



Bridging the Gap II

Inclusive Education Capitalisation Report

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Abbreviations	4
1 Introduction	5
2 Sustainable Development Goal 4	6
3 Overview: Bridging the Gap II and inclusive education.....	7
3.1 Paraguay	7
3.2 Ecuador	8
3.3 Global activities	8
4 Promising practices initiated or supported by the Project	10
4.1 Data for inclusive education.....	10
4.2 Strengthening the national dialogue on inclusive education	15
4.3 Producing accessible educational materials for students with disabilities ...	21
4.4 Raising awareness about the right to education of people with disabilities and inclusive education	23
5 Lessons learned on promoting inclusive education	23
5.1 Inclusive education is a paradigm shift requiring a systemic transformation of the education system, at all levels	24
5.2 Wide participation and building long-lasting relationships are pre-requisites of systemic change	24
5.3 Building the capacity to participate enables meaningful involvement and contribution	26
5.4 Learning lessons from the Project's missed opportunities.....	28
6 Recommendations	30
6.1 Recommendations to National authorities	30
6.2 Recommendations to OPDs and civil society.....	31
6.3 Recommendations to development partners.....	32
Annex 1 Bibliography	35
Annex 2 List of persons interviewed	36



Abbreviations

AECID	the Spanish Agency for Development and Cooperation
BtG-I	Bridging the Gap project I
BtG-II	Bridging the Gap project II
CONADIS	Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Discapacidades. Ecuador – National Council for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EU	European Union
FENASEC	Federación Nacional de Personas Sordas del Ecuador National Federation of the Deafs (Ecuador)
FENCE	Federación Nacional de Ciegos del Ecuador - National Federation of the Visually Impaired (Ecuador)
FENEDIF	Federación Nacional de Ecuatorianos con Discapacidad Física National Federation of Ecuadorian with Physical Disability
FEPAPDEM	Federación Ecuatoriana Pro Atención a la Persona con Deficiencia Mental, Parálisis Cerebral, Autismo y Síndrome de Down -Ecuadorian Federation for the Support to Persons with Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Autism and Down Syndrome
FIIAPP	International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies
FOAL	- Fundación ONCE para América Latina ONCE Foundation for Latin America
INE	National Institute for Statistics (Paraguay)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MEC	Ministry of Education and Science (Paraguay)
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education (Ecuador)
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (replaces the abbreviation of DPO, formerly used widespread)
PANDPCD	National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
RUE	Single Student Register
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference



1 Introduction

Inclusive education is a process contributing to achieving social inclusion, yet barriers to participation and learning are numerous for many children, particularly children with disabilities. Children are missing out on the opportunity to learn due to stereotypes, stigmatisation, discrimination, segregation in special schools or special classes, lack of funding to disadvantaged schools and learners, learning environments that are little diverse and inclusive, rigid curricula, and untrained teachers. Children with disabilities are often pushed out of education systems due to the multiple barriers they face. Some never enter the education system and remain out-of-school throughout their childhood. In many countries, the lack of reliable and robust data on persons and children with disabilities is an education marginalisation and exclusion factor. Without data, policy makers cannot identify gaps in education service provision or plan and budget for reasonable accommodations to make inclusive education a reality.

Bridging the Gap II (BtG-II) – Inclusive policies and services for equal rights of persons with disabilities (the Project hereafter) aimed to contribute to the socio-economic inclusion, equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities through more inclusive and accountable institutions and policies. More specifically it contributed to:

- Support the implementation of the CRPD and the attainment of disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Support the capacity development of government institutions and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in five countries (Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan) to contribute to the implementation of the CRPD.

In Ecuador and Paraguay, one of the Project components focused on inclusive education to address several barriers to participation and learning.

This capitalisation report is based on a desk review of activities and outputs in both countries and interviews with key project stakeholders (see Annex 2). The major limitations of the report were respondents' availability which has not always enabled triangulation of information from different sources.

After a recap of the world commitments on inclusive education through the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG) (Chapter 2), the report summarises the activities implemented by the Project (Chapter 3). Best practices from Ecuador and Paraguay (Chapter 4) and lessons learned (Chapter 5) are then identified, which inform a set of recommendations for inclusive education stakeholders (Chapter 6).



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2 Sustainable Development Goal 4

SDG 4 aims to “**Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**”. Equity is to be understood as a process (the how), i.e. the activities that are put in place to ensure equality (UNESCO, 2020).

Several targets must be achieved by 2030 to realise SDG4. The Project aimed to particularly contribute to 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4a and 4c.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

Target 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Target 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

Target 4.c: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small-island developing States.



3 Overview: Bridging the Gap II and inclusive education

BtG-II had three main goals:

1. Increasing the technical capacity of development partners to include persons with disabilities in mainstream development cooperation and implementation of the SDGs.
2. Enhancing the capacity of government stakeholders to develop and implement disability-inclusive policies and services.
3. Supporting OPDs to influence policy development processes.

BtG-II in Paraguay focused on all three goals, while in Ecuador it focused only on the last two. Under this broad framework, the Project supported a range of objectives and activities, some of which were specific to inclusive education.

3.1 Paraguay

BtG-II strengthened the National Secretariat of Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities (SENADIS) and supported the participation of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and of Civil Society Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (CSOs) in national policy discussions. A strong focus was on using national data as a fundamental tool in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policy and ensuring the inclusion of people with disabilities in the country's information systems. A sub-focus was improving data for inclusive education. Key outputs related to inclusive education in the Paraguay Project include, but are not limited to:

- A study on definitions of disability to be used in Paraguay and on internationally agreed criteria to be used in statistical data collection tools to allow data comparability.
- A study on lessons learned from the inclusion of the variable of disability in the Census 2012.
- A set of indicators of the National Action Plan for Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities 2015-2030 (PANDHPCD).
- Technical assistance and training of key institutions (DGEEC, SENADIS, MEC) for the collection, exploitation, and dissemination of data on disability, including Census data and data from the Single Registry of Students (RUE).
- Technical assistance to the implementation of the Law on Inclusive Education through a diagnostic study and a preparatory report for the



development of an Operational Plan for implementing the Law on Inclusive Education.

- Technical assistance and online awareness raising/training on inclusive education for MEC officers and teachers.
- A proposal for the revision of the curriculum of the Teacher Training Institute on inclusive education mainstreaming.
- A Compendium of Guidelines and texts for reasonable accommodations at the Basic and Initial, Secondary, University and Technical Education levels, for the Law on Inclusive Education.
- Inclusive Education Pedagogical Support Guide for Compensatory Educational Attention Service – Hospital Classroom.

