services to be usable by everyone from the beginning. *Example:* providing a step-free entrance to a training venue.

Reasonable Accommodation: Making an appropriate adjustment for an individual when a general arrangement does not meet their needs. *Example:* additional time, a scribe or an accessible format for an assessment.

I. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY- AN ENABLER OF PARTICIPATION

Assistive technology (AT) includes devices and solutions that maintain or improve functioning, independence, participation and well-being. Access to AT can open pathways to education, employment, social inclusion and civic life.

- No-tech: adjustments such as changing a person's location or seating, facing the person and using gestures.
- Low-tech: simple, usually low-cost aids that do not need a power source.
- Mid-tech: devices that are generally easy to operate and use a power source.
- High-tech:more complex or programmable devices, often involving computers or electronics

Plan for awareness, affordability, services, product quality, procurement, trained personnel and policy attention. A device is useful only when it is appropriate and the person can access and use it.





Types of Assistive Technology





Computer Access
Alternate means for the individual to access the computer

Writing
Adaptives to produce text material

Reading
Adaptives to reading material to make it accessible.

Visual Aids
Enable individuals with visual impairments to gain information from various sources & activities



Physical Education, Leisure, & Play
Helps to enhance social interaction and participation in recreation activities

Augmentative Communication
Assistive means for communicating effectively in other ways than standard speech

Assistive Listening
Assistive ways to gain greater auditory access to information.

Mobility
Items & devices that enable individuals to move around more independently



Environmental Control
Enables individuals to gain independent control of their environment

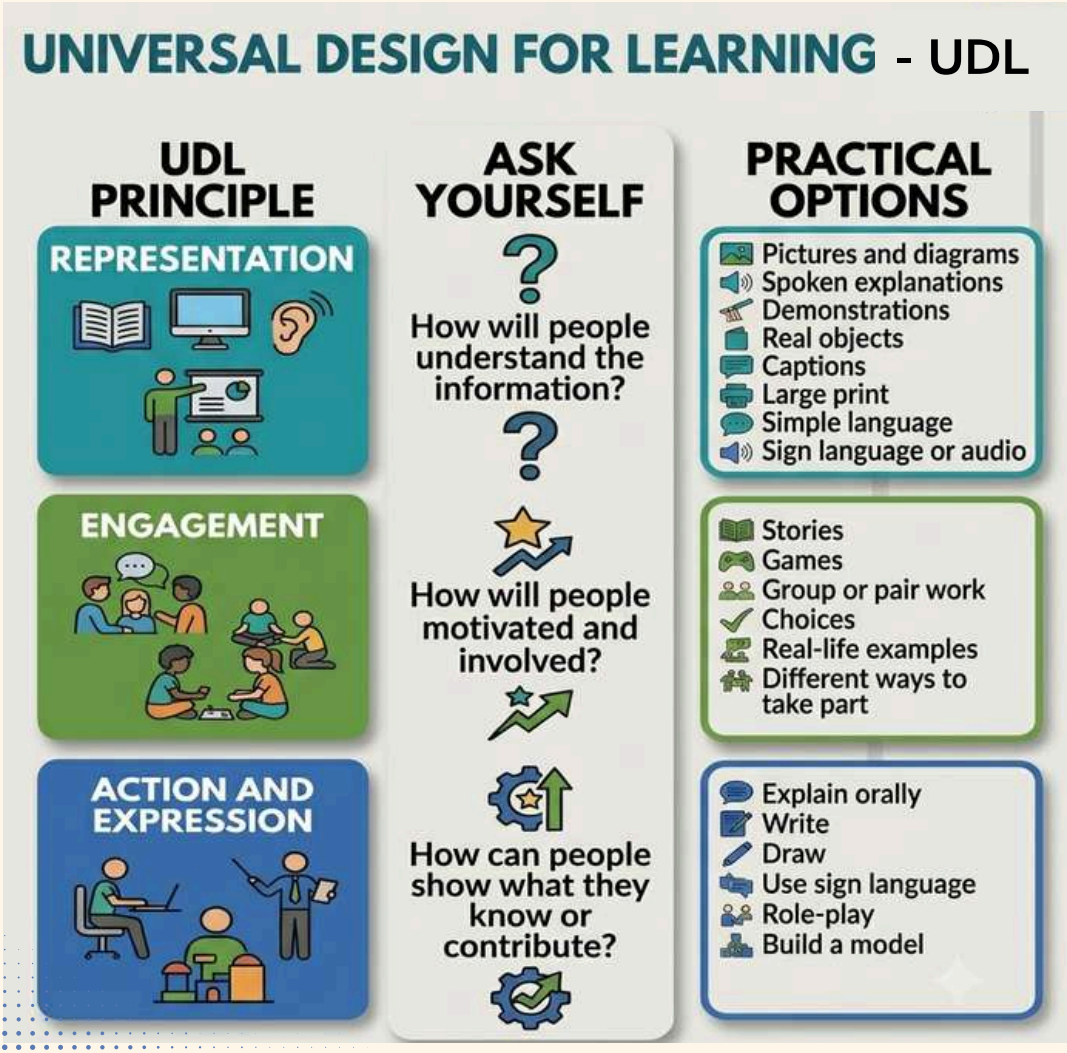
Activities of Daily Living (ADL's)
Enables individuals to gain independent control of daily functions (i.e. eating, dressing, etc.)

