

# Advocacy and Training Toolkit



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

*“Advocacy and Training  
are essential parts of  
Social Change”*

This toolkit has been created by the five partners involved in the "Disabled People Partnership for Inclusive Education" project, funded by Grundtvig. The project partners are:



Alliance for Inclusive Education (UK)



APF-Association des Paralysés de France (France)



UNAPEI (France)



Associazione DarVoce (Italy)



Sjalfsbjörg ISF (Iceland)

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## Advocacy and Training Toolkit

### Introduction

This toolkit focuses on supporting disabled people to lead on advocacy. Not all of the information will be useful to everyone. We hope the toolkit will be a starting-point. You will need to adapt it to the aims of your chosen advocacy and training work, and the people you hope to reach through the work.

### Aim of the Project

To create opportunities for disabled learners, families and education professionals to have a better understanding of the practices of inclusive education in different countries; what the barriers are and solutions to making inclusive education a reality for ALL. Greater understanding and broader experience about what is possible will increase inclusive education practice across all partner countries and beyond.

There are some specific aims for disabled people involved with the project. They are:

**To support young disabled adults to speak up about their experiences of education.**

**A greater understanding amongst young disabled adults that they are the experts in their own lives and should have genuine choice and control about their education.**

**To support young disabled adults to play a lead role in promoting inclusive education.**





A key outcome for the project was to develop an Advocacy and Training toolkit to increase the confidence of disabled people to lead the transition from segregated education to inclusive education. The toolkit will include information and good practice from each partner country about the current barriers to inclusive education and solutions for overcoming these barriers which will be used to increase understanding of the benefits of inclusive education across all areas of society.

## **What do we mean by Inclusive Education?**

It is the accepted view in countries around the world that the right to education is a fundamental right for everyone. However there is still a wide gap between this understanding and reality. This is particularly the case for the 77 million disabled children and young people around the world 90% of whom don't attend school.

This is despite the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 28, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights' Article 14, the 1994 Salamanca Statement and more recently Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24 states:-

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

- a. *The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;*
- b. *The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;*
- c. *Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.*

(full text of article 24 can be found at appendix 1)

For some time now it has been the aim of the Inclusive Education movement across Europe to shift the debate away from 'inclusion vs. segregation' because all evidence shows that education that is inclusive benefits not only disabled learners but the whole of society. This project will assist in moving the debate on by focusing on current good practice in inclusive education across each of the partners involved and will enable us to disseminate that good practice widely across Europe. Project partners have all signed up to the following:



## **Principles for Inclusive Education**

The Project partners believe Inclusive Education is a Human Rights issue and can only be achieved by a fundamental change to existing education systems. Every learner has additional learning needs, and inclusive education is for all. This belief embodies all the principles of Inclusive Education, which are:

**Diversity enriches and strengthens all communities**

**All learner's different learning styles and achievements are equally valued, respected and celebrated by society**

**All learners to be enabled to fulfil their potential by taking into account individual requirements and needs**

**Support to be guaranteed and fully resourced across the whole learning experience**

**All learners should have the opportunity to develop friendship and support from people of their own age**

**All children and young people to be educated together as equals in their local communities**

**Inclusive Education is incompatible with segregated provision both within and outside mainstream education**

The Project partners have collected examples from each of the five countries to support the Principles for Inclusive Education:



### **Diversity enriches and strengthens all communities**

**UK** - Acceptance of diverse minority groups in local communities encourages greater inclusion of disabled students.

**France/Italy** - Peer-to-peer support enriches each learner.



### **All learner's different learning styles and achievements are equally valued, respected and celebrated by society**

**Iceland** - Students have access to flexible learning spaces and are encouraged to learn through development of individual interests.

**Italy/Iceland** - Individualised curriculum. The curriculum is flexible and can be adapted for children with additional learning needs.



### **All learners to be enabled to fulfil their potential by taking into account individual requirements and needs**

**Italy** - A system of competence certificates are provided to demonstrate the potential of disabled school-leavers, and the skills they could use in employment or further education.

