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Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Diplomatic  
Academy.



**MARGINALISATION**  
*EDUCATION LEARNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT MODULE*  
*Foundation Level*  
2021



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## ACRONYMS

BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CCTs	Conditional cash transfers
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
MTB-MLE	mother tongue-based multi-lingual education
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund



# 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this module is to provide introductory information about the key characteristics and strategies to reducing marginalisation. It provides a foundation to engage in this topic and apply advice from staff with operational or expert levels of knowledge in combatting marginalisation. On successful completion you will be able to be an informed participant in forums related to marginalisation.

## 2 WHAT DOES MARGINALISATION MEAN?

*‘Marginalisation is not random. It is the product of institutionalised disadvantage – and of policies and processes that perpetuate such disadvantage.’*

*‘Barriers [to education] can take many forms: the curriculum, the assessment system, lack of resources, etc., but the most difficult factor is the barriers that are within our mind.’*

Sources: UNESCO 2005, [Regional Workshop on Inclusive Education: Getting All Children into School and Helping Them Learn](#); UNESCO 2010, [Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the Marginalised](#).

Few concepts have so many terms attached to them than the concept of ‘not belonging to the privileged mainstream’. Such people are sometimes called ‘disadvantaged’, often ‘hard-to-reach’ or ‘excluded’, the ‘extreme poor’, and, ultimately, ‘marginalised’ – in other words, at the margins of whatever society or culture of which they are a member. However, care needs to be taken in using terminology to describe members of the marginalised community.

The range in definitions reflects, among other things, historical trends, educational philosophies, and development agency agendas.

### Describing inclusion and exclusion

The terms **inclusion** and **exclusion** are now increasingly used to represent the concept of marginalisation. The guidelines of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) says that inclusion:

*“requires the recognition that students’ difficulties arise from aspects of the education system itself, including: the ways in which education systems are organized currently, the forms of teaching that are provided, the learning environment, and the ways in which students’ progress is supported and evaluated.”*

The [Education 2030 Framework for Action](#) has been adopted by the global education community to advance progress towards [Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its targets](#). The Framework stresses the need to address all forms of exclusion and marginalisation,



and specifically calls for addressing inequalities related to access, participation, and learning processes and outcomes, paying particular attention to gender equality. This includes efforts to enable education systems to serve all learners, with a particular focus on those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities. Excluded learners include those from the poorest households, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous people, and persons with special needs and disabilities.

*'The message is simple: every learner matters and matters equally'.*

Source: UNESCO, 2017, *A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education*.

## Inclusion and disability

For some, 'inclusion' has a narrower meaning. Words such as 'mainstreaming' and 'integration' are used to describe the movement of children with disabilities from 'special schools' into mainstream schools.

As a result, the disability sector adopted the term 'inclusive education' – to ensure that the needs of learners with disabilities were recognised and responded to by the education system. That is, that the classroom teacher, the school and the larger education system adapt themselves to the learners, rather than the other way around.

The concern with 'simple' inclusion is that children with disabilities may be included physically in the classroom (access) but this may not equate with 'full' inclusion: children with disabilities are often excluded from the learning that takes place (quality).

In this way, marginalisation can operate at two levels: in simple access to educational opportunities; and in the ability to fully and equally participate in learning activities.

## Who is excluded?

A wide range of obstacles to access and learning exist. It would also be useful to also consider other ways that the education system is unequal. For example, in relation to education management and women's leadership in decision making, diversity such as a lack of ethnic minority teachers as well as in relation to curriculum and teaching pedagogy.

Furthermore, gender, health and nutrition status, language, disability, geographic location, culture, religion, economic status – all, in different contexts, are barriers to inclusive education. It has become clear to governments and development agencies alike that the mere expansion in the number of schools – and even the improvement of the quality of education they offer – is not necessarily going to provide good quality education to some marginalised groups. Despite progress towards higher rates of primary completion, here remains a certain percentage of children who do not enter the education system – or enter and quickly leave (e.g. drop-out or are pushed out), or who do not have a positive or supportive experience while in school which impacts on learning outcomes (for example students who experience sexual harassment, discrimination and violence).

A broad definition of inclusion and exclusion to cover all barriers to education is therefore seen as important to understanding which groups are marginalised, and why, to thereby determine strategies to achieve full inclusion.



Note: The worldwide movement Education for All (EFA) was proclaimed in 1990 and helped drive significant progress in education. It was revised in line with the new Sustainable Development Goals and gave rise to the Education 2030: Framework for Action, which was formally adopted in the Incheon Declaration in 2015 and links to SDG4: Inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all.

## Describing marginalisation

*‘The experience of marginalisation in education today is seldom a consequence of formal discrimination... [Marginalisation] is embedded in social, economic and political processes that restrict life chances for some groups and individuals’.*

In describing **marginalisation**, UNESCO acknowledged the complexities associated with the term, and settled upon this description: ‘marginalisation in education is a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities’, where it is different but related to inequality.

