

Baseline Report

Promotion of Socio Emotional Learning and
Resilience Building for Inclusive Education Project

Submitted to:

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Background:

The Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID) has been dedicated to establishing the rights of children and adults with disabilities since its inception. CSID firmly believes that children with disabilities have the right to live with their families and access all rights, including education. In addition to direct support for children with disabilities, CSID works to integrate them into mainstream education. The organization also focuses on vocational training and securing decent employment for persons with disabilities. A significant part of CSID's work is promoting inclusive education and child protection, particularly for children with disabilities.

Objective of the inquiry:

The main objectives of this baseline inquiry were the following

- To measure the impact of Social Emotional and Learning in the intervention areas
- Assess the status of resilience building in the intervention areas.

Methodology

The baseline inquiry process followed mainly a qualitative approach whereby 95 children (including 56 children with disabilities) in 2023. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed to highlight social, emotional and learning aspects of randomly selected children with and without disabilities available at schools supported by CSID for promoting inclusive education.

Findings

This report provides an analysis of the demographic characteristics, situation of disability assessment, comprehension of simple questions, and various other factors affecting children with and without disabilities. The data focuses on understanding the specific needs, educational challenges, and support systems for these children, aiming to inform targeted interventions and strategies for their development.

No. of Children covered by the inquiry: Among 95 children covered, 56 children had disabilities, with boys slightly more represented (n=32) compared to girls. Among 39 children without disabilities, the gender distribution was relatively balanced, with girls constituting 56%, n=22.

Distribution of Disabilities Among Children: The largest group of children with disabilities consists of those with physical impairments, followed by children with intellectual disabilities. Children with cerebral palsy form the next largest group, while those with autism follow closely behind. Hearing impairments are the least common, highlighting their limited representation among the children at school. Additionally, children with Down syndrome, low vision, and visual impairment each constitute a smaller segment of the total group.

Status of Comprehensive Disability Assessments for Tailored Support Services: Comprehensive disability assessments are crucial for understanding and addressing the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. Such assessment has the potential to enhance their educational and learning needs while also promoting community participation. However, none of the interviewed children with disabilities were

assessed for their specific disabilities/degrees of disabilities, or for learning abilities highlighting a significant gap in support services. This is yet another obstacle toward developing individual educational plan.

Seating arrangements of Children with and Without Disabilities - The Need for Tailored Arrangements:

Children with disabilities tend to sit wherever they find available seats, while children without disabilities show a stronger preference for sitting on the first bench. Tailored seating arrangements based on individual needs are essential to ensure effective access to the curriculum but not carefully practised at classrooms currently.

Seating arrangements for children should be based on their individual needs to ensure they can access the curriculum effectively. For instance, children with hearing impairments might benefit from sitting closer to the teacher to better hear instructions, while those with visual impairments might need to be closer to the board. Ultimately, the goal is to provide an inclusive learning environment that accommodates the specific needs of each child, which might include preferential seating for some.

Interests of Children with and Without Disabilities in Attending School and possible factors Influencing Their Choices:

All children with disabilities (100%) and a high percentage of children without disabilities (95%) like coming to school. Most children enjoy coming to school, which allows them, especially children with disabilities, to explore beyond their home environment, interact with other children or at least observe them, and learn together. Aside from attending school, children with disabilities often have limited opportunities to leave their homes or socialize, which is not the case for children without disabilities reached by data collectors. Schools provide opportunities for social interaction, participation in recreational activities, and, in some cases, access to education.

The Importance of Eye Contact in Communication Among Children with Disabilities: Observations and Implications:

Eye contact is essential for communication and social connection. Most girls and boys with disabilities demonstrated eye contact during interactions, indicating their ability to engage socially and communicate effectively. However, this behavior was primarily observed when data collectors-initiated conversations, suggesting it may not occur as frequently in everyday situations where these children interact on equal footing. Notably, girls with disabilities showed slightly less eye contact than boys, while children with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD) exhibited even lower levels, often requiring additional support to understand and respond. These findings suggest that, except for those with NDD, most children with disabilities can effectively use this crucial social skill. This ability can be leveraged by teachers, caregivers, and parents in educational, therapeutic, and social contexts to promote the development of all children with disabilities to their maximum individual potential.