**UK** - Pictures used for speech and language, as English was not first language for some children; this meant all students were able to access learning.



### **Support to be guaranteed and fully resourced across the whole learning experience**

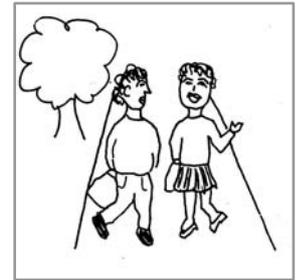
**UK** - Dedicated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in each school as a legal requirement

**Italy** - Additional support staff assigned to classes.

## All learners need opportunities to establish friendship and support from people of their own age

UK - Friendship bench was in playground, enables all students to play a role in building relationships with each other

**Iceland** - Year groups learn together to support peer to peer support



## All children and young people to be educated together as equals in their local communities

**France** - Children encouraged to work together and support each other.

**Italy** - Accessible bathrooms installed in schools to meet the personal care needs for disabled students.



## Inclusive Education is incompatible with segregated provision both within and outside mainstream education

**Italy** - A legal right to inclusive education since 1977

**ALL** - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 24

**ALL** - Salamanca Statement on Inclusive Education 1994



## Using this Toolkit

When using this toolkit it is important to understand who we are talking when we talk about disabled people:



### Who are Disabled People: What is Disability?

Over the last 30 years and since the 1981 International Year of the Disabled and the formation of the international movement for change led by disabled people, the understanding and awareness of disability has changed from a traditional model to a model that is about empowerment and liberation.

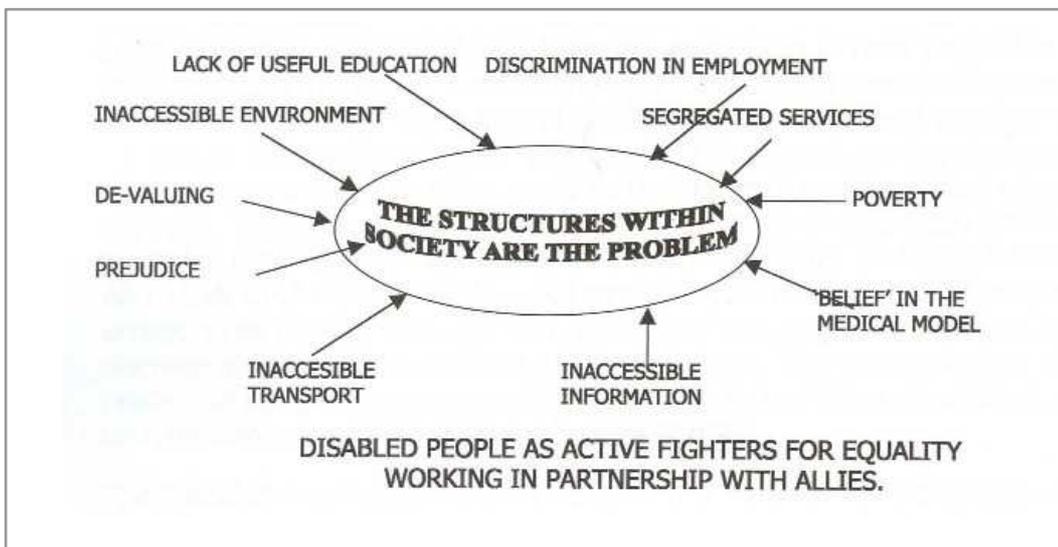
### The Medical Model: Disability as Personal Tragedy

This is the traditional explanation of disability and is based on the understanding that impairment or health condition is to blame for the low status of disabled people and that it is the responsibility of individuals with impairments and health conditions to fit in with society - to be 'normal'. In other words, we are disabled as a result of our individual physical, intellectual or sensory limitations. This explanation is known as the individual or medical model of disability, because it has mostly been the view of the "experts". This model of disability has been rejected by disabled people and is now generally recognised by academics and professionals as well to be an inadequate basis for understanding disability.