One example of disadvantage is the existence of any barriers that prevent access to, or full participation in, good quality education. People tend to be marginalised due to many factors such as gender, disability, geography, ethnicity or socio-economic status.

Source: UNESCO, 2010, EFA Global Monitoring Report: *Reaching the Marginalised*.

## Eliminating marginalisation in education

Eliminating marginalisation in education – making at least basic education of good quality genuinely available to all children – is a difficult task, often expensive and labour-intensive. It requires strong government commitment and comprehensive institutional reform. Integrating the principles of equity – fair, impartial and just distribution considering economic and philosophical principles of justice and fairness – and inclusion into education systems and policies also involves engaging with other sectors such as health, social welfare and child protection services to ensure a common administrative and legislative framework. Equity in education refers to the extent in which the system enables individuals with the opportunity to advance regardless of their background whereas inclusion refers to an ongoing process involving a series of actions and practices that embrace diversity and build a sense of belonging among individuals.

Source: UNESCO, 2020, *Global education monitoring report: Inclusion and Education: All Means All*; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018, *Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education*.

## Domains of marginalisation

Domains of marginalisation may interact, increasing the levels of exclusion from education. For example, being poor and female carries a double disadvantage in many countries. Likewise, being an ethnic minority in a rural or remote area can mean fewer years in school, and poorer learning outcomes.



## 3 WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT MARGINALISATION IN EDUCATION?

### Marginalisation in education

There are several reasons why we should focus on marginalisation in education:

- States have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right of all learners to education, as mandated in numerous international treaties.
- To improve the efficiency and cost-benefit of education systems by reducing the wastage caused by large numbers of children repeating grades or dropping out entirely.
- To promote economic, social, and political development by creating a broader and stronger human resource base able to participate more effectively and more responsibly – and with greater equity of outcomes.
- To promote social cohesion and inclusion by teaching learners how to live together, promoting respect for diversity and pluralism, and encouraging mutual understanding, cooperation, and solidarity.
- To fulfil internationally mandated goals such as the [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG 4\) for quality education](#) and the [Education 2030: Framework for Action targets](#).
- To ensure that everyone, regardless of who they are has the opportunity to realise their full potential in life.
- Educating girls, who are often most disadvantaged when it comes to access to education, is critical for the development of communities and society as a whole.

Source: UNESCO, 2017, [A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education](#).



#### An activity for you

**Is marginalisation in education considered an important issue in your country program or a developing country known to you?**

If yes, which of the above arguments are most often used?

If no, which of these arguments might prove most persuasive?



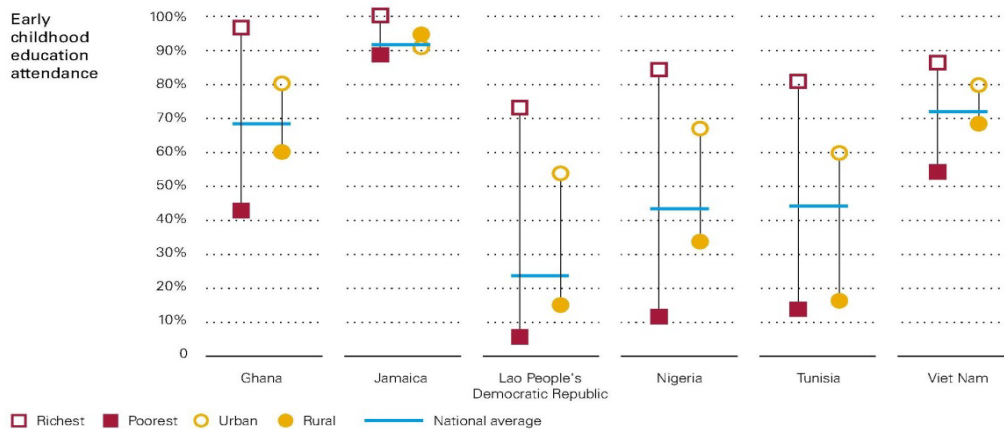
## 4 WHO IS MARGINALISED?

### Groups marginalised from education

In education, marginalised people are those who have no or limited access to education and, if they do, the education they receive is of poor quality – inadequate and irrelevant to what they need to learn and what they want to learn.

The diagram below shows early childhood education gaps according to wealth and relative geographic location.

**Figure 1 - Early childhood education attendance by wealth, residence and national average, 2011**



**Note:** Data are for 2011, except for the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Tunisia (2011–2012) and Viet Nam (2013–2014).

Source: UNICEF State of the World's Children, 2016, p. 57.

The diagram below shows girls with disabilities are still left behind.

**Figure 2 – Inclusive education for girls with disabilities**



Source: Leonard Cheshire Disability, Still Left Behind: Pathways to Inclusive Education for Girls with Disabilities, 2017.