3.2 Ecuador

With regard to inclusive education, in Ecuador, BtG-II supported the capabilities of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to implement the inclusive education legislation and strengthened OPDs and the National Council for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities (CONADIS) to increase their participation and capacity to influence the development of education policies and strategies. Key outputs related to inclusive education in the Ecuador Project include, but are not limited to:

- A situation analysis of inclusive education in Ecuador.
- An awareness-raising campaign on the Right to Education for children with disabilities and to promote inclusion and diversity within and beyond the education sector.
- The development of learning material for children with hearing impairment, visual impairment, and children with intellectual disabilities.
- Training workshops for teachers with a focus on blind teachers and teaching students with intellectual disabilities.
- Infrastructure adaptation for children with physical disabilities in 8 schools affected by the earthquake.
- Training workshops for inclusion departments (DECE & UDAI) of the public education system on Human Rights, National Model for Inclusive Education and Universal Design for Learning.

3.3 Global activities

BtG-II also supported inclusive education related activities at global level. Under the heading “Tackling the challenges to ensure inclusive and equitable quality



education”, Bridging the Gap celebrated its 2018 Annual event on November 28th in Spain, gathering institutional representatives, development practitioners and organisations of persons with disabilities. Two roundtables were organised and raised the debate on some of the main challenges to ensure inclusive education:

- Data and statistics for ensuring inclusive education policy planning (roundtable I), and
- Mainstreaming gender and disability in inclusive education: the experience of the international cooperation (roundtable II),

Several high-level events were organised on the topic of inclusive education throughout the Project:

- During the Bridging the Gap’s launch event in Brussels, December 5th, 2017, a roundtable on inclusive education was organised, moderated by Marion Steff, SDGs Coordinator at European Disability Forum. Claude Cahn, Human Rights Officer with the OHCHR Regional Office for Europe, Franz-Joseph Huainigg, Member of the Foreign Policy Committee and Committee on Human Rights of the Austrian Parliament, and Donata Vivanti, Vice-President of the Italian Forum on Disability discussed the topic, pointing out the value of inclusive education from their personal and professional perspective. (FIIAPP & BtG II, 2017)
- During the project 2018 Annual event in Madrid, “Tackling the challenges to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education”, two roundtables were organised on inclusive education: (i) one on data and statistics for ensuring inclusive education policy planning, and (ii) one on Mainstreaming gender and disability in inclusive education: the experience of the international cooperation.
- The 2019 International Forum on Inclusive Education in Quito, Ecuador, that presented good practices from Canada’s New Brunswick, Colombia, Uruguay and Ecuador.
- The 2020 Virtual Technical Workshop “The path to inclusive and accessible education policies: Data, indicators, and best practices for the educational inclusion of girls and boys with disabilities”, that brought together high-level policy makers from several Latin America countries, development partners and international organisations. (BtG II, 2020)

“Inclusive education is a fundamental right. It means that in order to do the work of CRPD one has to really look at the system as a whole and to think about education in its entirety, and to the way in which diversity of children engage with the education system” (Claude Cahn)



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4 Promising practices initiated or supported by the Project

4.1 Data for inclusive education

BtG-II focused mostly on supporting the use of meaningful disaggregated datasets as a key tool for designing and implementing public policies. To do so, the Project aimed to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in the country's main information systems, particularly Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).

The BtG-II approach to data for inclusive education was strongly embedded in the work of BtG-I, where human rights indicators were developed for the CRPD, in line with SDGs indicators. Those indicators were developed through a highly participatory process involving the CRPD Committee, human rights experts, UN agencies, civil society, State representatives, National Human Rights Institutions, development partners, academics and statisticians and validated through several meetings fathering representatives from Ethiopia, Paraguay, Moldova, Jordan and Nepal.

Paraguay participated in both BtG-I and BtG-II. BtG-I focused on the development of human rights indicators for the CRPD and CRPD informed guidelines for policy makers on the SDGs and guidelines on data sources to populate indicators. In BtG-II, Paraguay was able to use these indicators and guidelines to support evidence-based policy planning and monitoring, including in the education sector.

Concretely, the generic indicators developed under BtG-I, which stemmed from international standards and best practices (CPRD guidelines and Washington Group questions (Groce & Mont, 2017; Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 2011)), directly informed the development and finalisation of indicators for the 17 axes of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Paraguay (PANDPCD). The Project first produced a Guiding Document for the drafting of the PANDPCD Indicators and Baseline (Cáceres de la Serna & BtG II, 2020), which included (i) 138 indicators and their metadata grids, and (ii) responsibilities of various institutions for implementing the planned activities and collecting data. Three types of indicators necessary for monitoring progress were identified: structural, process, and outcome indicators and the Guiding Document also recommended to include gender and cultural diversity in the indicator framework (Cáceres de la Serna & BtG II, 2020).



The Guiding Document includes 14 guidelines for monitoring the inclusive education related part of the PANDPCD and an indicators template to measure the indicator (Name of the indicator, method of calculation, unit of measurement, measuring frequency, date of available information, geographical specificity, disaggregated levels, data source, institution responsible for data collection, etc.). BtG-II then supported the publication of the PANDPCD with a full set of indicators and baseline data (AECID & BtG II, 2020).

This work was done through a thorough multi-stakeholder engagement process with government representatives, the Secretaria Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de las Personas con Discapacidad (SENADIS) and OPDs. Indicators were developed in alignment with: (i) the System of Planning by Results of Paraguay, which dictate the indicator modules of different types of national plans, and (ii) the CPRD Guidelines for States regarding the submission of information in the compliance reports. The indicators were nationally agreed and

Below are the indicators selected for the 14 education sector guidelines of the PANDPCD.

Guidelines	Indicators
Public policy: <i>Access for persons with disabilities to the right to education through an inclusive education system with a rights-based, gender and ethnic-linguistic approach</i>	
11.1 Guarantee the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the educational system at all levels and in all modalities, stipulating a timetable for the implementation of the law on inclusive education and its regulation at a national level	11.1 Schedule of implementation at the national level of the inclusive education law and its regulations, approved. 11.1.2 Proportion of persons with disabilities enrolled in the education system who attend regular schools, by levels and modalities.
11.2 Dissemination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Human Rights Plan and the National Human Rights Education Plan, specifically regarding disability and the education of persons with disabilities.	11.2.1 Number of actions contemplated in the National Plan for Human Rights and the National Education Plan for Human Rights, with specific reference to the issue of disability and the education of people with disabilities disaggregated by stage of development: disseminated, implemented, monitored, evaluated
11.3 Strengthening of inclusive educational plans, programmes and projects throughout the country providing access to persons with disabilities to the educational system, including the gender and ethnic-linguistic perspective in all levels.	11.3.1 Number of public education policy management instruments (plans, programmes and projects) that incorporate the perspectives of inclusion, gender and ethno-linguistics, disaggregated by educational level. 11.3.2 Gross enrolment rate of people with disabilities, disaggregated by educational level, sex, and indigenous villages
1.4 Incorporation of subjects on the rights of persons with disabilities	11.4.1 Proportion of streams in Higher Education Institutes with curricula including