## The Social Model: Disability as Social Oppression

The disabled people's movement believes that there are economic and social barriers which prevent people with impairments and health conditions from participating fully in society. This explanation is known as the social model of disability because it shifts the focus away from individuals with impairments and health conditions towards society's disabling environments and barriers of attitude. The social model was developed by members of the global disability movement.



## Advocacy

### What is Advocacy and why is it important?

Advocacy means any one or more individuals or groups speaking up and out with the aim of influencing others to make any form of change (e.g. social and political change)



### What is needed to run a successful Inclusive Education advocacy campaign?

- A significant clear thing that needs to be changed
- A straightforward goal
- Right range of issues
- A realistic chance of success or chance of raising awareness of an issue
- Something that inspires people and offers them clear action in different ways
- Follow up



Understanding the barriers and solutions to progressing inclusive education for ALL disabled students is the central issue of your advocacy work. Focusing on barriers and solutions will ensure that activities take a Social Model of Disability approach to your work. This will also help to determine the strategies, time-scale, resources and target audiences needed.

## **Barriers**

The "Disabled People Partnerships for Inclusive Education" project has identified a number of barriers to progressing inclusive education. The barriers are categorized into five themes, however many of the barriers are relevant to more than one theme. The following barriers are shared across the four partner countries - France, Iceland, Italy, and the UK



## **Attitudes and Relationships**

To segregate disabled children at a young age produces an ideology that encourages exclusion and devalues the skills and talent of disabled people

Pressure for disabled students to access social environments, but with no support and a lack of opportunity to build social relationships

The length of time to socialise and establish friendships in classrooms can be limited

Lack of understanding on the philosophy of Inclusive Education and what it means in practice

Traditional fear that Inclusive Education might negatively affect other students

Unhelpful focus on the Medical Model of Disability which highlights impairment and how it hinders disabled people to perform their activities in daily life

## Physical Accessibility

Many Schools remain physically inaccessible to disabled students

Inaccessible public transport makes it difficult for disabled students to travel to school with their peers



## Lack of Information

A general lack of understanding on disability equality issues and disability equality training

Insufficient knowledge on inclusion and disability amongst those who are in control of schools and education facilities

People have little understanding of the Social Model of Disability



## Problems within Education Systems

Disabled students' achievements are not recognised as being equal to their non disabled peers - in Italy - disabled students could only access certificates, never diplomas, which led to the assumption that disabled students could never achieve academic diplomas

The existence of special schools creates a drain on education resources and funding. Disabled students and families must have the real choice of a local mainstream school with a guarantee of all necessary support.

Professionals and teachers working in special schools oppose any changes for the fear of losing their role and status

Educational policies are based on academic results where students are measured by fixed/rigid achievement standards

The presence of 'Special' tutors can discourage friendships between disabled and non students as they can act as a barrier





## **Lack of Disabled Peoples Voice**

Disabled children and young people have limited opportunities to meet empowered disabled adults

Lack of opportunities for disabled children and young people to learn about their identity, culture and history in school.

No voice from students when constructing their Individual Education Plan.

Professionals assume that parents will always speak on behalf of the student



## **Solutions**

The "Disabled People Partnerships for Inclusive Education" project has identified a number of solutions to progressing inclusive education. The solutions are categorized into four themes, however many of the solutions are applicable to more than one theme. The following solutions are shared across the four partner countries - France, Iceland, Italy and the UK



## **Resources within the Education System**

The presence of qualified teaching assistants to support disabled students

The capacity within the education system to allow all children to grow up together, whatever their differences

The presence of alternative communication as a standard format to communicate

Good mix of vocational courses

Practical resources for teaching staff to support inclusive teaching methods

Mutual learning between colleagues - networking and exchanging ideas

Teachers trained to recognise individual skills of each child

Shape the curriculum to meet the needs of the individual

Allocating friendship time, which allows time for students to talk

Collaborative learning, whereby teachers can pair students to learn together

Parents to be part of the process

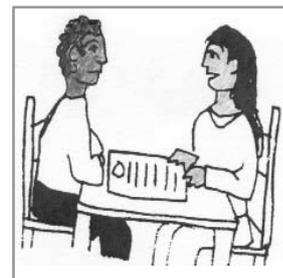
Support for student empowerment

Access to external professionals to help teachers to understand Inclusive Education and additional learning needs.