Seating & Positioning
Enables greater physical access to activities and environments

Equal Access

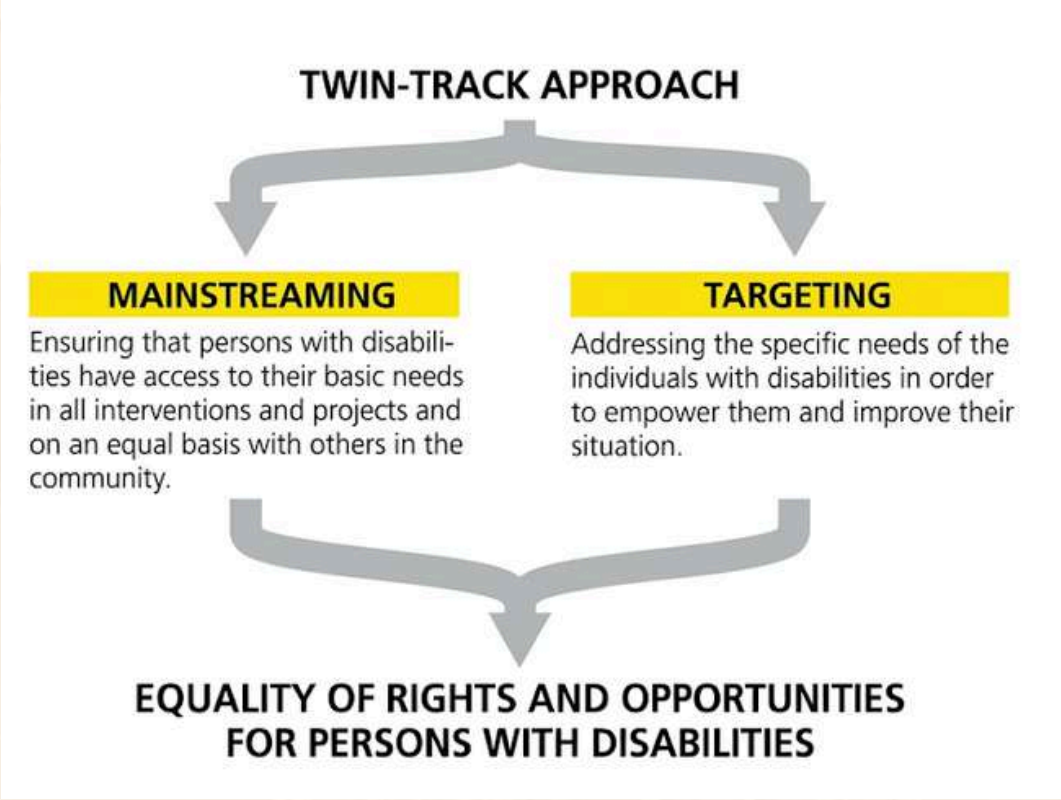
J. UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

UDL is an approach to inclusive education that recognises that children learn in different ways. It encourages providing multiple ways to access information, engage in learning and demonstrate understanding. The same approach can be applied when planning workshops, training, digital learning and other programme activities to ensure everyone can participate and learn meaningfully.



