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Long-term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER) Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (PULSE)

Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) Nepal Interim Report

LASER PULSE — Delivering Practical, Research-Driven Solutions to Global Development Challenges

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

CEHRD	Center for Education and Human Resource Department
CFM	Child Functioning Model
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Program
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERO	Education Review Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoN	Government of Nepal
HI	Humanity & Inclusion (also Handicap International)
HR	Human Resource
HQ	Headquarters
IDP	Inclusive Development Partners
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
KU	Kathmandu University
LASER PULSE	Long-Term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine
MCSIE	Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Youth, and Technology
NAWB	Nepal Association for the Welfare of the Blind
NEGRP	National Early Grade Reading Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSL	Nepali Sign Language
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
R4A	Reading for All
RC	Resource Classroom
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SOW	Statement of Work
TV	Technical Verification
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WEI	World Education, Inc.

Executive Summary

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has demonstrated a vested commitment to supporting education for all learners globally, including learners with disabilities. This commitment is reflected in the 2018 USAID Education Policy (USAID, 2018b) and 2019–2023 Strategy on International Basic Education (USAID, 2018a). In line with this commitment, USAID has funded projects and programs that support early grade learning for students with and without disabilities, such as those in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. It is against this backdrop that the Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) aims to generate evidence and lessons learned around the implementation of inclusive early grade reading (EGR) programs. This report describes findings to date in the case of Nepal and spans information collected February 2020–July 2021. The project in Nepal is on-going, therefore all findings are interim and will be supplemented with additional information including household data, school-level data, and further review of project activities in subsequent reports. Household data and school-level data was not included in this report due to postponement of activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequent reports will cover data from August 2021 through December 2022 when the project closes to produce final findings.

Evaluation Background and Purpose

USAID is partnering with Inclusive Development Partners (IDP), through the Long-Term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (LASER PULSE) mechanism led by Purdue University, to conduct a three-and-a-half-year evaluation of three USAID inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. This evaluation effort, referred to as MCSIE, seeks to derive lessons about what is working, for whom, and in what context to sustainably advance teaching and learning outcomes for children with disabilities in the target countries.

In the case of Nepal, IDP has collaborated with the Disability Research Center within Kathmandu University (KU) to evaluate inclusive education efforts within the Reading for All (R4A) Nepal project implemented by Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and its sub-partner World Education, Inc. (WEI). R4A focuses on improving reading outcomes among children with disabilities in grades 1–3 and is implemented in 10 districts across Nepal. Since the program's inception in 2018, activities have included screening children to identify (and subsequently support) those with disabilities or functional limitations; building the capacity of Government of Nepal (GoN) officers and local organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) staff to support inclusive education; training school administrators and teachers in inclusive instructional approaches for reading; and developing and pretesting adapted versions of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) for learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, are blind or have low vision, or have intellectual disability.

Methodology

This report is an interim snapshot of R4A's activities related to inclusive education through July 2021, as project activities are ongoing. IDP is using a process-evaluation design to develop individual case studies of the inclusive education system in each country and to show how the USAID-funded interventions have affected the respective systems. Five key themes provide a framework for the study and have helped to structure this report: (1) the process of setting up and implementing the project, (2) the screening and identification of learners with disabilities, (3) the teacher training models supporting learners with disabilities, (4) the inclusive instructional models to improve reading outcomes, and (5) the project's unintended consequences.

To shed light on the core themes and findings in Nepal, IDP conducted an extensive review of 120 project documents, surveyed 150 project and partner staff members, and, in collaboration with KU, interviewed 40 stakeholders, including project staff, government employees, and representatives of OPDs. IDP performed data analysis through qualitative deductive coding, evaluative rubrics and checklists, and descriptive analyses. This approach was subject to limitations, including a largely remote data collection process due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a related inability to triangulate findings with in-person, school-based observations or interviews at the time of this report.

In April 2022, COVID-19 case levels dropped sufficiently to allow a three-person IDP team from the US to travel to Nepal. A large part of the trip's purpose was to conduct a series of meetings to discuss key elements of the interim report findings. From April 3-13, with support from local staff member Padam Pariyar as well as from colleagues at Kathmandu University, the IDP team met with a series of stakeholders. This included R4A personnel and national resource partners in Kathmandu as well project personnel, OPD partners, and local government officials in four implementation districts (Banke, Bhaktapur, Kaski, and Surkhet). The IDP team also visited schools and spoke with administrators, teachers, and parents. Context and findings from this trip are included in this report.

Answering the Evaluation Questions

For each of the study's five themes, USAID generated an evaluation question (EQ) to inform the project of both individual country programs as well as programming across the three countries. As the project is on-going, this is an interim report and IDP has not drawn final conclusions. Initial responses to the EQs are based on data collected until July 2021.