Using Support Assistants to facilitate relationship building between disabled and non disabled students

School creates different areas for learning, quiet time and friendship building

Peer-to-peer support encouraged



## **Society Attitudes**

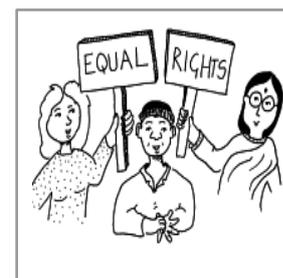
General equality focused activities will encourage a positive attitude to disability across the wider community. A culture which embraces diversity and acknowledges the skills and talents of disabled people will create a more equal and inclusive society. Ultimately, disabled people become valued members of their communities

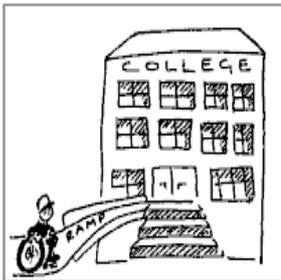
Schools are legally obliged to implement a Disability Equality Action plan to raise awareness of disability equality

Identify and encourage positive role models

Model inclusion in our own communities, not just in education

Knowledge of inclusive teaching methods in all job descriptions





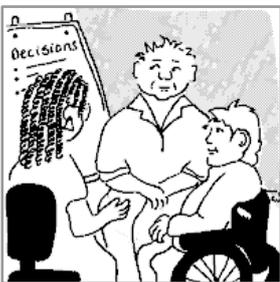
Head teachers in schools to take leadership role for inclusion

Supportive ethos for all staff in schools

### **Physical Accessibility**

Accessible environment

Accessible and affordable public transport



### **Voice of Disabled Students**

Communication between teachers and students

Encouraging peer-to-peer support

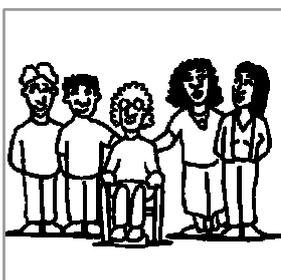
Networking and exchanging ideas

A feeling of welcome and involvement for all children and their families in schools

Support for students to challenge disadvantages

### **What are the key messages for an Inclusive Education Advocacy Campaign?**

The Principles for Inclusive Education already mentioned in this toolkit are a good place to start. Use examples of good practice to demonstrate the benefits of Inclusive Education within society. All messages should be positive, and provide solutions for achieving Inclusive Education for ALL learners. Explain how there are laws which promote the inclusion and equality of disabled people; this means disabled people should always be educated in mainstream environments. Remember, Inclusive Education is a Human Right, it cannot be denied.



### **Find Allies and Work with Them?**

Finding allies - people who share the same vision and can support the work turning that vision into a reality are very important. The experience of other people - such as women's groups, the environmental movement, local community groups -

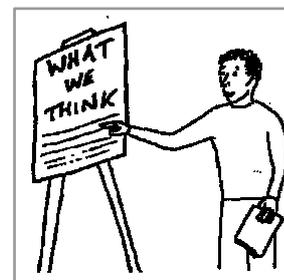
can be useful and encouraging. As disabled people, we can look to these groups for guidance and support in the building our campaigns.

