Types of teacher training

Pre-service Training

Pre-service training takes place before a teacher starts their job. This refers to student teachers who will become teachers after completing their pre-service training.

Pre-service training could involve a component on inclusive education, or how to respond to special educational needs in the classroom.

The goal of pre-service training is to help the student teacher develop an understanding of the role of the teacher, and to gain the necessary skills and competences to become a teacher.

When organising a component on inclusive education in pre-service training, different activities like school visits, classroom observation activities and practical assignments based on the content of the training will need to be arranged.

Ideally, inclusive education should not be understood as a component, but as a fundamental principle of teaching all content. The whole pre-service curriculum should therefore be based on responding to diversity by using inclusive practices.

![It is imperative that links with the authorities and existing teacher training colleges are made when developing and organising training, and that any manuals which are created are planned for and accepted by the Ministry of Education. Advocacy with the highest levels of the education authorities is therefore crucial for ensuring that inclusive education is an over-arching principle in teacher training initiatives.](image)

In-service Training

We talk about in-service training when we organise training for teachers who are already working as teachers or qualified as teachers. This training can take many forms, for example:

- two-week intensive training
- weekly / monthly sessions over a period of time
- several intensive training sessions during a longer period (e.g. 2 weeks per year over 3 years).

In-service training can be organised for a group of teachers from different schools, or can be organised for a whole team of teachers in one school (whole-school approach).
Whole-school approach | Teachers from different schools
--- | ---
**Pros**
- All participants work together in the same institution to develop inclusive practices.
- The whole staff from one school has the same training.
- The training can be tailored to meet the schools specific needs and tackle current challenges.
- Usually all teachers involved.
- Cost-effective, since several schools can be reached at once.
- More exchange of experiences between different schools.
- Less disruption to school schedule.

**Cons**
- Exchange stays inside one school, no networking with other schools or fresh ideas.
- Usually short week-day sessions or on weekends to avoid disruption to the school schedule.
- Knowledge gained through training is often not transferred to colleagues.
- Only a few teachers from one school receive training.

To support teachers from different schools in transferring skills acquired during training, a ‘training-of-trainers’ module could be added. This would give the teachers the skills, knowledge and tools needed to pass on what they have learned to their colleagues.

Providing a budget and motivating the teachers for school level trainings and entering into a contract with the school and trainer are just some ideas that can ensure that the skills and knowledge gained are transferred to colleagues when they return to their respective schools.

**Distance learning/ self study**

Distance learning can be very useful for teachers who are unable to attend training events due to problems with scheduling or long-distance travel. The time flexibility of self-study makes it a good way of training for working adults.

In distance learning and self study courses, the teacher and learner are separated by time and space. A variety of media can be used to compensate for this separation and facilitate communication between the teacher and learner e.g. DVDs, podcasts, online lectures such as those provided by EENET and interactive forums.
Distance learning can be as effective as traditional forms of training if:
- the methods used are appropriate,
- there is regular teacher-learner interaction, and
- teachers provide their learners with suitable and timely feedback.

Example:

In Uganda, UNISE (Ugandan National Institute of Special Education), in collaboration with Kyambogo University, provides distance learning on special needs and inclusive education.

The University of Oslo, Norway, in collaboration with UNISE and KISE (Kenya Institute of Special Education), has developed a flexible online teacher education programme called ‘Teachers for All’. This programme can be followed by the internet, or can be provided on DVD.

http://www.intermedia.uio.no/teachersforallmethodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Pre-service training</th>
<th>In-service training</th>
<th>Distance learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students acquire understanding, skills and competences on inclusive education from the beginning of their teaching career.</td>
<td>Teachers can almost immediately put into practice what they have learned in the training.</td>
<td>Learners are in control of their own learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teaching approaches of students can be influenced before they become entrenched.</td>
<td>Participants have a lot of experiences that the trainer can build on.</td>
<td>The course is flexible in time, less expensive to support and not constrained by location.</td>
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<td>Possibly, less resistance to trying different ideas.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Pre-service training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The trainees have limited experiences on which to build.</td>
<td>There might be resistance as teachers have become accustomed to the methods they are already using.</td>
<td>Might require electronic media and/or the Internet, which is not always available.</td>
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<td>It is more difficult to monitor trainees after the course to see how they put into practice what they learned.</td>
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<td>If the Internet is used, learners need basic computer skills</td>
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<td>They might face lack of co-operation once they start teaching, as other teachers/colleagues</td>
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<td>Learners get less immediate feedback.</td>
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<td>There are fewer</td>
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might not understand these new, active approaches.

exchanges and less interaction between learners, as they often study alone.
- The lack of human contact with the trainer might impact negatively on the motivation of the learners.

Who is involved?

If we want teacher training to be sustainable, it should be carried out in collaboration with those partners and stakeholders who are responsible for teacher training in the country where you work. Ideally, teacher training should be organised by teacher training centres. The role of Handicap International or any other organisation should be to support and to advise regarding the teacher training development process. All partners who are involved in the development of the teacher training process should share a common understanding of inclusive education right from the beginning. It is important to check that this understanding of inclusive education forms the cornerstone of the process of developing teacher training, as this will influence the content of the teacher training, and how training will be put in practice by teachers.

These partners (individuals and groups) might need support to take up their role in the development of inclusive education, but they will also already have a lot to offer. They might have experiences around disability and/or inclusive education and they can act as a useful resource in teacher training. Their involvement might also be very important if we want inclusive teacher training to be recognised by the Ministry of Education and become part of normal teaching practice.

Here follows a list of partners that might or should be involved in the development of teacher training:
- Institutes for higher education and universities
- Teacher training colleges
- National curriculum development department
- Ministry of Education
- District education office (inspectors)
- School directors
- Head teachers
- Teachers
- Pupils
- Other NGO’s working on inclusive education
Most of these partners were most likely identified when the inclusive education project was developed. Since their specific roles in teacher training might not have been defined, it is important to clarify this during the situation analysis (see section 2 – preliminary activities).

### Involvement of special schools

It is very important to work together with special schools in your nearby area. Very often, they have a lot of experience in the education of children with disabilities. Even though we are talking about inclusive education, try to give special schools a role in this process. The teachers from special schools can contribute to training and can advise teachers in primary schools on specific issues they might encounter in the classroom. Teachers from special schools have a lot of experience, so you need to use them.

**Example:**

HI DRC supported two special schools called “Bon Départ” and “Kikesa centre” to become referral centres in the field of Inclusive Education in Kinshasa. Staff members participated in several training sessions, and are now training teachers themselves.