K. USE A TWIN- TRACK APPROACH

Mainstreaming means making all regular programmes, services and systems inclusive. Targeted support means providing specialist expertise or disability-specific support where required. Both are important: mainstreaming enables scale; targeted support responds to specific needs.



Ask these questions before an activity is approved:

Who might be excluded by the venue, timing, communication or eligibility rules? Have persons with disabilities helped identify the barriers? Are the adjustments, staff time, budget and responsibilities clear? How will participants tell us whether the activity worked for them?

L. INTERSECTING BARRIERS

Disability does not affect everyone in the same way. Gender, poverty, age, location, culture and other circumstances can combine to shape a person's experience.

M. GENDER AND DISABILITY

Women and girls with disabilities may face overlapping barriers linked to gender norms, poverty, inaccessible services, limited economic opportunities, stigma and greater risks to safety. These barriers can affect education, health, employment, independent living, relationships and community participation.



N. INCLUSIVE SKILLING: INCLUDE PEOPLE THROUGH THE WHOLE JOURNEY

Inclusion does not end when a person is admitted to a course. Training systems need to adapt so that persons with disabilities can access training, participate and learn, demonstrate skills, gain certification, transition to employment or self-employment, and retain and progress in work.



Plan for access, learning, assessment, certification, transition and progression - not enrolment alone.



O. INCLUSIVE MONITORING, EVALUATION, LEARNING (MEL) - MEASURE WHETHER INCLUSION IS WORKING

Counting participants with disabilities is useful, but it is not enough to show that a programme is inclusive.

Many times inclusion of persons with disabilities happen by chance and not by design. Or a special project is created only for them. Most of the persons with disabilities can access regular programmes if there are designed in an accessible inclusive manner.

Disability-inclusive monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) asks whether people could access the programme, participate meaningfully, influence decisions and benefit from it. It also asks whether the organisation and its systems are changing so inclusion becomes routine rather than dependent on one-off adjustments.



WHAT SHOULD WE MEASURE?

Reach and access	Who took part, and who may have been left out? Were venues, information, registration and digital platforms accessible?
Participation and experience	Could people participate, make choices, take leadership roles and give feedback? Were requested accommodations provided? Did people feel safe and respected?
Outcomes and system change	What changed in learning, skills, employment, income, independence or community participation? Have policies, staff capacity, budgets, accessibility and accountability improved?

Where appropriate and safe, analyse participation by sex or gender, age and disability. Make disclosure voluntary, explain why information is being collected, protect confidentiality, and provide accessible ways to respond. Combine numbers with feedback and the perspectives of persons with disabilities.



A QUICK INCLUSION CHECKLIST

[ ] Have persons with disabilities helped shape the programme?	[ ] Are outreach, selection and communication accessible?
[ ] Are venue, transport, toilets and digital tools accessible?	[ ] Have we planned and budgeted for reasonable accommodation and Assistive Technologies?
[ ] Can participants take part, learn, lead and give feedback in different ways?	[ ] Do our MEL questions measure experience, outcomes and system change?

TURN REFLECTION INTO ACTION

Choose one programme or activity. Identify three barriers that may prevent children or persons with disabilities from participating or benefiting equally. For each barrier, agree on one or two actions, name who is responsible, identify the resources needed, and decide how you will know whether the change has worked. Review the actions with persons with disabilities and organisations working with people with disabilities.

THE CORE COMMITMENT

Disability inclusion is a shared responsibility. It means designing programmes and organisations so that persons with disabilities are not only reached, but can participate, contribute, make choices and benefit with dignity. Nothing about us without us.



Let's spark conversations for inclusion!

We are Better Together!



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