## **What are the advocacy and campaigning activities you want to do and why?**

Agreeing on the problem sounds quite easy. There are many barriers that prevent the full inclusion of disabled students in mainstream education and so many examples of changes that could be made to make inclusive education a reality for all. We think there are two areas to focus on:

### **Public Awareness - Advocacy work with a Time Focus**

One type of advocacy activity is that of raising awareness of the benefits of inclusive education among the general public - disabled and non-disabled people - with the aim of changing negative attitudes about disabled people and our right to be part of society. It's important, though, to realize that this sort of change doesn't happen overnight.



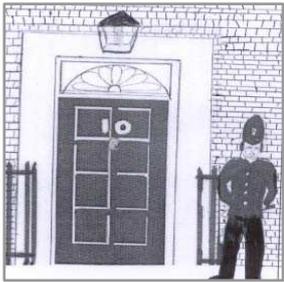
### **Changing Laws, Policies, Services - Long-Term Advocacy work**

Advocacy campaigns for new or changed policies or legislation, such as a law that would create a right to inclusive education for all disabled students, need to be long-term. They involve very careful planning of strategies and resources. They need committed and motivated people at the core of the campaign who are going to follow through with the work over a long period. These people will need plenty of time to spare. You also need people who know how to get other people to do things.



### **Who is in a position to influence / make these changes?**

Involve those who are in powerful positions which affect the lives of disabled people. This is a list of people you could involve in your advocacy work; you could ask them to publicly support you by agreeing with the Inclusive Education principles. Or, the campaign could challenge these peoples' views and attitudes.



### **Policy Makers**

Their decisions affect how schools and other education facilities operate.



### **Disabled People**

Uniting with other disabled people will give you a powerful voice. Seek out Disabled People's' Organisations to help with your advocacy work, they may already have experience of successful advocacy work.



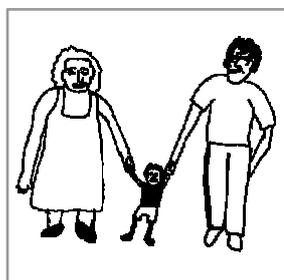
### **Young People**

Having a diverse range of students campaigning together shows those who make the decisions that all your peers want an Inclusive society.



### **Education and Health Professionals**

(teachers, assistants, doctors, occupational therapists) - their attitude towards Inclusive Education has an effect on teachers and parent's decision to support disabled students in mainstream environments.



### **Families**

Parents and family members make decisions on behalf of their child, they need to understand the importance of Inclusive Education.



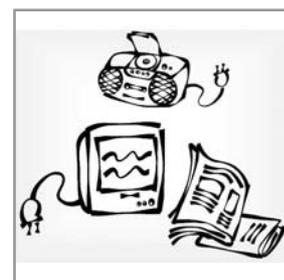
### **Employers**

By gaining their support for all students to have mainstream education, society will have more skilled and confident members to gain meaningful employment.

## Working with the Media

The media can be a fantastic opportunity to promote your messages of Inclusive Education. They can raise awareness, argue on your behalf and challenge people in powerful positions. This, however, comes with problems if the media do not appreciate the importance of Inclusive Education. They may report it inaccurately, by emphasising the wrong messages or the opposite of what you are trying to achieve. Always ask for control of how the media report your campaign, ask to see final versions of news articles for example.

The Internet, with facilities like Youtube and Facebook give you an opportunity to reach large audiences while still having control over the way you publicise messages. It would also be worthwhile writing articles and printing them in professional magazines, where teachers and professionals will read it. You can also target conventional media outlets, such as local and national newspapers and television. There is no reason why you cannot produce flyers, stickers to distribute round communal areas. You want to raise awareness and cause debates!



## Training

### What is needed to develop successful Training?

#### What is Training and why is it important?

Think of training as a direct way of informing a small group of people. Training can mean different things; it can refer to a professional teaching a group of people, or it can be empowered people informing and raising awareness. Disabled people are experts about the barriers and solutions to achieving equality and inclusion; therefore you are in the position to give accurate information. Think of advocacy as a way of raising public awareness across society, whereas training is informing and possibly changing the 'mind-set' of individuals.