Response levels of Children with Disabilities to Simple Questions in Bangla and English: When asked simple questions in Bangla more than 52 out of 54 children with disabilities responded successfully though for some (those with NDD) data collectors had to struggle to get their attention. However, in English, their success rate dropped significantly, with only 26 out of 54 children with disabilities responding correctly. They included 15 out of 32 boys with disabilities and 11 out of 22 girls with disabilities.

Among the assessed groups, girls with disabilities demonstrated the lowest success in responding with their own names, while boys with disabilities performed slightly better. In contrast, girls without disabilities exhibited a significantly higher success level, and boys without disabilities also showed strong performance. Children with neurodevelopmental disorders were unable to respond without support.

These findings reveals the need for targeted support and intervention for children with disabilities, highlighting the importance of tailored educational strategies to help them achieve crucial language milestones, particularly in responding to direct questions. The underperformance of girls with disabilities may be attributed to the severity of their disabilities as well as a lack of adequate support, including at home.

Analysis of Alphabet Recognition Among Children with and Without Disabilities: Knowing/recognizing alphabets is foundation for literacy – for reading and writing, developing language skills, skills in literacy which is related to social and other skills. A significant majority of children with disabilities (31) did not recognize all the alphabets, while only 5 children without disabilities had the same issue. This notable disparity suggests that classroom instruction may not be effectively understood by children with disabilities compared to their peers. This situation highlights the urgent need for targeted educational interventions to enhance literacy skills among children with disabilities, along with tailored strategies to address their specific learning needs both at school and at home.

A significant difference in shape recognition abilities between children with and without disabilities was observed too. Among children with disabilities, 34 could not recognize all shapes (e.g. circle, triangle, square) correctly, whereas only 7 among children without disabilities could not recognize all shapes.

Many children with disabilities participating in this project come from families with limited educational backgrounds, which further complicates their learning environment. Under these circumstances, schools must intensify their support efforts for these children. Early intervention and support will be crucial for helping children who struggle with this foundational skill.

Difficult subjects to learn: Children with disabilities talked to face most difficulties in learning subjects such as English (20 out of 54) and Math (16 out of 54); a few children have some challenges learning Social Science and Religion. No children reported difficulties with learning Bangla. However, at least 16 children with disabilities mentioned they were unsure about which subjects posed challenges, and one indicated difficulties across all subjects. As for children without disabilities (12 children out of 39) faced difficulties in English and 17 in maths, and just a few in social science and Bangla. Overall, both children with and without disabilities faced difficulties in learning particularly, English and math though children with disabilities lagged behind children without disabilities, which may be due to various factors including issues with teaching-learning, inadequate support to build foundational skills, lack of exposure outside the classroom and lack of problem solving skills and dealing with abstract concepts (math). Specific emphasis is required by schools to promote the scope of (all) children and particularly children with disabilities’ skills in both these subjects-topics.

Children with disabilities	Children without disabilities
Bangla and Social Science are the least challenging subjects, with only 1 child with disabilities finding each subject difficult.	Bangla and Religion are the least challenging subjects, with no children without disabilities finding them difficult. Social Science is moderately challenging, with 1 child finding it difficult.
English and Math are the most challenging subjects. A significant number of children, 20 and 12 respectively, find these subjects difficult.	Math is the most challenging subject, with 17 children without disabilities finding it difficult. English is also a significantly challenging subject, with 12 children struggling with it.

<p>Religion is a challenging subject for them, with 12 children struggling with it.</p> <p>In summary, English and Math are the most difficult subjects for children with disabilities, while Bangla and Social Science pose the least challenges.</p>	<p>In summary, Math and English are the most difficult subjects for children without disabilities, while Bangla and Religion pose no challenges.</p>
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Awareness of Parental Contact Information: Knowing the contact numbers and/or address of parents/home is one of the crucial aspects for the safety and well-being of children. In emergencies, having immediate access to a parent’s contact information has the potential for prompt communication. However, only 21 children with disabilities knew the contact number of one of their parents, boys significantly outnumbering girls with disabilities.

Children without disabilities however, demonstrate significantly higher success in recalling their parents' mobile numbers, with girls and boys showing similar levels of proficiency. This parity among non-disabled children indicates that the gender disparity observed in children with disabilities does not apply to their peers without disabilities. Parents of girls with disabilities may require additional motivation and support to effectively care for their daughters. Enhancing resources and encouragement can empower families to provide better care and advocate for their children’s needs.