## Which groups are marginalised from education?

- 1. Those completely excluded from school (never enrolled), because of:**
  - where they live (in slums, remote areas, war zones or refugee camps with no schools). For girls it can often be seen as dangerous to travel to attend school.
  - how they live (in poverty)
  - who they are (barriers created by disability, gender norms and attitudes, ethnicity, citizenship, family, religion, culture, or other factors associated with the person).
- 2. Those once in school but then dropped out** or, more often, were pushed out by the nature of the school itself through different ways such as a language not familiar to the student, irrelevant curricula, difficulties in gaining initial literacy, disinterested teachers with low expectations, expensive fees, sexual harassment, verbal and physical abuse, poor sanitation, too few female teachers, etc. Dropouts can also be as a result of cultural and social norms such as attitudes towards pregnancy, early marriage, preference for boy's education, domestic labour pressures, disability, etc.
- 3. Those enrolled in school but not learning**, as students may sit in the classroom (and are counted as enrolled) but do not learn because of their own individual or group characteristics (language, disability, gender), teachers cannot (or will not) adequately respond to their different learning needs, gender bias in teaching and learning pedagogy, or low quality of education provided. Such students often have low participation rates (i.e. do not attend school every day), and are at high risk of drop-out or repetition. Pandemics such as COVID-19, natural disasters and conflict increase the risk of perpetuating the cycle of learning disruption to marginalised students.
- 4. Those enrolled in school but school is disrupted**, due to pandemics (such as COVID-19), natural disasters and conflict. Such events exacerbate the difficulty of school access especially for marginalised individuals. Care is needed to develop strategies to mitigate effects of school disruption (e.g. build climate resilient buildings).

For extensive information on out-of-school children in selected countries around the world, see the reports of the UNICEF/UIS global initiative to reduce the number of children out of school.



### An activity for you

**Has the Ministry of Education in your country program or a developing country known to you carried out any research on out-of-school children – who they are and why they are not enrolled?**

If analysis of out-of-school children has been done, does it disaggregate by:

- Sex?
- Urban-rural location?
- Ethnicity?
- Socio-economic status?
- Children with disabilities?
- In school?
- Not in school?
- Enrolment rates, drop-out, repetition, completion rates?

**If not, what would be needed to ensure such disaggregated data are collected and analysed?**

**Check your answers.**

There are three important issues in this regard:

**Issue 1:** The sheer diversity in the situation (cause and scale) of marginalisation among different countries.

**Issue 2:** The problem of multiple factors of marginalisation.

**Issue 3:** Where does the responsibility for marginalisation lie?

These issues are discussed further below.

**Issue 1: The sheer diversity in the situation of marginalisation among different countries**

One of the important issues is the sheer diversity in the situation of marginalisation among different countries. Marginalisation takes different forms in different contexts.

Some examples:

- In Papua New Guinea, girls living in remote communities who are not encouraged to attend school and have to walk long and potentially unsafe distances to schools.
- In Mongolia and the Philippines, boys forced to (or choosing to) leave



school to help their families survive.

- In Zambia, HIV and AIDS-affected children either needed at home or refused entry to school.
- In Lao PDR, children whose mother tongue is not the national language.
- In many countries, children with disabilities who are hidden from the community, and who are not even counted in the total school cohort because they are considered uneducable.

### **Issue 2: The problem of multiple factors of marginalisation**

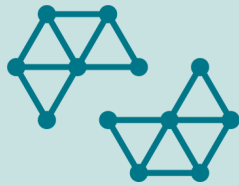
‘Poverty, gender, ethnicity and other characteristics interact to create overlapping and self-reinforcing layers of disadvantage that limit opportunity and hamper social mobility.’

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2012, *Reaching Out-Of-School Children is Crucial for Development*, UIS Fact Sheet June 2012, No. 18.

Most Ministers of Education will know their national net enrolment rate (right age enrolment) or literacy rate. But how many know the enrolment rate for girls from a poor family, with a disability, from an ethnic minority, and living in a remote area? How many know the gap between this rate and that of boys from a rich family, without a disability, from a linguistic majority, and living in a large city?

### **Issue 3: Where does the responsibility for marginalisation lie? What can we do?**

As development practitioners, it is important to analyse and discuss with partner governments the educational disparities between those in the mainstream and those at the margins. Understanding and talking about the particular forms of educational disadvantage is fundamental to the Australian aid program’s focus on reducing poverty and supporting the most vulnerable.