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into the syllabus of universities and vocational training centres, in all degree programmes.	materials on the rights of persons with disabilities. 11.4.2 Proportion of streams in Vocational Training Centres with curricula including materials on the rights of persons with disabilities.
11.5 Ensure implementation, adjustment and support in the education system with a focus on rights.	11.5.1 Proportion of educational institutions that provide reasonable accommodation compared to the total number of educational institutions in the National Educational System. 11.5.2 Proportion of institutions in the National Educational System that implement reasonable accommodation and school kits for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
11.6 Design and implement a plan for the execution of infrastructure works in the education system, including accessibility to educational institutions.	11.6.1 Proportion of institutions in the National Educational System with accessible infrastructure according to the Law No. 4934/13, disaggregated by level and modality.
1.7 Strengthening of the National System for the Evaluation of the Educational Process that responds to an inclusive educational system based on the CRPD	1.7.1 Proportion of institutions in the national education system that implement evaluation systems with a focus on inclusion in their schools. 11.7.2 Proportion of teachers, Ministry officers, directors, supervisors and coordinators who implement evaluation systems with inclusive criteria.
11.8 Guarantee access to education for children with disabilities of indigenous communities.	11.8.1 Gross enrolment rate of indigenous population with disabilities, disaggregated by sex and educational level
1.9 Creation and strengthening of centres that support inclusion.	11.9.1 Number of centres that support inclusion that are strengthened.
11.10 Adaptation of rules and administrative decisions in the educational system, in accordance with national and international instruments on disability	11.10.1 Number of administrative rules and regulations of the National Educational System developed in accordance with national and international instruments on disability.
Public policy: Access for persons with disabilities to the right to education through an inclusive education system with a rights-based, gender and ethno-linguistic approach	
11.11 Design and implementation of protocols and procedures for action at all levels and in all modes of the education system.	11.11.1 Number of protocols and operating procedures for all levels and modalities of the National Education System that are aligned with the CRPD.
11.12 Design and implementation of communication flow for inclusion processes.	11.12.1 Communication flow protocol designed and implemented for the inclusion processes in the education sector.
11.13 Promote specialised research on innovations and good practices in inclusive education in accordance with national and international instruments related to inclusion.	11.13.3 Number of specific research on innovations and good practices in inclusive education.



11.14 Design and implementation of a training program for teachers and experts of the Ministry of Education and Culture for due attention to persons with disabilities and the establishment of an effective inclusion policy in education.	11.14.1 Number of teachers and Ministry officers trained on disability-inclusive education.
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Source: Plan de Acción Nacional por los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad 2015-2030 (AECID & BtG II, 2020)

The Project followed a multi-level funnel approach for the improvement of data for inclusive education. Further to the high-level work on indicators for monitoring the PANDPCD, capacity development took place on data on people with disabilities for key institutions, including the National Institute of Statistics (INE, former DGEEC), combined with technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) to work and improve education data systems. This was supposed to be followed by a pilot at school level, which was unfortunately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Improving the relevance, quality and disaggregation of information on disability requires compliance with international standards and comparability between data collection tools. This process was supported through a technical assistance to the INE and covered both the National Population Housing Census (2022) and the Permanent Household Survey to enable the production of accurate data on the number of persons with disabilities in Paraguay based on the Washington Group's questions. Issues around the definition of disability and criteria to be used by statistical information sources were addressed to ensure reliability of statistical data and comparison between years and population groups. This also directly contributed to the technical assistance to the MEC and to the Ministry of Health (inclusion of disability data in the design of the universal health record). This was a welcome move as information flows between Ministries are key in inclusive education to enable the identification of children with disabilities of compulsory school age who are not enrolled in schools but might be registered in MoH's databases.

A key issue in data for inclusive education is not only to be able to identify the number of students with disabilities in schools to be able to channel appropriate budget and human resources, but also to provide information on the barriers to participation and learning faced by students. To this end, a range of information on the school environment also needs to be collected as part of EMIS.



“Identifying the issues is not enough, we need to look at the barriers that hinder participation” Daniel Mont, Washington Group on Disability Statistics

BtG-II therefore supported the national education registry system (RUE) with:

- The integration of the Washington Group’s questions, and
- The clarification of responsibilities for data collection in schools. The Project has revealed that data collection practices in schools were threatening data reliability and comparability. Establishing the responsibility of school administrators for data entry with the support from school auxiliary staff including school psychologists, was a significant step in the process of obtaining more coherent and complete data for inclusive education in forthcoming years.

A first set of disability-sensitive education data nation-wide was produced in 2020 in Paraguay, and it is expected that data reliability will be improved in the 2021 data, as a result of clarifying processes and responsibilities for data collection and data entry at school level.

The Paraguay experience provides a good example of a structured multi-level process to tackle the issue of data for inclusive education. Starting from the definition of disability and the identification of international standards and existing instruments, and from the development of indicators to monitor the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including indicators for monitoring policy implementation in the education sector, the country then moved to improving data quality, reliability and comparability, starting with the Census for the provision of accurate and relevant population data and then moving to sectors, including health and education, to improve their data systems in light of the CPRD and SDGs requirements.

BtG-II also contributed to improve the accessibility of public websites and portals. Training and web templates in line with the WCAG 2.0 international web accessibility standards were adopted by SENADIS and progressively by other institutions. This is also a way of enhancing civil society’s access to data on disability and data on inclusive education and contributes to a virtuous cycle of producing data, accessing data, and using data for advocacy purposes.

Although there was no systematic knowledge exchange with Ecuador under the framework of the project, Paraguay has valuable lessons to share about its endeavor to make data systems more disability sensitive.



Propositions for capitalizing on the project's experience

1. Share broadly the work done in Paraguay on national indicators and support to national and sector data systems, both in terms of approach (fennel approach, multi-stakeholder involvement, gender mainstreaming) and content (types of indicators used, data collection tools at school level).
2. Consider South-South projects and fora for sharing practices.
3. Provide medium-term technical support to schools and education authorities at all administrative levels to analyse and use data for planning interventions, allocating resources and monitoring progress.

4.2 Strengthening the national dialogue on inclusive education

One of the greatest contributions of the Project in both countries has been to strengthen the national policy dialogue on inclusive education. This was done through several complementary activities that aimed to:

- (i) Involve a broad range of stakeholders in policy dialogue,
- (ii) Build the capacity of stakeholders,
- (iii) Produce evidence and knowledge products to inform the national dialogue.