Informing a smaller group of people allows you to focus on specific issues which you want to make others aware of, and highlight the solutions needed to make Inclusive Education a



reality. Training, by informing people, gives you an opportunity to use direct and personal information to change attitudes.

### **What do the key Training messages need to be?**

The purpose of training in this context is to inform what inclusive education is and why it's important; with the purpose of information sharing and changing attitudes. You should outline what you hope to achieve during your session with information, guidance and suggestions. You should acknowledge the barriers which prevent Inclusive Education, but provide solutions for every problem raised. Explain to the audience that you are here to help and support them to make inclusion happen! If Inclusive Education is to become a reality then disabled people need to advise and inform others; you must be involved and always remember the slogan of the Disabled Peoples Movement: 'Nothing About Us, Without Us'.



### **Who should be included in the Training led by disabled people?**

Disabled people are the experts, and you should always be in control of the advice and guidance given to other people. Depending on who you are talking to, it may be worthwhile to involve professionals or qualified trainers, but they must believe in the Inclusive Education principles. Working with others is known as co-production, and is perceived as an effective way for changing attitudes. Having a range of people involved will keep your session refreshing for the audience, as they hear different people talking about the benefits of and ways to achieve Inclusive Education.

### **Who do you need to work with on the Training?**

Informing as many people as possible within the education sector or those involved in a disabled person's life will help promote the importance of Inclusive Education. Nevertheless, your methods to inform others will differ depending on who you are speaking to; therefore here is a list of suggestions for different training ideas:

#### **Policy Makers**

Policy makers and local and national Government representatives may not give you much time, therefore keep information clear, short and structured.



You could have a table discussion on the principles of Inclusive Education.

Show examples of schools which are working well to include disabled students.

Gather a list of supporters of Inclusive Education and present it.

Use the existing laws to help your cause and suggest new laws and policies which solve existing barriers.

## Health Professionals

Explain the different models of disability, especially the social model of disability - giving practical examples will help with understanding.

Get disabled people to tell their personal stories - this reminds professionals that disabled people are human and have important experiences to share.

Bring together different professionals within the health, education and social care services; this encourages networking which would not happen normally.

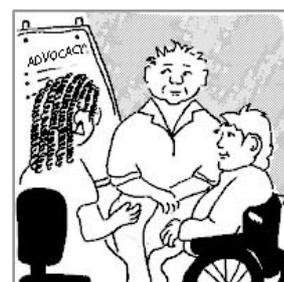


## Disabled People

Explain the different models of disability, especially the social model of disability - giving practical examples will help with understanding.

Focus on activities that support people to think about their identity as a disabled person.

Activities that encourage disabled people to take leadership in advocacy work - writing and promoting a Manifesto for Change



## Families

Use visual methods to demonstrate benefits of Inclusive Education, i.e. documentaries, personal stories.

Organise workshops which can bring families and young people together, and can involve an aspect of teaching about the Principles, i.e. cookery class with discussion on



Inclusive Education.

Opportunities for families of disabled and non-disabled young people to work together, and discuss benefits of inclusion through team-work.

Support families to think about how they can be an ally to their disabled child.



### **School Children, Young People and Peer Groups**

Use fun activities which ensure diverse groups of young people are able to interact with one another. The games must emphasise the need for socialising, communication and friendship building.

Explain the importance of Inclusive Education in plain simple words and images, avoid formal group discussions.

Focus on activities that promote inclusion for all minority groups too

Make sure there are opportunities to allow children the time to socialise and have fun.



### **Educational Professionals**

You could explain the language and impact of the different Models of Disability.

Encourage their support for a Campaign to have specific disability equality training as a mandatory part of teacher training.

School staff to think about ways students, families and community members could be involved in monitoring Equality Action Plans.



### **Employers**

Highlight the benefits of including disabled students in mainstream education as a means of increasing confidence and self esteem

Highlight team building exercises which promote inclusion in the workplace.