Aspirations of Children with and Without Disabilities: A Comparative Analysis: A child with disabilities expressed a desire for self-dependency, a choice not made by any children without disabilities. Teaching is an aspiration for eight children with disabilities, slightly surpassing the seven children without disabilities who share this goal. In the "Don't know" category, both groups show uncertainty about their future, but the number is higher among children with disabilities (7) compared to children without disabilities (3). A higher number of children without disabilities aspire to be doctors compared to their peers with disabilities. Among children with disabilities, there is a notable interest in becoming drivers, while no children without disabilities selected this option. Three children with disabilities aim to join the police force, compared to two children without disabilities. Lastly, one child with disabilities expressed an interest in becoming a mechanic, with no children without disabilities pursuing this path. This diversity in aspirations may indicate differing levels of familial and societal expectations, as well as the support systems available to children with disabilities.

Primary Sources of Support for Children with and Without Disabilities: The data reveals the primary sources of support for children with and without disabilities. Mothers and teachers are the primary sources of support for both groups. Fathers and other family members are less commonly selected. This underscores the pivotal role mothers and teachers play in the support systems of children with disabilities. However, there are notable exceptions. One father, for example, came to school every day to support his son’s participation and education, as he has a severe attention disorder. Additionally, a teacher, who is also a mother of a child with disabilities, not only ensured her own child’s inclusion but also actively assisted other families in creating a welcoming and disability-friendly school environment.

Among children with disabilities, the majority identified their mother as the first point of contact for support. A similar trend is observed among children without disabilities, who also predominantly named

their mother as their main source of support. Fathers were rarely mentioned, with very few children with disabilities selecting their father, and none among the children without disabilities. Mothers and teachers emerge as key support figures for both groups.

	Mother	Father	Both parents	Grand mother	Aunt	Teacher
No. of Children with disabilities covered	23	1	4	3	0	8
No. of Children without disabilities covered	18	0	5	1	0	7
Total	41	1	9	4	0	15

Perceptions of Safety Among Children with and Without Disabilities: Home is overwhelmingly perceived as the safest place for most children, regardless of their disability status. While both groups also view school as a safe environment, this is not as strong as that of their home. This analysis emphasizes the crucial role of the home and immediate family, especially mothers, in fostering a sense of security for children. This also highlights the need of fathers enhancing their involvement in supporting their children, regardless of disability status.

Conclusion and recommendations

Tailored interventions and educational strategies are essential for supporting these children in reaching their full potential. Comprehensive disability assessments, educational programs that promote peer support within inclusive classrooms, and nurturing inclusive environments are crucial. These elements foster an inclusive society where every child, regardless of ability, can thrive and learn from one another. While children without disabilities often choose their own seating when possible, children with disabilities may require teacher intervention to ensure that their peers understand the importance of providing them with the necessary space.

The findings emphasize the importance of focused educational interventions to support both children with and without disabilities, with particular attention to essential life skills such as recalling important information like their parent's phone number. This underscores the necessity of tailored reminder devices, repeated practice, and routine integration to enhance recall and ensure safety and communication abilities.

Furthermore, creating a supportive school environment that fosters social interactions, recreational activities, and educational growth is crucial. This involves helping teachers to not only focus on academic progress but also improve students' life skills. While it is not mandatory for children with disabilities to sit in the front row, seating arrangements should be tailored to meet their individual needs, ensuring they can access the curriculum effectively.

1. **Focused Educational Interventions:** Develop and implement educational programs that emphasize essential life skills, such as remembering important personal information. These programs should include tailored reminder devices, repeated practice sessions, and routine integration.

2. **Inclusive School Environment:** Ensure that schools create an environment conducive to social interactions, recreational activities, and educational growth. This includes training teachers to support the holistic development of students.
3. **Individualized Seating Arrangements:** Tailor classroom seating arrangements to the specific needs of children with disabilities. This will help ensure that all students can effectively access the curriculum. Motivate fellow students to support this intervention for children with disabilities.
4. **Support for Educational Strategies:** Develop and implement strategies that help children with disabilities achieve language milestones, particularly in responding to direct questions, thereby enhancing their communication skills.
5. **Arrange comprehensive disability and educational assessment and potential for children, particularly children with disabilities.**