Broad stakeholder involvement

An inclusive policy dialogue with a comprehensive range of stakeholders within and beyond government is critical to increasing the likelihood that national policies and plans will be appropriately designed and implemented and yield the expected results. Overall, the broad participation of OPDs and civil society in policy matters facilitated by the Project has led to greater CRPD awareness among government stakeholders, and greater recognition of the value of civil society participation in national policy planning and implementation.

In Ecuador, the Project has brought together the National Council for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities (CONADIS) and the four National Federations of Persons(s) with disability(ies): FENEDIF (National Federation of Ecuadorian with Physical Disability), FENASEC (National Federation of the Deaf), FENCE (National Federation of the Visually Impaired) and FEPAPDEM (Ecuadorian Federation for the Support to Persons with Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Autism and Down Syndrome). This coordination between the Federations was a first in Ecuador and it was further formalised between the OPDs and the Ministry of Education with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) articulating the role of OPDs and their contribution to selected Project activities that would contribute to improving inclusive education in the country. This coordination process helps



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OPDs to understand the importance of joining forces to play a full role in policy influencing and national debate. Other civil society organisations were also associated to Project events and national discussions on inclusive education. A key point for the Federations was not only to involve them as umbrella organisations in the national dialogue, but also people with disabilities themselves, in schools and communities.

Stakeholders report that the Project has significantly contributed to strengthening the relationship between State institutions and civil society in Ecuador, as the latter felt recognised, acknowledged and listened to in matters of education. The Project gave visibility, voice, decision-making power and autonomy to OPDs and civil society organisations. This has contributed to improving the dialogue around disability-inclusive education policies and services through the representation of a diversity of views and competences. It has also contributed to strengthening the coordination mechanisms between OPDs which in turn has increased their influencing power and made it more strategic.

In Paraguay, BtG-II was also seen as a main coordination mechanism for persons with disability and a key avenue for institutional strengthening (PROEVAL et al., 2020). The Project supported CSOs and OPDs' empowerment and capacity development through a participatory process including: (i) consultation about needs and priorities for capacity development, (ii) support to interaction with the National Congress, (iii) support to OPDs coordination. Promoting linkages and collaboration with the MEC was one of the key priorities identified in the process.

Capacity building

In Ecuador and Paraguay, OPDs and other local civil society actors in the disability arena might be perceived as weak political actors. To address this, the Project supported capacity development activities to increase the understanding of:

- The CPRD and the rights of people with disabilities (e.g. through awareness raising and promotion of the PANDPCD in Paraguay),
- Government mechanisms and policy planning processes and Ministerial structures and responsibilities,
- Policy influencing approaches, and
- Good inclusive education practices and trends in inclusive education, through supporting the participation of civil society representatives to national or international fora on inclusive education, such as the International Forum on Experiences of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Education held in Quito (2017) which presented and



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discussed the experiences of Canada, Colombia, Uruguay and Ecuador, or the Good Practices Encounter held by the Ministry of Education in Ecuador to showcase innovative practices in specialized and inclusive education.

In both countries, capacity building effort was identified as critical to enable civil society to meaningfully contribute to the national debate, articulate key gaps, propose solutions and prioritise advocacy messages.

The Project also supported the capacity development of Ministries of Education and relevant national education stakeholders. A good practice in Ecuador was the organisation of a study tour in Spain for Federations, CONADIS and Ministry of Education representatives (2018). Other international exposure activities were organised in Argentina and Colombia in 2019, and several had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Not only did a joint study tour strengthened personal contacts and strengthened informal relationships between Ecuadorian inclusive education actors, but it also contributed to prioritise areas for joint programming and areas for technical assistance.

Capacity for participation is directly linked to the quality of the contributions of OPDs and national education stakeholders, which in turn strengthens and supports trust between institutional and civil society actors and enriches the national dialogue.

A significant component of capacity development was the production of: (i) diagnostic studies that generated evidence to inform the national education policy debate, and (ii) technical products that informed decision-making and improved the quality of specific services and processes.

Knowledge products to inform policy decision-making

In Ecuador, the **Situational and Context Analysis of Inclusive Education** (Campopiano, 2018) has provided civil society with an independent research on the current state of inclusive education in the country, including an in-depth bottleneck analysis and recommendations to support policy influencing work and compliance with the CRPD principles. The research was based on terms of reference developed with the Federations. It ensured that disability, gender, ethnic and geographical characteristics were reflected in the data collection methods and analysis to embrace the inclusion agenda fully. Based on desk review and a comprehensive data collection exercise in several education institutions, the situation analysis provided: (i) a full review of the regulatory framework for inclusive education, (ii) an assessment of key achievements and remaining challenges, including key barriers for boys and girls to participate in



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education, particularly children with disabilities, (iii) a review of existing mechanisms for institutional coordination for disability-inclusive education, and (iv) recommendations for advocacy strategies for OPDs and for policy and implementation improvement. The Situation Analysis contributed to creating a shared understanding and knowledge across the Federations and between the civil society and Ministry of Education and it served as a basis for constructive discussions at national level on inclusive education.

In Paraguay, a **Diagnosis Study and a Preparatory report for the development of an Operational Plan for implementing the Law on Inclusive Education** were supported by the Project. The study (Florentín Gómez et al., 2020) provided detailed comments on the gaps of the 2013 Law on Inclusive Education and related regulations, such as the focus on disability vs inclusive education for all children, the lack of consideration given to specific groups of children, including gifted children and the absence of continuous provision across education cycles from preschool to university education and across education provision and its various implementation modalities. Other areas investigated include budgets, EMIS, enforcement mechanisms and communication and coordination mechanisms. The Diagnosis not only informed all the activities of the Project, it also provided useful information to the government, donors and civil society, despite not being made public.

The Preparatory report on the Operational Plan (Sebastián et al., 2020) made recommendations for the 2020-2024 Operational Plan for the implementation of the Law on Inclusive Education, based on extensive consultation with key actors. It emphasised the need for greater coordination between SENADIS and the Ministry of Education for developing a vision, activities, and targets for the Plan, and ensuring buy-in from key stakeholders, particularly representatives of the Parliamentarian Group on Children and Disability and legislators from the Bicameral Budget Commission. The consultants also recommend doubling the budget allocated to inclusive education between 2020 and 2024.

This preparatory work was used as a decision-making tool by the government which made inclusive education one of the areas of support requested from the EU as part of the Multi-annual Indicative Programme for 2021-2027 currently under discussion.

Combining guidance and training in Paraguay

In Paraguay, the Project produced several technical documents to equip education stakeholders with frameworks, guidance and propositions for concrete reforms and change in inclusive education practices in education institutions.



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(i) A Compendium of guidelines and texts for reasonable accommodation at the levels of Basic and Initial, Secondary, University and Technical School Education, for the application of the Law on Inclusive Education.