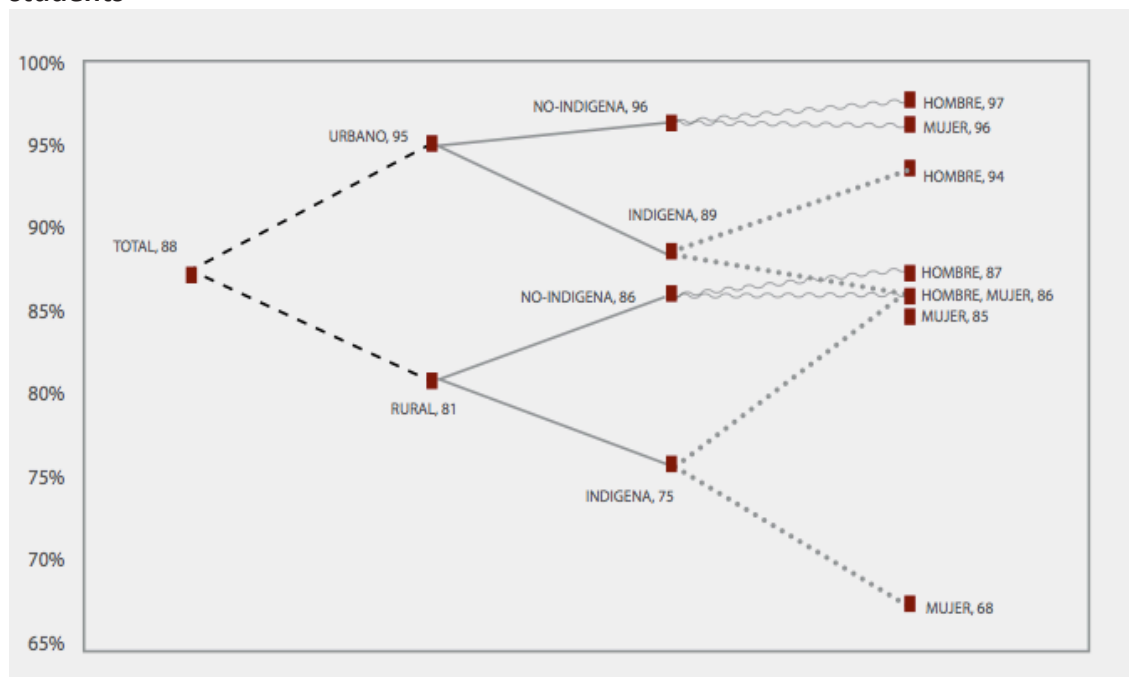


### Case study: Youth illiteracy in Guatemala

The chart below shows the youth illiteracy rate in Guatemala by residence (urban-rural), sex (male-female), and mother tongue (national-indigenous). The national rate – 88 per cent – is something which a Ministry of Education, given its country's challenges, might consider acceptable.

Many ministries don't look far beyond this national rate to see the problem of marginalisation and the gaps in access which such marginalisation creates. As the table shows, indigenous, rural girls are 68 per cent literate versus non-indigenous, urban boys who are 97 per cent literate. If only the national rate is ever taken as a baseline for action, many of these inter-group gaps will never be seen, let alone tackled.

**Figure 3 - Percentages of urban, rural, non-indigenous, indigenous, and male and female students**



Source: UNESCO, 2010, Global Monitoring Report on Education for All.

Urbano = Urban

Rural = Rural

No-indigena = Non indigenous

Indigena = Indigenous

Hombre = Male

Mujer = Female



### An activity for you

**The following statements essentially place the responsibility for non-enrolment or failure on children or their parents. Re-phrase the statements so that the responsibility is shifted to the education system.**

- The children live too far from the school...
- The family is too poor to pay for school...
- The children don't understand the language used in school...
- The parents don't understand the value of education...
- The children aren't interested in learning...

**Check your answers.**

**The children live too far from the school...**

- It is the responsibility of education authorities to provide schools that are readily accessible to children.

**The family is too poor to pay for school...**

- Education authorities and school communities should ensure that the cost of sending children to schools is affordable to all families.

**The children don't understand the language used in school...**

- The language(s) of instruction used in schools should include the student's mother tongue at least until they have been taught to use other languages.

**The parents don't understand the value of education...**

- It is the responsibility of education systems and authorities and of school communities to educate parents of the importance and value of their children's education.

**The children aren't interested in learning...**

- It is the responsibility of education systems to provide quality and relevant curricula and learning materials, properly trained and engaging teachers and learning environments that include all children.



## 5 ADDRESSING MARGINALISATION

### Girls and women

**Though every country has different groups that are marginalised, the most common in education relate to girls and women, the poor, people in rural and remote areas, minority ethnic/linguistic groups, and learners with disabilities.** Although government action around marginalisation should focus on developing general policies which attempt to eliminate all barriers to education, there are still many responses that can be taken to include specific marginalised groups.

Traditionally disadvantaged in most systems of education around the world – and despite progress over the last two decades – girls and women remain a significant marginalised group. Girls in school are also often marginalised from learning – less is expected of them by their teachers, questions are directed to them less often, and they are counselled towards less professional futures. Discrimination, sexual harassment and violence in schools means that school is not always a safe place for girls.

This marginalisation can be multiplied by other factors such as ethnic minority status, disability, child labour, conflict and disaster contexts, and remoteness. According to one estimate, some 70-75 per cent of the 65 million girls who are out of school face multiple marginalisation.

Source: UNESCO, 2017 Global Education Monitoring Report.

It should be added that in many countries – even at very early levels of education – boys are increasingly marginalised; this is occurring for many reasons: economic (they are needed to work for the family); social-cultural (boys are meant to go out into the world rather than stay in school particularly at higher grades and/or as the boy reaches maturity; girls often think that they need to be more educated to advance, whereas boys don't think they need to get higher education because they may be more advantaged by gender norms when it comes to employment and leadership); and educational (pedagogical styles, curriculum content, and the role models of female teachers).

