

National Symposium on Inclusive Education in Zambia 2022

Theme: “Not all children with disabilities are visible in the education system”

Terms of Reference and call for abstracts

The disability movement in Zambia spearheaded by Disability Rights Watch (DRW) has been among other pertinent issues advocating for the revision of the National Policy on Education (Educating Our Future Policy), the Curriculum Development Framework, administration and marking of examination for children with disabilities especially those with hearing and visual impairments. This is in line with international human rights instruments to which Zambia is a signatory and some national laws and policies.

On the International level, the UN General Assembly to which Zambia is a member adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 13th December, 2006. Zambia went ahead and signed the convention in May 2008 and ratified it in February 2010. The Disability Policy (currently under review) was equally put in place in 2015 which acts as a work plan for the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act No 6 of 2012. The National Policy on Disability of 2015 provides for increased access to appropriate formal and non-formal education and skills training including life-long learning by putting in place an INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM at all levels. This is equally the position in the National Policy on Education (Education our future). The Persons with Disabilities Act # 6 of 2012 equally highlights free and compulsory Primary, Secondary and Higher Education; Inclusive quality education; Reasonable accommodation; Consideration of additional needs.

Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 (Quality Inclusive Education) and the General Comment No. 4 on Inclusive Education among its reference documents is equally a guiding principle for ensuring equity within the education sector.

Disability Rights watch recognises that there are many players in the field of IE advocacy in Zambia and has partnered with other Disability Organizations to advance the cause for IE for children with disabilities. The organisations, which form the IE Advocacy Working Group include:

- i) Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD)
- ii) Zambia Federation of Disability Organisations (ZAFOD)
- iii) Zambia Association of Parents for Children with Disabilities (ZAPCD)
- iv) Mental Health Users Network of Zambia (MHUNZA)
- v) University of Zambia (UNZA)
- vi) Archie Hinchcliffe Disability Intervention (AHDl)
- vii) Cheshire Homes Society of Zambia (CHSZ)
- viii) Sightsavers International
- ix) Zambian Institute of Inclusive Education (ZIIE)

- x) Albinism Foundation of Zambia (AFZ)
- xi) Deaf-Blind Association of Zambia (DBAZ).

The IE Advocacy Working Group will be responsible for strategic advocacy towards the actual realization of IE in Zambia. The National Annual IE Symposium forms part of the advocacy process. It seeks to act as an advocacy review platform by different stakeholders in education service delivery, teacher education, curriculum developers, examinations and assessments, cooperating partners and activists including organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

Thus the importance of bringing together all stakeholders working in the field of IE to share experiences and learning, hold open and honest discussions and seek to influence the strengthening of policy, legislative measures and their domestication in order to facilitate effective inclusion in the general education system.

The 2022 national inclusive education symposium draws its theme from the 2022 theme of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) **“Not all disabilities are visible.”**

It hence shall focus on how this rich theme would be achieved through effective inclusive education. The Symposium shall give a highlight on milestones so far achieved on the on-going advocacy work and IE projects that have been piloted or implemented by organisations like NAD in Southern Province, Sightsavers in Muchinga Province and CHSZ in Eastern Province and any other organisations.

Background to the 2022 Symposium on Inclusive Education

Disability Rights Watch has been engaging community volunteers and paralegal caseworkers working within the partner DPOs and CBR communities. The partner DPOs identified IE as an advocacy theme extending to the year 2019 when the last IE symposium was held. It is observed that the process of developing an up-to-date National Policy on Education that reflects the true principles of IE has taken very long. This is also in light of the fact that there has been inadequate teaching and learning materials for children with disabilities in schools and higher learning institutions; children with disabilities, in particular those who are blind do not learn mathematics and science; teacher education curriculum still focuses on special education.

This is amidst Zambia’s commitments to the implementation of the CRPD and the SDGs among other international and national instruments. Zambia has also committed itself to the Global Disability Summit 18 and 22 (GDS 18 and GDS 22) on enhancing IE.

Goal

The goal of the symposium is to contribute towards enhanced advocacy for the realization of Inclusive Education at all levels through a supportive policy environment for the purpose of sustainable budget allocation towards implementation and rolling out of quality IE.