This extensive document provides a range of underpinning pedagogical frameworks for inclusive education and makes detailed suggestions for reasonable accommodation for children with various impairments. These are based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). They also include needs assessment mechanisms, Individual Education Plans, and coordination mechanisms at the level of education institutions. The document is comprehensive in that it covers the whole education spectrum from basic to university and technical education.

(ii) An Inclusive Education Pedagogical Support Guide, Compensatory Educational Care Service – Hospital Classrooms.

This document is a very useful guide for education officers, teachers, and medical staff about education in hospital classrooms. It provides information on the needs of children enrolled in hospital classrooms (and their families) and the specific barriers to learning they face. It then describes the specificities of teaching and learning in those environments depending on various scenarios, from length of hospital stay to type of treatment and provides valuable considerations for (i) teaching and learning, (ii) family engagement and support, and (iii) coordination with education bodies and professionals from other sectors. A few considerations for disability-inclusive education are also included as well as templates for needs assessment, learning plans, learning records, and learning timetables.

(iii) A proposal for the review of the curriculum of the Teacher Training Institute on Inclusive Education.

To address the outdated inclusive education curricula in teacher training institutes, the Project joined forces with UNICEF to review the programme and support the adoption of an administrative law to ensure the uptake of the proposed new curriculum in State Teacher Training Institutes.

This document proposes a new structure and content for the inclusive education curriculum which would ensure that the curriculum is a core subject, spans across the three years of teacher training, and covers pedagogical issues, research and coordination with a range of stakeholders within and beyond schools. The course outline includes detailed thematical content and competences to be taught as well as ideas to enrich the course through visits and workshops with experts and assignments for supervised practice.



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“The materials produced reaffirm the relevance of mainstreaming inclusive education throughout the education system and teacher training”. Robert Cano Paredes, Deputy Minister of Basic Education of the Ministry of Education and Science, Paraguay

(iv) A proposal for the designing and implementing an inclusive education MOOC for Ministry of Education staff including technical staff, teachers, directors, and supervisors.

The focus is on developing a certified 4-week online course on inclusive education for Ministry staff and teachers. The objectives of the course are to (i) understand the concepts and human rights instruments of the rights of persons with disabilities and inclusive education, (ii) understand the national legislative framework, (iii) plan for disability-inclusive education in schools and classrooms, and (iv) be equipped with key pedagogical and organisational strategies to adjust teaching and support learning in the classroom. The roll out of the course would align with the national teacher training calendar.

Combining teaching and learning resources and teacher training in Ecuador

In Ecuador, the Project supported the organisation of teacher training activities under the broader framework of the production of specific teaching and learning materials for students with disabilities (see 4.3 below):

- A 40-hour training for 1500 teachers from public and private schools on “Methodologies of care in the classroom for students with intellectual disabilities and the use of accessible educational materials”, in partnership with AECID and FEPAPDEM. Strongly anchored in broad inclusion concepts and the principles of UDL, the training focused on a range of topics from children’s rights to education to pedagogical practices in regular and specialised classes and learning materials for students with intellectual disabilities, including the *Así Aprendo* manuals (see below). Sexual and Reproductive Health was also included in the training building on a collaboration between AECID and UNFPA under the ‘We Decide’ project which produced a Guide of Sexual and Reproductive Guides and a Life Free of Violence for Persons(s) with disability(ies).
- A 60-hour online course for 60 teachers on “Methodologies and educational planning for teachers with visual impairment” organised by FENCE and the Undersecretariat of Specialised and Inclusive Education and focusing on teaching and learning tools for inclusive classrooms. This covered the UDL principles, curriculum adaptation strategies, the use of



the learning materials for students with visual impairments developed under the framework of the Project (see below) and how to use the child needs assessment of the Ministry of Health to support inclusive practices in schools and classrooms.

- A two two-day seminar on inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities, particularly autism, facilitated by an international expert in Quito and Guayaquil, with the support of FENODIS, the National Federation of Disability-related NGOs.

All training video sessions and materials are currently being reviewed, edited and repurposed to produce a self-directed online course that will benefit all teachers in the country.

Propositions for capitalizing on the project's experience:

1. Consider adapting the participation and capacity development strategy of the OPDs and CSOs to increase participation in decision-making and policy influencing in other sectors not yet covered by the Project.
2. Develop a capacity building strategy or toolkit for OPDs that could be shared in participating countries, in the region and internationally.
3. Support the implementation and monitoring of the guidance developed throughout the project in Paraguay. Support mechanisms for reflective practice, learning exchange and learning lessons throughout.
4. Support a dialogue on the improvement and mainstreaming of inclusive education in the pre-service teacher training in Ecuador, based on tools and lessons learned from the in-service teacher training modules developed.

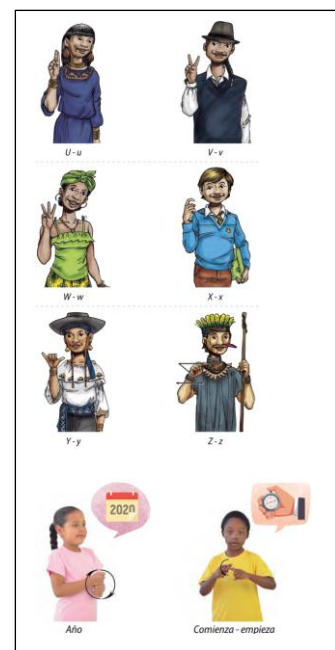
4.3 Producing accessible educational materials for students with disabilities

In Ecuador, a key output of BtG-II has been the production of accessible educational materials for students with disabilities, and more specifically for students with visual impairments, hearing impairments and intellectual disabilities. The materials, tailored to the needs, realities and cultural backgrounds of Ecuadorian children with disabilities, are aligned with the national curriculum and compliant with the Marrakech Treaty for which the Federations are accredited implementers in Ecuador. Under the framework of the MoU with the Ministry of Education, it has been agreed that the materials would be piloted through the project and replicated nation-wide.

- *Así Aprendo*, developed by FEPAPDEM, which comprises five manuals in language and mathematics for students in Grade 1 to 5 and three teacher guides for Grade 1, Grades 2-3 and Grades 4-5, all approved by the Ministry. *Así Aprendo* are the first learning materials in easy reading for

children with disabilities in Latin America. Their development followed a highly participatory process involving students from special education schools and their parents, teachers, curriculum developers, and other professionals. They were reviewed with a gender, diversity and culture lens to reflect the multiple realities of Ecuadorian's children. More than 3000 copies have been disseminated to public and private regular schools so far while also accessible from the Ministry's website. Internationally praised, the series was short-listed for the Zero Award 2020.