### What can be done?

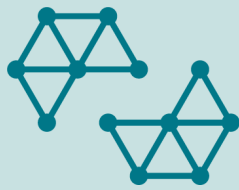
Consider the following activities to reduce marginalisation of girls and women.

- Scholarships and cash transfers to girl students or their families as an incentive to enter and stay in school.
- School feeding programs.
- Recruit and train more female teachers and principals.
- Local advocacy to overcome cultural or religious reluctance to educate girls.
- Teacher training in gender-sensitive/responsive teaching methods.
- Bias- and stereotype-free texts and learning materials.
- Gender analysis of curriculum and teaching materials to remove gender bias
- Development of respectful relationships curriculum for young adolescents



- Girl-friendly school facilities (e.g. separate toilets).
- School policies against harassment and teacher training in anti-discrimination and anti-violence against women.
- Early childhood care services to free older siblings to go to school.

Note that boys too need to be provided with curricula that are culturally engaging, relevant to their local contexts, materials and learning resources that are challenging, interesting and engaging as well suitably qualified and experienced teachers who provide positive role models.



### Case study: Better education for girls in Bangladesh

**A good example of a program with a special focus on girls is that of Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC) in Bangladesh.**

BRAC's Non-Formal Primary Education Programme provides a five-year primary education course in four years to poor, rural, disadvantaged children and drop-outs who cannot access formal schooling. These one-room schools are for children between eight and 14 years of age with a special focus on girls. Each school typically consists of 33 students and one teacher. Core subjects include Mathematics, Social Studies and English. In 2016 BRAC pre-schools and primary schools enrolled over 3.5 million children, with over half of these enrolments for girls. The schools have a drop-out rate of less than five per cent.

Source: BRAC, 2016, *BRAC at a Glance*.

## The poor

The poorest people, those in 'extreme poverty', often live in rural areas but, due to internal migration patterns, are also increasingly urban. They live on less than \$1.90 USD a day, are landless and unemployed, or work as day labourers and small vendors, and have little access to adequate social services. They often cannot afford the range of formal and informal costs of schools for their children and/or children are needed to work with the family or elsewhere to increase family income.

Source: World Bank, 2016, *Taking on Inequality*.

### What can be done?

Consider the following activities to reduce marginalisation of the poorest people.

- Elimination of school fees and other costs.
- Provision of financial support through scholarships or other cash transfers.



- Elimination of child labour which interferes with schooling.
- School feeding programs that target the poor.
- Provision of flexible, alternative, non-formal equivalency programs for children unable to regularly attend school.



### An activity for you

**In your country program or a developing country known to you, which of the above interventions, if any, are used to include more children from poor families in school?**

Discuss with your colleagues which interventions are most effective or which new interventions might be more effective.

## People living in rural or remote areas

Despite the trend toward migration to towns and cities, many people still live in small villages on mountain tops and in the deep jungle, on isolated islands, or in areas far from major roads. Schools may not be available, and where schools do exist, they are often far from remote villages, and are poorly resourced in terms of infrastructure, teachers, and learning materials.

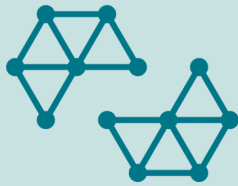
### What can be done?

Consider the following activities to reduce marginalisation of people living in rural and remote areas.

- The development of various mobile school models.
- Expand the number of (small) schools with multi-grade teaching in remote areas, and provide safe, affordable transportation for children in surrounding communities.
- Incentives for good teachers to go to and stay in remote locations.
- Training teachers from local communities.
- Culturally-sensitive, child-friendly boarding schools.

**Note:** An excellent resource on multi-grade teaching is Little (ed.) 2006, *Education for All and Multi-grade Teaching: Challenges and Opportunities*.





### Case study: Donkey carts in Gambia

Gambia's education system has seen a rapid expansion in access to basic education over the past 10 years, but inequities still remain, especially in remote rural regions of the country. Schools are mandated to be located within a three kilometre radius of communities. However, about a quarter of children still have greater distances to travel, meaning they are not able to attend school on a regular basis.

To address this issue, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education came up with an innovative strategy of using donkey carts to transport early grade children to and from school. 120 schools located in the remotest areas of the country were provided with five female donkeys and carts for each school.

Each cart transports up to 12 children; so, on average, 60 children per school ride in the cart to and from school on a daily basis. A custodian within the community is responsible for operating the cart and the upkeep of both the donkey and the cart. This custodian is not financially remunerated but can use the donkey, and is allowed to own one in five foals. The result of providing these donkey carts is regular attendance and punctuality and improved learning outcomes for students. The provision of such a facility has strengthened community participation and involvement in the schooling of their children. The Ministry of Education has committed to ongoing support for this initiative in their 2013-2030 Education Sector Strategic Plan.