Theme: “Not all children with disabilities are visible in the education system”

Objectives

- ✦ To create awareness on invisible children with disabilities within and outside the education system.
- ✦ To raise public and stakeholder awareness on inclusive education principles and application.
- ✦ To put in place a proposed road map for the state and stakeholders for implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012 together with the GDS 18 and GDS 22 on IE related Commitments.
- ✦ Build momentum for scale up of 'Inclusive Education pilots' by government through documenting best practices through the symposium platform.
- ✦ Assess the effectiveness of current advocacy efforts for supportive inclusive education policy and legal framework and financing for I.E.

Outputs of the Symposium

1. Inclusive education policy briefs. A couple of professional briefs will be published and shared with government and stakeholders arising from key issues identified by the symposium.
2. A proposed road map for the state and stakeholders for implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2012 and the GDS 18 and 22 Commitments on IE.
3. Documentation of papers in a symposium annual book which will among other things outline the current situation of IE in Zambia with clear recommendations around principles, strategies and implementation focus of IE.

The set date for the symposium is 23rd and 24th November, 2022.

Participants

The participants to the 2022 symposium will be drawn from: CSOs, Organisations off/for Persons with Disabilities, International NGOs, UN system, Cooperating Partners, academia/researchers, mass media and other key influential persons.

Call for abstracts

A call for papers is therefore made from different players in the inclusive education sector, civil society, academics, advocates, community leaders and activists. This call is deliberately targeted to a particular group of selected experts and implementers because the symposium is an advocacy oriented one.

An abstract of not more than 300 words may be submitted under each of the following themes:

1. *Children with disabilities not visible in the education system*

Papers will focus on defining children who are not visible within and outside the education system. This will be directly linked to invisible impairments or identifiable impairments but not absorbed by the education system e.g. children who are deafblind. The papers should reflect ways of absorbing them into the education system with practical recommendations.

2. *Access to the built environment.*

Presentations here will address barriers that exist in the built environment such as inaccessible school buildings, walkways, sanitation facilities etc. and seek to provide innovative solutions.

3. *Accessible learning and teaching materials and teaching methodologies*

Presentations under this category will look at the history and future of publication of literature and other learning and teaching materials that can be used by various categories of persons with disabilities such as those with visual and hearing impairments, those with deafblindness, those with intellectual or psycho-social impairments among others. Appropriate teaching methodologies that go with these educational materials should also be discussed.

4. *Information Communication Technology- opportunities for inclusive learning*

Papers are invited on the critical role that information communication technology plays in modern education and how it is opening opportunities for access to persons with disabilities to quality inclusive education. Papers may include use ICT platform for inclusive education during emergency situations e.g. the COVID pandemic period.

5. *Approaches for teaching practical skills, mathematics and science to learners with disabilities*

Papers should bring out challenges and innovative approaches and methodologies of teaching identified categories of learners with disabilities who have been left out in skills training, mathematics and science subjects. This includes learners with visual impairments and those with intellectual impairments.

6. *Innovation in reaching to out of school children with disabilities and other disadvantaged children.*

Papers are invited under this category from individuals and institutions to speak on strategies for reaching children who are out of school through innovative strategies such as Home Based Education. This should include strategies for outreach and child finding for inclusion into the school system.

Note: All abstracts should ensure that the issue of gender and intersectionality is clearly taken care of.

Deadline for Abstracts

The deadline for paper submissions is 31st October, 2022. Abstracts should be submitted to: bruce@disabilityrightswatch.net and info@disabilityrightswatch.net.

For any clarification call Bruce Chooma on +260977579205.

About Disability Rights Watch

Disability Rights Watch is a duly registered Disability Service Organisation with the Patents and Company Registration Authority as a company by guarantee and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities. It is specialized in capacity building of organisations of and for persons with disabilities in the field of strategic advocacy, including strategic litigation; human rights with emphasis on the UNCRPD; resource mobilization and organisation development with emphasis on strategic management.

www.disabilityrightswatch.net

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