- Several materials for children with hearing impairments, developed by FENASEC, particularly an educative version of the Ecuadorian Sign Language Dictionary, using high quality signing photographs, and aiming at facilitating communication in regular schools between children, staff and children with hearing impairments. The Project also supported the revision of several guides produced by FENASEC, including (ii) an education guide for mothers and fathers of children with hearing impairments, providing information on hearing impairment detection, tips to support effective communication with children and socio-emotional support materials, (iii) a guide for teachers providing information on hearing impairment, communication tips and adjustments to classroom practices, and (iv) a guide for Ecuadorian sign language translators.
- Learning materials for children with visual impairments, in Braille, with the support of FENCE: (i) braille learning and math with the use of abacus, (ii) parental guide in braille learning for children with visual impairments, (iii) activity manual for the early inclusion of children with visual impairments.



Propositions for capitalizing on the project's experience:

1. Share broadly the materials nationally and regionally, including with universities (faculty of education), teacher training institutes, and OPDs.
2. Develop guidelines for developing teaching and learning materials for students with disabilities that could be shared regionally and beyond, particularly for the easy reading materials.



4.4 Raising awareness about the right to education of people with disabilities and inclusive education

Targeting the general public to support attitudinal change

In Ecuador, the Project implemented the first awareness-raising campaign on the Right to Education for children with disabilities in the country: “*Yo me quiero sumar*”. The campaign, developed in partnership between OPDs, CONADIS and the Ministry of Education was informed by a thorough participation process with OPDs, public institutions and beneficiaries. The campaign targeted teachers, families of persons with disabilities, organisations of persons with disabilities and the general population. The campaign included leaflets in both ink and Braille, and a radio spot which aired on Spotify with an inclusive video clip in sign language. The campaign dissemination covered schools and communities at local and national levels with the aim to contribute to attitudinal change.

Targeting Ministry officials and professionals to support practice change

Paraguay and Ecuador embedded awareness raising in activities targeting civil servants, such as (i) the MOOC on inclusive education for ministry staff (see above), which includes awareness raising about the right to education and inclusive education, and (ii) an Easy Reading Guide and Accessible Materials for Public Servants, developed by CONADIS and providing clear guidelines and tips on how to write official and administrative communications in plain language to make them as accessible as possible (Ecuador). This Guide was enabled by a technical assistance from *Grupo AMAS - Plena Inclusión Madrid*, which also resulted in a training on easy-reading adaption that led to the production of easy-reading versions of COVID-19 info (JICA funded). Quito municipality has also expressed interest for easy-reading adaptations for several museum materials.

Propositions for capitalizing on the project’s experience:

1. Conduct an evaluation of the impact of the campaigns to learn lessons about what works in supporting attitudinal change for different target audiences (civil servants, general public, school stakeholders).

5 Lessons learned on promoting inclusive education

This section aims to provide considerations for the project and project partners based on the capitalisation of project practices. Valuable lessons have been learned that could inform future projects and areas for support.



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5.1 Inclusive education is a paradigm shift requiring a systemic transformation of the education system, at all levels

The experiences of BtG-II in Paraguay and Ecuador have been very different. Paraguay adopted a strategic top-down and highly technical approach based on a legislative diagnosis with a focus on data, planning, and organisational capacity (inclusive education teacher training curriculum, guides for reasonable accommodation, capacity building of Ministry officers and staff). With regard to data for inclusive education, Paraguay used a funnel approach, starting from an indicator framework for the National Action Plan of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities followed by technical assistance to improve population data and education data through system and processes improvement.

Ecuador implemented a bottom-up approach, informed by a situation analysis anchored in consultation with beneficiaries (students' barriers to participation and schools and teachers' experiences), and developing concrete tools to support the inclusion of children in classrooms, facilitate the learning process and raise awareness about the right to education of children with disabilities in communities. It also supported the rehabilitation of 8 schools affected by the earthquake to ensure their accessibility for students with physical disabilities. The activities supported under the Project responded to the needs identified by the four Federations.

Those approaches are complementary to support the transformation of an education system, which requires both 'upstream' and 'downstream' work, including political understanding of the complexity of the education sector (from early childhood education to university and TVET, from public to private and non-for-profit provision of education services, from education specific aspects to cross-sectoral aspects) and involvement of users and beneficiaries in defining the outcomes they want and need from those services.

5.2 Wide participation and building long-lasting relationships are pre-requisites of systemic change

Devising broad consultation processes

Inclusive Education is a paradigm shift requiring a full transformation of the system, based on a clear vision for an inclusive society that must be articulated at the highest level of the State with the full participation of a wide range of political, legislative, governmental, businesses, private sector, civil society actors and the general population.



A lesson learned from Paraguay is the importance of vision building at national level following the ratification of the CRPD before looking at part of the systems, including education. Another is the participation of legislative power institutions at the highest level in that vision setting exercise, so that they understand what a paradigm shift inclusive education is and why this shift is necessary. In politically volatile contexts that may lead to frequent government changes, the full participation of legislators can contribute to supporting legislation and regulations that contribute to the transformation of the education system, but also support budget allocations that would contribute to making inclusive education a reality. In Paraguay, BtG-II has created a momentum and contributed to vision building across institutions, stakeholders and sectors.

Another lesson from Paraguay is that civil society goes beyond OPDs and non-for-profit, including universities, the media, unions, interest groups including women and youth groups, businesses, the private sector, etc. Supporting wide participation in vision setting and decision-making processes for the education sector therefore requires the involvement of a very broad range of stakeholders, including those that have not traditionally engaged with disability issues in the past. This is critical to support the systemic transformation of the education system and ensuring that inclusion in its broadest definition is understood and supported by all stakeholders. From Ecuador, the Project also learned that the involvement of OPDs specialising in autism would have broadened the participation. Another lesson from Ecuador is that OPDs are not homogeneous and have different views on how education should best support the people they represent, some advocating for inclusive regular schools, others favouring special education institutions or schools for students with a specific impairment such as a visual or hearing impairment.

Creating a space for national dialogue

Relationship building and establishing a dialogue between stakeholders has been in both countries challenging and purposeful. BtG-II created a space for national dialogue, supported by AECID and the EUD as key convenors of disability-related discussions and interventions. A lesson from Paraguay is that direct access to high government and ministry representatives was a key enabler for convening participants, contributing to political dialogue and supporting policy changes. In Ecuador, the Federations felt listened to by the Ministry of Education and recognised for their expertise and contribution to decision-making processes. This outcome was a result of the Project creating a space for national dialogue at country level. What the Project also contributed to, is creating a space within the Federations for listening to people with disabilities more, including children and



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adults who attended special and regular schools, hence enriching the national debate on inclusive education with end beneficiaries' perspectives.