Source: UNICEF 2013, *Identifying and Promoting Good Practice in Equity and Child Friendly Education*.

## Ethnic and linguistic minorities

Many millions of children around the world go to school and are forced to learn in a language they do not understand when they are from a linguistic minority and the education is provided in the national language. They don't understand the lessons or the texts and are often neglected by their teachers – with predictable results of repetition, drop-out, and failure. More generally, this absence of the mother tongue in the education system often weakens the home language itself and the culture it "carries".

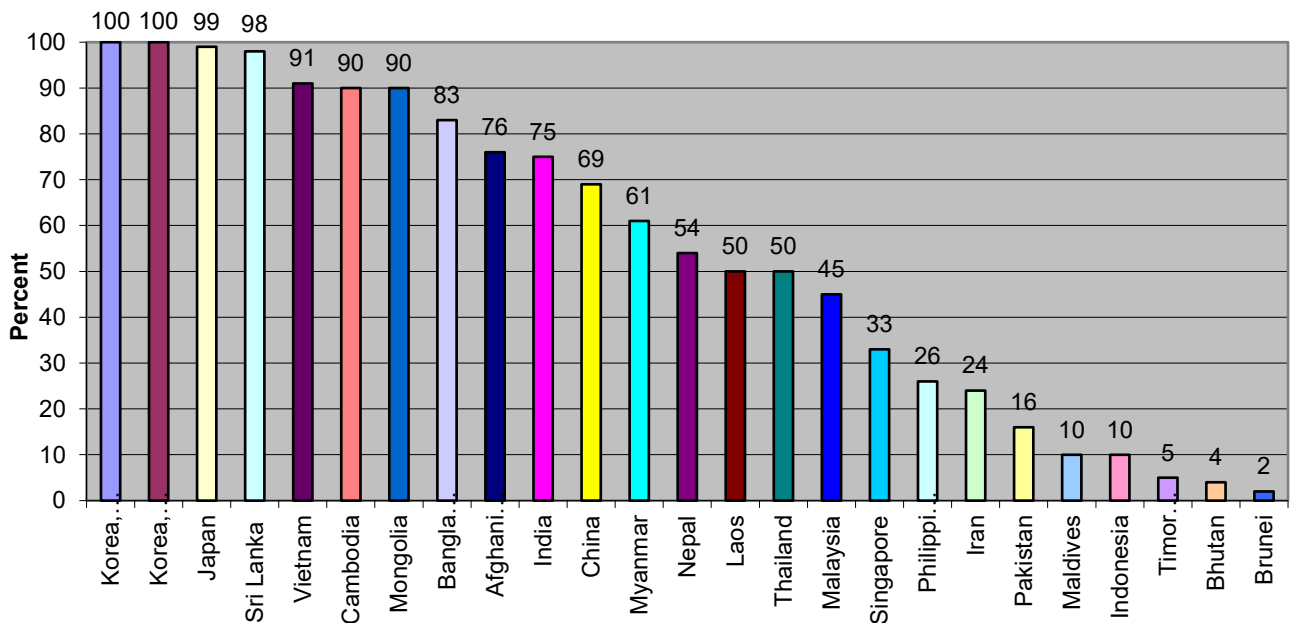
Looking at recent data in Sri Lanka, for example, it is estimated that 98 per cent of students learn in their mother tongue. Numbers of students learning in their mother tongue descend steeply across many of the Australian aid program's partner countries. For example, in Timor-Leste, only five per cent of Timorese students learn in their first/home language.

International analyses have shown that speakers of non-official languages can be severely disadvantaged in terms of education access, completion and learning outcomes. This is often exacerbated for girls from ethnic minorities. The graph below shows the estimated



proportions of national populations whose first/home language is used as a language of instruction.

**Figure 4 - Chart showing the estimated proportions of national populations whose first/home language is used as a language of instruction.**



Source: Benson and Kosonen, 2013, *Language Issues in Comparative Education: Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Non-Dominant Languages and Cultures*

Note: The figures are the estimated proportions of the TOTAL national population whose first/home language is used as a language of instruction/literacy in any systems of education in the given nation-state.

### Mother tongue based approach to early literacy

Linguistic theory recommends that children (and adults) should gain initial literacy in their mother tongue in the early grades of primary school and then use the skills gained from that process to bridge to mastery of literacy in the national and international languages. This is reinforced by evidence from mother tongue-based multi-lingual education programs (MTB-MLE) around the world.

Although there are practical difficulties with a mother tongue-based approach to early literacy, many countries are moving in this direction. For example the Philippines is working to provide initial literacy in 12 minority languages; and programs and pilot projects in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand are demonstrating the impact of MTB-MLE policies on raising pupil achievement – not only in mother tongue but also in other subjects, including the national language.

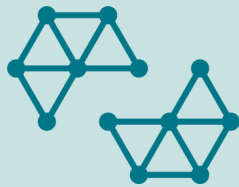
However, other countries such as Papua New Guinea are now requiring that English be the official language of instruction in schools, whilst the vernacular is to be taught as a subject.