Gain support from large employers to support your campaign for Inclusive Education as a route into employment.

## Measuring Success

Checking the progress of your advocacy and training work is important so you can see if you have successfully reached your goals. This will help you to plan future activities and events. There is always something to learn.



Nobody gets it right all the time (and especially not the first time!). Looking back can be very useful.

You could do this by asking people who have been involved in the advocacy and training work about their experience.

Questions like:

What were your expectations of the work/ training /event?

Do you feel they were met?

If not, why?

What is your opinion of the practical arrangements (venue, interpretation, etc.)?

Any other comments (what you liked; what might have made the day better for you)?

Please return this form to: [your address]

## Some of the Aims of Evaluating Success

To examine the impact of your advocacy and training work.

To help development by identifying barriers and contributing to the planning of future work.



## Conclusion

Disabled people play an important role in achieving inclusive education. The barriers faced by disabled people cannot not be explained or excused by their impairment; it is the environmental, social attitudes and the lack of adequate support services which disable people. With this definition of 'disability', we have to acknowledge and believe that disabled people are the experts on disability issues - they understand the barriers and the route to inclusion better than anyone else. By empowering and capacity-building all disabled people, they can act as leaders, role models and champions to promote the messages of inclusion. Those who want to make a difference to society, and improve the quality of life for disabled people, will need to work with professionals, disabled people's organisations and families with disabled individuals.

In order to achieve inclusive education, empowered disabled people must work with officials working in education policy development at local and national level, as well as the media to ensure the principles of inclusive education is heard by all those with power to create change.

We hope this guide assists all disabled people working towards achieving inclusive education. We need to promote and support all those involved in the development of inclusive practice, and challenge the views of those who oppose the inclusion of disabled people in our communities and wider society. Disabled people want choice, control and independence, and the only way to achieve this is through change. Action leads to change!



## Useful Contacts and References

### Contacts

**Alliance for Inclusive Education** - UK based campaigning and information sharing network led by disabled people - [www.allfie.org.uk](http://www.allfie.org.uk)

**APF-Association des Paralysés de France** - National disability organisation - [www.apf.asso.fr](http://www.apf.asso.fr)

**DarVoce** - Association of associations set up to support and promote volunteering - [www.darvoce.org](http://www.darvoce.org)

**Disabled Peoples' International** - [www.dpi.org](http://www.dpi.org)

**Disabled Peoples's International Europe** - [www.dpi-europe.org](http://www.dpi-europe.org)

**Disability Awareness in Action** - Disabled People's Organisation resources - [www.daa.org.uk/index.php?page=test-resources](http://www.daa.org.uk/index.php?page=test-resources)

**European Disability Forum** - [www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org)

**European Network on Independent Living** - <http://enil.eu>

**RENINCO Association Romania** - National Information and Cooperation Network for Community Integration of Children and Youth with Special Educational Needs - [www.renincor.ro](http://www.renincor.ro)

**Sjalsfbjorg ISF** - National organisation of disabled people - <http://gamli.sjalsfbjorg.is>

**UNAPEI** - National Federation of Representation and Advocacy for People with Intellectual Disabilities and their families - [www.unapei.org](http://www.unapei.org)

**World of Inclusion** - <http://www.worldofinclusion.com/resources.htm>

## References

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[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

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<http://european-agency.org/publications/ereports/thematic-key-words-for-inclusive-and-special-needs-education/THEMATIC-KEY-WORDS.pdf>

**Index for Inclusion (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education) -**

<http://www.csie.org.uk/publications/inclusion-index-explained.shtml>

**Manifesto for Inclusive Education - Campaigns - Alliance for Inclusive Education**

**Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education 1994 -**

[http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA\\_E.PDF](http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF)

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

1989 - <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2007 -** <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

## UK Laws

1981 Education Act -

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/60>

1996 Education Act -

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 -

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/10/contents>