Establishing institutional engagement strategies from the start to build long-lasting relationships and support stronger impact

Ecuador experienced frequent changes of Ministers and Ministry high-level officers throughout Project implementation (3 Ministers of Education, 3 Under Secretaries and 5 National Directors on Inclusive and Specialised Education) which led project partners to present BtG-II and re-establish a relationship with the Ministry after each ministerial change. In Paraguay, this was done once as the new administration was entering into power at the beginning of the Project.

In Ecuador, the establishment of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Education and the four Federations formalised the relationship between those key Project stakeholders. It granted access to schools for the Federations and secured the dissemination and take-up of key Project outputs such as the learning materials for children with disabilities. It was also an opportunity for the Federations to coordinate and implement joint interventions for inclusive education. A key lesson from this process is the need to ensure that institutional engagement strategies are discussed and embedded at the onset of an intervention to avoid delay, and that they are covering the role of all parties involved.

In Paraguay, this lesson was applied in the second half of the Project when the technical assistance on the preparation of the Operational Manual consulted new stakeholders, including the Organization of Ibero-American States or the Bicameral Budget Commission of the National Congress. In the first half of the Project as regard data for inclusive education, the focus was on (i) having CSOs approve the indicator framework of the PANDPCD to prepare their role as accountability partners in the policy implementation roll out process, and (ii) securing the buy-in from, and building the capacity of, a range of technical staff in the Ministry of Education to maximise the sustainability of the processes initiated in the field of disability sensitive data.

5.3 Building the capacity to participate enables meaningful involvement and contribution

Understanding the barriers to CSO's participation

A key lesson in both countries was the importance of understanding the needs of CSOs for meaningful participation before developing their capacities for quality



contribution in policy dialogue around inclusive education and direct contribution to inclusive education related interventions. With an overall weak institutional and organisational capacity, CSOs tend to rely on government funding and focus on small scale projects that have few ripple effects on policy planning and system changes.

A lesson from Ecuador was the importance of understanding the role of CSOs in the policy and political space to enable them to strengthen their voice and strategies in policy influencing. Through the BtG-II, the Federations have learned to work together, not only practically in terms of reasonable accommodation for all representatives to be able to participate in coordination meetings, but also strategically in finding common priorities for advocacy and change, which increased their influencing power. Strengthening the capacity of the Federations has also contributed to improving their relationships with the Ministry of Education.

Another lesson was the importance of institutional strengthening, building capacities of OPDs on partnership building, networking and fund raising to enable them to play a sustained role in national debate in the future. The project empowered Federations to engage more frequently and meaningfully with international development cooperation, and to participate in calls for projects and funding mobilisation.

Strengthening organisational leadership

A lesson from Paraguay was the need to support CSOs to find their place in the policy influencing space without losing independence while also working constructively alongside government stakeholders towards a more inclusive society. This called for leadership support, for CSOs to be seen as credible representatives of civil society, entrusted to play this dual role in the policy influencing space, both advocating for change and holding the government accountable and proposing robust solutions that would system change.

The Project contributed to building this credibility in various ways: (i) supporting interactions between state and non-state actors, (ii) supporting the coordination among civil society actors, (iii) strengthening technical understanding of both the CPRD and inclusive education, and (iv) sponsoring the participation of CSOs in civil society fora nationally and regionally, so that they could strengthen their networks, be exposed to a range of practices and establish themselves as legitimate partners in the field of inclusive education in their country.



5.4 Learning lessons from the Project's missed opportunities

Knowledge sharing and peer exchange

BtG-II supported different approaches and activities in Ecuador and Paraguay. Each country has developed valuable processes, products and learned valuable lessons that would benefit each other, yet the Project was not set up to support systematic information and practice sharing between the two countries. Two areas could have particularly benefited from knowledge transfer:

- Data for inclusive education, particularly processes to improve Census and EMIS data collection tools,
- Inclusive participatory processes to support the development of teaching and learning materials.

To note, however, that knowledge sharing was facilitated beyond the region. The experience of the National Plan's indicators in Paraguay has been, for instance, presented as good practice to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Ethiopia as part of the disability Act's reform process.

Synergy with EU support

In Paraguay, the education policy development calendar was not aligned with the EU programming cycle which meant that the previous budget support was approved before BtG-II and, to date, there is no budget support confirmed for the education sector as the new education policy and sector plans are pending. However, both the EU and BtG-II have contributed to the social dialogue *Transforming Education 2030*, a highly participatory process that has included more than 75,000 participants to date in the needs assessment and vision development of the future education policy. If a new budget support for education is approved in the future, it will be critical to ensure that disbursement indicators support a broad definition of inclusive education and include disability disaggregated indicators.

In Ecuador, synergy was sought between the EUD and BtG-II including in relation to the COVID-19 response and propositions made under the “Mesa COVID Ecuador” about inclusive digital education, which did not concretise due to government’s overwhelm and the election process.

Defining inclusive education broadly

BtG-II was set up as a disability-inclusion project. Activities supporting inclusive education were implemented through a disability-lens and focused on people with disabilities. The Project has not always maximised this approach as an entry point



for policy development and implementation of an education system that is broadly inclusive, i.e. that supports inclusive quality education for all children. The disability focus might contribute to reinforcing pedagogical practices that focus on special educational needs as opposed to inclusive education principles and practices.

In Paraguay, this could have taken the form of a broader review of education data systems and the extent to which they could generate information on groups of children at risk that could inform broad inclusion policy planning. Or of an inclusive education teacher training curriculum that would equip teachers to support all children. In Ecuador, this could have been about using information from Situation Analysis to advocate for and support greater inclusion of girls, ethnic minorities and children living in rural areas.

Gender and inclusive education

A ripple effect of the point above is that gender, unlike disability, has not been included in the inclusive education related aspects of project through a twin-track approach. While mainstreaming was sought at the onset, there was no specific focus on initiatives targeting women/girls with disabilities in the education sector. In Paraguay, for instance, although gender was mainstreamed in the design of the indicators for the National Disability Action Plan and in the data collection tools for the Census and the EMIS system, the use of gender disaggregated data appears to have been limited. In addition, the inclusive education teacher training curriculum touches only lightly upon gender-responsive teaching and learning pedagogy. In Ecuador, inclusive education teacher training activities have little addressed gender responsive teaching strategies or the promotion of gender equality through education.

BtG-II has nonetheless addressed gender mainstreaming globally, not only through the organisation of events such as the roundtable of the BtG-II 2018 Annual Event on “Mainstreaming gender and disability in inclusive education: the experience of the international cooperation”, or the focus on the 2019 Annual Event on the inclusion of girls and women with disabilities, but also by providing critical inputs into the next EU Gender Equality Action Plan.