### How do you put mother tongue-based approaches into practice?

- Support mother-tongue based bilingual education programs to ensure initial literacy (including the creation of written scripts for languages without them).



- The development of learning materials in ethnic languages.
- The recruitment and training of teachers from minority groups, particularly female teachers.
- Teacher training in how to move from mother tongue as the language of instruction to second and third languages.



### Case study: Mother tongue-based multilingual education in the Philippines

In 2009, the Department of Education in the Philippines issued an order mandating the use of mother tongue in initial education as a result of a pilot project in multilingual education in Lubuagan, where students in the experimental classes began with literacy in mother tongue. Beneficiaries significantly outperformed students in the control classes which taught all subjects from Grade 1 in the two official languages. The results were significant for Grades 1, 2, and 3, across a range of subjects (English, Filipino, mathematics, and makabayan [values education]). The Philippines has since become a regional leader in institutionalising this approach, rolling out the use of mother tongue education to all schools and using 19 local languages.

Source: Department of Education, 2016 *Mother Tongue based learning makes lessons more interactive and easier for students*, Republic of the Philippines.



### An activity for you

**To what extent are mother tongues, especially of ethnic and linguistic minorities, used in classrooms in your country program or a developing country known to you?**

Discuss with your colleagues the major obstacles to expanded use, and what might be done to overcome these obstacles.



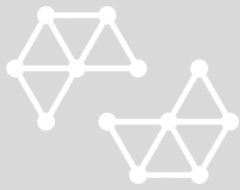
## People with disability

According to the [World Report on Disability](#), more than one billion people live with some form of disability, with prevalence much higher in developing countries. A commonly accepted figure is that there are approximately 150 million children with disabilities in the world.

### What can be done?

- Checklists, tools, and training to help teachers recognise (and, if needed, provide further referral concerning) disabilities.
- Assistive devices and additional classroom support for disabled learners in regular classrooms.
- Building and/or retro-fitting schools to make them disability-inclusive, consistent with the [Australian aid program's Accessibility Design Guide](#). For further information, see the [Infrastructure Foundation](#) and [Practitioner](#) modules.
- Training in practical ways of coping with disabilities in the classroom, such as [Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs in Inclusive Classrooms](#), [A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education](#), [Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on the education of persons with disabilities: challenges and opportunities of distance education](#).
- Local advocacy to overcome attitudinal reluctance to educate children with disabilities.

Source: UNESCO, 2017, [A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education](#); 2021, [Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on the Education of Persons with Disabilities: Challenges and Opportunities of Distance Education: Policy Brief](#); World Health Organization, 2011, [World Report on Disability](#).



### An activity for you

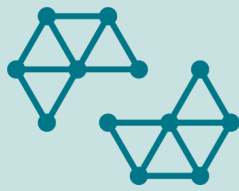
**Which of the above interventions, if any, are used in your country program, or a developing country known to you, to include more children with disabilities in school?**



## Marginalisation of other populations

There are many other marginalised populations – for example, people in prisons, orphans, street children, children of migrants and refugees, and children affected by natural disaster, conflict, and HIV and AIDS.

In general, it is important to ensure that Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) effectively disaggregate data, to enable an identification of which groups/regions are marginalised from education and why. Good data is necessary to the development of effective and appropriate policies and interventions to address marginalisation.



### Case study: Using EMIS to track individual student data in Timor-Leste

EMIS has been developed and implemented in Timor-Leste since 2003. Its use is integrated within the education system's legal and policy framework, where data on pre-primary, primary, and secondary education are collected annually.

Data managed under EMIS include student enrolment and learning, school infrastructure, and teacher status.

EMIS has the potential to provide quality information of students to enhance government policymaking and program design. A review of Timor-Leste's EMIS system has found it collects relevant student data that can be used for equity analysis and supporting disadvantaged groups. It is ideal that EMIS can measure inclusion (gender, disabilities, learning difficulties), provide aggregate insight per municipal on learning achievements, and identify vulnerable children in need for government support. The task is for policymakers in the government to implement system measures to achieve the ideal EMIS to make sure all students are included, well supported to learn and achieve their best.

Source: UNICEF, 2020, *Review Of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) That Track Individual Student Data: Timor-Leste*.

## Strategies for combatting marginalisation

One strategy increasingly being adopted by development agencies is to move away from the concept of marginalisation to that of exclusion/inclusion. This presents a positive condition to move towards (inclusion) and helps to reduce what has traditionally been seen as a tension between access (expanding a system) and quality (improving it); inclusion insists that access, participation and quality are all essential.

Other strategies include:

1. **Focus on the education of girls and women:** Many agencies have coalesced around



the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) with its focus on the education of girls and women. Interventions include scholarships and food programs that target girls, the re-writing of texts in gender-sensitive ways, and more complex advocacy programs which try to alter gender biases underlying many cultures around the world. From 2014-16 the 'UNGEI Good Practice Fund' supported 17 organisations and local governments from across the globe to shed light on best practices and lessons learnt in gender focused education initiatives.

