



## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: UNESCO AND IFLA GUIDELINES

**Sanjam Upadhyay, Ph. D.**

Assistant Professor, Khalsa College of Education, Amritsar. [sanjamupadhyay@gmail.com](mailto:sanjamupadhyay@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*In 1994 UNESCO gave guidelines to assist countries in strengthening the focus on inclusion in their strategies and plans for education, to introduce the broadened concept of inclusive education and to highlight the areas that need particular attention to promote inclusive education and strengthen policy development. IFLA and UNESCO have same motive of providing inclusive education. This paper highlights equitable quality education for people with disability. Access to information is important; and since the library plays a key role in providing this access, there is a need to develop policies and put structures in place cater to the needs special children. A library is fundamentally an organized set of resources, which include human services as well as the entire spectrum of media (e.g., text, video, and hypermedia). Libraries have physical components such as space, equipments, and storage media. This paper presents IFLA and UNESCO's Policies and Strategies, Inclusive Design and Services for special children.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Education, Information Centers, UNESCO, IFLA,*



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“When learning is purposeful , creativity blossoms , when creativity blossoms, thinking emanates, when thinking enamates, knowledge is fully lit, when knowledge is fully lit ,economy flourishes “

**Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years the concept of inclusive education has evolved and expanded towards the concept of the right to high-quality education for all learners, regardless of any individual or social characteristic. This right is multi-faceted, includes both individual and collective dimensions of different components of inclusive education.

Inclusive education is defined as learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class. color, gender, disability, sexual preference, learning style and language (NCSNET, 1997, SOUTH AFRICA).

In recent years the thought of inclusive education has evolved and enlarged towards the thought of high-quality education for all learners, in spite of any individual or social characteristic. This right is multi-faceted, includes each individual and collective dimension and builds on the mix of various parts of inclusive education. Inclusive education supports the right to equal access opportunities to education. Inclusive education is a method towards equal learning opportunities implementing the right to education to all. Inclusive education could be seen as a method that takes into account social, cultural and learning diversities and builds on factors that facilitate to spot and remove barriers to learning and participation in education.

### **UN GUIDELINES**

**Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** stipulate that countries must take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities access an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live.

**The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** is an ambitious, inspirational and universal agenda to wipe out poverty through sustainable development by 2030. When it adopted the new Agenda in September 2015, the international community recognized that education was essential for the success of all 17 of its goals. Ambitions for education are essentially captured in **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (four) which** aims to “**ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**”.

### **UNESCO GUIDELINES**

Inclusive education therefore means attributing learners’ difficulties to schools’ inability to compensate for different starting positions, rather than to individual weaknesses (UNESCO, 1994).

1. **UNESCO encourages the development and implementation** of inclusive education policies, programmes and practices to ensure equal education opportunities for persons with disabilities.
2. **UNESCO promotes effective practices and knowledge sharing** through various platforms, such as the website, developed in cooperation with the European

Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education and the online Knowledge Community.

3. **UNESCO supports countries in their efforts towards the inclusion** of children with diverse learning challenges and children with disabilities in education through the development of guidelines and tools, teacher training and the use of ICTs in education.
4. **UNESCO** is committed to promote **lifelong learning** for indigenous peoples and ensure their full inclusion in education.

### **IFLA GUIDELINES**

IFLA (2014) supports the notion that, “Access to information is a fundamental human right that can break the cycle of poverty and support sustainable development”. It is important to note that IFLA is the “Global Voice” for libraries and thus the LIS profession. It has proven beyond doubts, through its activities and partnership activities with funding bodies like the United Nations Organizations, that the LIS profession has an indispensable role to play in enhancing the development of the human society. It is based on these that the following recommendations have been proffered:

In many countries all over the world, access for patrons with disabilities to use libraries is not yet available or even expected. In order to provide equal opportunities for all library users, it is necessary to look with the eyes of these patron groups at the physical condition of library buildings, as well as library services and programs. This checklist – developed by the IFLA Standing Committee of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) – is designed as a practical tool for all types of libraries (public, academic, school, special). The aims of such libraries are:

- 1) To assess existing levels of accessibility to buildings, services, materials and programs.
- 2) To enhance accessibility where needed.

To make this change accessible to all, change of staff attitude and thinking is essential. IFLA recommend that representatives from disability groups and support organizations be included in the evaluation process of information centers. Input from these individuals, along with the checklist findings, will provide much useful information for immediate enhancement measures, as well as future planning.

#### **IFLA GUIDELINES FOR INFORMATION CENTERS:**

- Everybody should be able to use the libraries of a country. The surroundings of the library, the entrance, restrooms, stairs, elevators and special rooms should be accessible for persons with different kinds of disabilities.
- All parts of the library should be accessible. The space should be logically arranged with clear signs and a floor plan posted close to the entrance. Service desks should be located close to the entrance. Clear and easy-to-read signs with pictograms, visible and audible fire alarms should be installed.
- All library materials should ideally be accessible for all users. There are various ways to achieve this goal. Libraries should acquire talking books, video/DVD books with sub-titles and/or sign language, **Braille books**, accessible e-books, easy-to-read books or other non-print materials. Library staff should know how to borrow such materials from other libraries, including the National Library for the Blind.
- Computers for public use should be accessible. Fast and reliable technical support should be available for both computers and adaptive equipments. Staff should be trained to provide on-site support. National and local disability advocacy and support organizations can provide information on how to make computers accessible.
- Making the library accessible for persons with disabilities includes the provision of services and programs that meet the needs of these user groups. Communication between library staff and patrons should be clear and concise.

#### **CONCLUSION**

United nation's sustainable development's agenda four and sixteen also advocate the inclusive education. The objectives of these Guidelines are to assist countries in strengthening the focus on inclusion in their strategies and plans for education, to introduce the broadened concept of inclusive education and to highlight the areas that need particular attention to promote inclusive education and strengthen policy development. IFLA and UNESCO has same motive of providing education and information to all

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