6 Recommendations

Based on BtG-II activities, the good practices identified, discussions with stakeholders and the areas for continuation, deepening and improvement identified throughout the capitalisation study, below are a set of recommendations for national authorities, OPDs, and development and project partners.

6.1 Recommendations to National authorities

Transforming the education system

Inclusive education is about systemic change and transforming the education culture throughout the system. To do so:

- **Build a high-level shared vision for inclusive education** and how it contributes to an inclusive society and the realisation of the SDGs and CPRD.
- **Adopt multi-level interventions spanning the entire education system**, from early childhood to tertiary, vocational and non-formal education, so that persons with disabilities can access, participate and learn throughout the life cycle.
- **Improve cross-sector and inter-ministerial dialogue, information and data exchange, partnership and coordination.** Work with all relevant ministries and agencies who might hold data on children (health, social protection, justice, interior, education, national statistics agency...) and who might provide services that support children's enrolment and participation in education (social services, health services...).
- **Ensure that legislative changes are supported with enforcement mechanisms and realistic budgets.**
- **Engage directly with education beneficiaries and children and adults with disabilities**, not only with families or organisations representing them.
- **Raise awareness about the right to education and the principles of inclusive education** at all levels of the education system and in schools and communities. Associate children and people with disabilities, girls and women and ethnic minority groups in all awareness raising activities and communication campaigns.



Holistic approach to data for inclusive education

Reliable data is necessary for evidence-based policy development, directing support to students, regions and education institutions that need them most, and monitoring policy implementation. To improve data systems:

- **Conduct broad reviews of data sources and data systems** to understand how they could support inclusive education programming and monitoring, with a focus on disability, gender, ethnic and linguistic minorities, locations and other contextual factors of education exclusion.
- **Ensure wide cross-sectoral participation in data systems improvement and harmonise practices between national statistical agencies and the ministry of education.**
- **Improve data systems throughout the education continuum** from pre-school to tertiary education, including non-formal education provision.
- **Develop a capacity building plan for improving collection, analysis and use of data at all levels of the system.**
- **Train school directors, school staff and parent associations on data collection to improve data reliability** and on how to interpret and use data for improving inclusion practices at school level.
- **Develop a culture where disaggregated data is systematically analysed, interpreted and used for policy development and monitoring.**

6.2 Recommendations to OPDs and civil society

Meaningful participation and contribution of civil society

Engaging meaningfully in policy influencing is a long-term endeavour that requires building institutional, organisational and individual capacity. To work in this direction:

- **Engage in political spaces and spaces for policy dialogue at national and local levels** to actively and constructively contribute to policy development and policy monitoring.
- **Support and conduct independent assessments** of various aspects pertaining to inclusive education to inform advocacy strategies and strengthen the understanding of issues, barriers and priorities for various groups.
- **Build alliances with a broad range of civil society organisations and devise and improve coordination mechanisms** to maximise influencing power at policy level.



- **Support capacity development of members and member organisations** in general policy influencing and technical aspects of inclusive education.

6.3 Recommendations to development partners

Project design with an inclusive education focus

Based on the breadth and depth of BtG-II's experiences and lessons learned from the Project implementation, it is recommended that development partners:

- **Break the stereotype that inclusive education is mostly for children with disabilities**, by supporting projects promoting a broad definition of inclusion, while also supporting disability-specific activities where needed (two-pronged approach).
- **Include a broad range of civil society organisations in project implementation**, including organisations focusing on specific disabilities or psychosocial support for the most vulnerable and poorest children.
- **Include beneficiaries at all stages of the project cycle, not only organisations that represent them.** Involving children, parents and teachers in the project design would contribute to projects that address both upstream and downstream approaches to support a holistic transformation of the education system, through legislation and school practice changes.
- **Anticipate political volatility and institutional fragility** and develop strategies to overcome the challenges related to staff rotation and political changes at the start of the project.
- **Embed in the project design a road map for both civil society and national institutions on how to sustain the national dialogue on inclusive education**, in line with countries' plans.
- **Ensure that gender is mainstreamed from the start of the project to enable the participation of women** and men organisations and beneficiaries in activities and to ensure that products systematically address gender issues and gender equality.
- **Build-in activities to measure outcomes and change**, including attitudinal and behavioural change in individuals, communities, schools and government structures as a result of project activities.

Supporting the participation of civil society broadly

Development partners have the means and know how to support the participation of a range of civil society actors. To do so:



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- **Conduct mappings of civil society stakeholders in the domain of inclusive education**, including the media, academia, the private sector and stakeholders particularly involved in specific levels of education, such as early childhood, university or TVET education.
- **Build capacities to support the participation of OPDs and CSOs.** Focus on (i) the right to education, inclusive education principles and the CPRD so that they can familiarise themselves with the language and the concepts that will be discussed in national fora, (ii) institutional and organisational capacities to support strategic advocacy and policy influencing and financial autonomy.

Harnessing the potential of donors' convening power

Donors have a convening power at local, national and international level, and across sectors and actors that is an enabling factor in promoting inclusive education:

- **Promote and support cross-sectoral, inter-ministerial and multi-actor discussion spaces, coordination mechanisms and joint programming.**
- **Promote, facilitate and support country peer exchanges overtime** in the area of inclusive education, starting from peer learning exchanges between Paraguay and Ecuador and between BtG-II countries and other countries in Latin America. **Ensure that peer exchanges are supported at both political and technical levels.**
- **Develop a peer sharing strategy for inclusive education in Latin America**, leveraging the network of EU delegations and regional civil society fora.
- **Identify countries in Latin America who would benefit from key learnings and products from BtG-II** in the area of data for inclusive education and inclusive education teaching and learning practices.

Leveraging EU interventions and other investments in education

Inclusive education is both a goal and a mean to achieving the SDGs and complying with the CRPD. Donors have the capacity to leverage EU interventions and also securing or brokering investments for inclusive education:

- **Build in from the onset of the project synergies with EU Country Programmes** so as to maximise the use and sustainability of project outputs and processes.
- **Leverage EU interventions and instruments** for sustaining the outcomes of the Project. Ensure that budget support in education



promotes and enables systemic changes in education by including both processes and outcome indicators in M&E frameworks.

- **Broker, prioritise and secure investments in the education sector.** To support the inclusive education paradigm shift, investment is critical, particularly to increase resources and capacity development at all levels of the system.



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Annex 2: List of persons interviewed

Name	Organisation
Andrés Vazquez	BtG-II Technical Assistance Cooperation, AECID, Paraguay
Cándido Cabana Porto	BtG-II Technical Assistance Cooperation, AECID, Ecuador
Karina Rivadeneira	Ministry of Education, Ecuador
Daniel Salas	Responsible of activities, FEPAPDEM, Ecuador
Vera Valente	Project Manager, European Union Delegation, Paraguay