2. **Conditional cash transfers (CCTs):** An increasingly popular donor programming tool for poor families is conditional cash transfers which, in many cases, provide support to children (or their families) enrolling in and regularly attending (and/or succeeding in) school. There are many models of such CCTs, with variable results.

Source: Garcia et al, 2012, *The Cash Dividend: The Rise of Cash Transfer Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

3. **Financing of education programs:** As discussed earlier in this module, two promising areas of support are the financing of early childhood development and mother-tongue based multilingual education programs. A few development agencies and, notably, the Australian aid program, have a special focus on disability.

Source: UNESCO, 2016, *Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education 2030: A guide*.

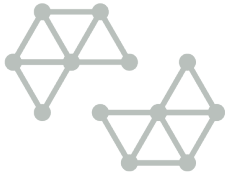
Note: While this module has discussed common domains of marginalisation, overall the critical issue is understanding the context, and the nature of marginalisation, to focus investment in the most targeted manner. Marginalisation may not be random, but it has many faces.



### An activity for you

**To what extent does the Australian aid program promote a system-wide approach to reducing marginalisation in the education system in your country program, or a developing country known to you?**

Discuss with your colleagues which of the above strategies would be most important, and feasible, to promote in order to reduce this marginalisation.



## 6 TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Assessment questions

Answer the following questions by ticking 'True' or 'False'. Once you have selected your answers to all the questions, turn the page to 'The correct answers are...' to check the accuracy of your answers.

#### Question 1

The term 'inclusive education' is limited to issues around learners with disabilities unlike 'marginalisation' which has a broader meaning.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

---

#### Question 2

Domains of marginalisation, defined as barriers to accessing and/or fully participating in good quality education, may interact, increasing the level of exclusion from education.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

---

#### Question 3

One problem with assessing the nature of marginalisation is the inability of many Ministry of Education management information systems to disaggregate data by sex, location, socio-economic status, and ethnic/linguistic status.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

---

#### Question 4

The major causes of a child's failing in school relate to the values and socio-economic status of their family.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

---

#### Question 5

Despite the marginalisation of girls in many education systems around the world, boys are also becoming marginalised in many education systems.



Is this statement true or false?

True

False

---

### Question 6

It is virtually impossible to provide adequate early learning opportunities in a child's mother tongue.

Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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### Question 7

Good quality early childhood development experience is an essential driver of an education system that values inclusion and fights marginalisation.

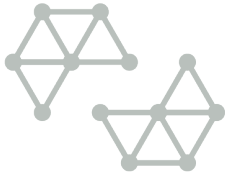
Is this statement true or false?

True

False

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## The correct answers are...

### Question 1

The term 'inclusive education' is limited to issues around learners with disabilities unlike 'marginalisation' which has a broader meaning.

**This statement is false.** Inclusive education is about addressing a wide range of barriers that prevent children from accessing their right to education. It is not just an issue relating to learners with disabilities. Inclusive education is a process whereby barriers to accessing education and to learning for all children are identified and removed.

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### Question 2

Domains of marginalisation, defined as barriers to accessing and/or fully participating in good quality education, may interact, increasing the level of exclusion from education.

**This statement is true.**

---

### Question 3

One problem with assessing the nature of marginalisation is the inability of many Ministry of Education management information systems to disaggregate data by sex, location, socio-economic status, and ethnic/linguistic status.

**This statement is true.**

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### Question 4

The major causes of a child's failing in school relate to the values and socio-economic status of their family.

**This statement is false.** There are many reasons why children might fail which are often a function of the education system, such as irrelevant curriculum, teaching in a language the learners do not understand, and absent or demotivated teachers.

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### Question 5

Despite the marginalisation of girls in many education systems around the world, boys are also becoming marginalised in many education systems.



**This statement is true.** This is often the result of irrelevant curricula and teaching resources and the inability of teachers to adopt child-centred teaching practices which places emphasis on meeting the needs of individuals.

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### Question 6

It is virtually impossible to provide adequate early learning opportunities in a child's mother tongue.

**This statement is false.** Linguistic theory, reinforced by more and more evidence from mother tongue-based multi-lingual education programs (MTB-MLE) around the world, recommends that children (and adults) should gain initial literacy in their mother tongue in the early grades of primary school and then use the skills gained from that process to bridge to mastery of literacy in the national and international languages. Many countries are moving in this direction; e.g. the Philippines, India, Cambodia and Vietnam.

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### Question 7

Good quality early childhood development experience is an essential driver of an education system that values inclusion and fights marginalisation.

**This statement is true.**

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## Learn more about...

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- ✦ *The ‘Reaching out-of-school children’ campaign to have all children in school by 2015, found at, [http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/global-out-of-school-initiative-operational-manual-2015-en\\_0.pdf](http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/global-out-of-school-initiative-operational-manual-2015-en_0.pdf)*
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- ✦ *The Breaking Barriers – Education for Marginalized Children in Kenya, found at, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0nj854GqqE>*
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