

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## POLICY DIALOGUE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PAKISTAN (MARCH 2019)



Recognizing the efforts of multiple stakeholders (CSOs/Academia/Govt./Industry/Donors) in Pakistan collaboratively leading the movement on disability, as well as recent efforts on adapting the ASER learning assessment tools (lower primary) for the visually impaired and the Deaf in Pakistan through partnerships (ITA, Sightsavers, FESF) with technical inputs from IDEAS and University of Cambridge;

Acknowledging that the SDGs 2030 provide a solid space for engaging with disability in 5 out of 17 SDGs (4,8,10,13,16 & 17) and 11 references; with annual review mechanisms by the Economic and Social Council of the UN focusing on selected themes/SDGs; in 2019 (July) it will be SDGs 4,8,10,13 and 17 at the High level Political Forum (HLPF). Pakistan's disability sector and CSOs consultatively prepared a Pakistan Disability Perspective VNR 2018 Report (Sightsavers, CBM, Handicap International, SEDA, ITA PDA, STEP National Forum-supporting women with disabilities), informed by the Pakistan Charter of Demands that fed into the Global Disability Summit 2018;

Fully cognizant of varying estimates on Pakistan's disability prevalence from 2.49% (Census 1998); to 13.4 % (World Disability Report 2011/based on WHO survey 2002-2004); to PPAF (2012 in 7 districts) at 8% and most recently ASER Washington Group's Child Functioning Module Survey (15.15%) with 11 functionings from 3000 households (Punjab and Sindh -5 districts).

Acknowledging laws/policies/international commitments for disabilities in Pakistan:

- Relevant Articles in 25 A/laws in provinces/areas (Sindh, ICT and Punjab 2012-2014)
- Disabled Persons (Employment & Rehabilitation) Ordinance, 1981
- Punjab Disabled Persons (Employment & Rehabilitation) (Amendment) Ordinance 2015
- Draft "Pakistan Disability Bill"
- The Sindh Differently Able Persons (Employment, Rehabilitation and Welfare) Act, 2014, amended 2017 (no rules yet)
- Sindh Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018
- Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017 (no rules yet)
- National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002
- National Plan of Action 2006 to Implement National Policy for PWDs 2002 & Pakistan's ratification of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD-2006) on 5th July 2011.

We recommend taking URGENT actions to implement Article 25 A/laws and SDG 4 goal/targets:

Note: These recommendations have been drafted in consultation with over 100 participants, including ministers, advisors, parliamentarians, government officials, researchers, practitioners, civil society representatives and academics, who were a part of policy dialogues in Karachi, Sindh and Lahore, Punjab.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prepare a comprehensive list of disabilities, including neurodevelopmental disorders such as Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia and Dysgraphia etc., which goes beyond the existing categories of disabilities i.e. Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Physical Impairment and Intellectual Disabilities.
2. Hold a high level inter-provincial ministerial meeting of education and special education ministers, respective education and special education secretaries, and key stakeholders of inclusive education to learn from government-led initiatives (pilots also) on inclusive education and develop a road map for the effective and phased implementation of inclusive education strategies in all provinces. (Govts: Federal/Provincial/ Areas)
3. Revise education policies, sector plans and strategies to incorporate a cross-cutting disability inclusion component to ensure adherence to Article 25-A of the Constitution and the federal and provincial Free and Compulsory Education Acts.
4. Develop Rules of Business for the Free and Compulsory Education Acts in consultation with persons with disabilities and organisations working for them.
5. Increase the federal and provincial sectoral budget allocations to at least 7% of the annual school education budgets so as to cater for the comprehensive inclusive educational needs of children with disabilities, including investment in assistive technologies.
6. Improve the readiness and responsiveness of the school education system for inclusion in education through:
  - i) revision of syllabi to ensure they are disability inclusive
  - ii) revise/review pre-service/professional and in-service teacher preparation modules/curriculum to become more inclusive and rights based; iii) orientation of head teachers and education managers, and development of continuous teacher capacities in disability inclusion as part of pre-service and in-service training programmes
  - iii) amendments in the assessment system/tools to accommodate the needs of children with disability
  - iv) improvements in infrastructure so that they meet national accessibility guidelines
  - v) provision of learning resources and learning support to children with disability in inclusive schooling environments
  - vi) counselling and placement services for children with disabilities in secondary schools
7. Conduct disability audits of schools and institute a phased programme to improve physical infrastructure-related accessibility for school children who are disabled.
8. Incorporate mandatory reporting of school children with disability, disaggregated by category of disability and sex, by amending the existing Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), data collection pathways and reporting processes to make them disability inclusive.
9. Establish a formal disability and educational needs assessment process for children with disability at sub-district, district, provincial and federal levels that interfaces with a school placement mechanism to ensure inclusion in education.
10. Develop an inclusive and accessible environment at technical and vocational training centres and programs within High Schools to promote enrolment of Persons with Disabilities in training programmes and ensure that the enrolment quota for candidates with disabilities is adhered to.
11. Assess the current status of technical training programmes for Persons with Disabilities in state institutions as to their appropriateness to emerging market needs.
12. Upgrade the technical capacities at state institutions and introduce such training programmes that meet market demands and improve the employability of Persons with Disabilities.
13. Develop Active Partnerships with industry to support inclusive education/training initiatives for children with disabilities at schools, communities and homes as part of CSR and community support initiatives.
14. Design and Provide Support for parents/caregivers for awareness on positive attitudes towards their children, current government laws, policies, initiatives and programs for inclusive education, social protection and other specialized services
15. Devise strategies for early intervention and prevention in line with the best practices from across the world.
16. Hold an Annual Convention with all Partners on Children/Youth with disabilities to stocktake/review: prevalence, laws, policies, sector plans and initiatives.
  - Recognize, through National Awards, young talent of CWD (up to age 18) and the most active partners supporting the sector.