1. **Process:** What worked well/poorly in the process of setting up an efficient, effective, and sustainable system to focus on improving the quality of education for learners with disabilities?

   Answer:[1] R4A made concerted efforts to ensure sustainability of the project, including

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[1] Answers for these evaluation questions are based on information collected until July 2021 and reviewed

embedding R4A staff in the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) and building OPD and non-governmental organization (NGO) capacity. Having large percentages of staff with disabilities as well as staff with close personal connections with persons with disabilities are strong and innovative elements of the project. The evaluation found that although staff had disability experience, many individuals had limited background in the technical area of inclusive education. In the early stages of the project, R4A used external consultants' and HI's headquarter (HQ) staff's technical guidance and expertise in literacy instruction and screening to supplement knowledge gaps and used training and field visits to develop OPD-partner capacity.

2. **Identification:** What methods worked best to identify learners with disabilities?

   Answer: R4A's efforts to include OPDs and local government within the referral process is an innovative strength of the project in many ways. The solicitation required using the Washington Group Questions as an early detection tool, building on HI's pilot of the tool in 2017.[2] R4A made concerted efforts to pilot the child functioning model (CFM) for classroom use with parents and, in many cases teachers, serving as respondents, and these results provide valuable information on attempts to adapt the CFM. During the IDP team's trip to Nepal, substantial positive feedback was provided from a range of stakeholders who described firsthand the ways that R4A's screening activities had significantly raised awareness and changed behavior among school and government personnel, in particular, and facilitated needed supports to children. Data from the project's technical verification (TV) of the screening, however, showed the CFM correctly flagged[3] only 27.10% of children who had functional limitations in the domains of vision, hearing, mobility, and communication and did not identify 72.90% of children who had functional limitations. Secondary analysis of the TV report and data showed several analysis errors. Given several methodological concerns with the first TV process, R4A initiated another round of TV, to take place in May 2022. With the results from this second TV effort pending, this EQ cannot be fully answered at the time of this report.

3. **Training:** What training model(s) worked best to provide teachers with the resources and support they need to best meet the needs of learners with disabilities?

   Answer: R4A's training plans were developed with technical support from an international expert in early grade literacy and adult-learning approaches and in collaboration with the Inclusive Education section of the Center for Education and Human Resource Development

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with partners for accuracy, to the extent possible, in April 2022; once the project is completed and all data is collected and analyzed, answers may change in the final report.

[2] Please note that evaluators do not have access to how this tool was used or the original pilot data to assess accuracy.

[3] The overall sum was calculated using the domains of vision, hearing, mobility, and communication only.

(CEHRD), within the MoEST. The project introduced new pedagogies and inclusive approaches through the teacher training activity by using lively and interactive modes of instruction, such as case examples, quizzes, and opportunities for group discussion, that participants viewed as effective. R4A conducted training in collaboration with OPDs, whose staff served as facilitators at times and provided logistical support. Data collected from participants afterward indicated that teachers were already using some of the inclusive education approaches taught during the training (e.g., group work), and they were encouraged to expand their repertoires. Materials provided instruction on disability and on literacy, but a clear and continuous link between inclusive pedagogy[4] and literacy concepts was not observed. Training provided participants with opportunities to discuss their perceptions of disability and, while teachers reported feeling more prepared to teach students with physical disabilities, attitudes toward educating learners with intellectual disability did not shift as much.

4. **Instruction:** What instructional models worked best to improve classroom instruction and reading outcomes among learners with disabilities?

   Answer: There was no available data at the time of this report to provide preliminary findings in relation to this EQ, because implementation in schools was on hold due to COVID-19. School-based data that is to be collected by the MCSIE team, as well as learning assessment data to be collected by R4A, will inform the answer to this EQ in subsequent reporting. Therefore, in this report the MCSIE team focused its attention on R4A's efforts to prepare for learning assessments via the EGRA. R4A's approach to assessing learners with disabilities was based on adapting the EGRA, an international normed and validated assessment instrument for reading. In adapting the EGRA, R4A included input from diverse stakeholders, learnings from other organizations' adaptation efforts, and informal field testing during the tool design phase. Although the pretest sample was not large enough to establish the validity and reliability of the adapted instruments, given the project's plans to track progress among the same sample of learners from baseline to endline, the pretesting was likely sufficient to work out the main issues in the instrument and implementation. R4A reports showed that teachers with hearing and vision disabilities were engaged to conduct the adapted EGRAs during the pretest. However, the half-day training for these teachers on how to conduct the pretest was not accessible, resulting in these teachers struggling to understand the training content and, thus, being inadequately prepared to implement the instruments.

5. **Unintended consequences:** Were there any unintended consequences of the activity? What were they?

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[4] Inclusive pedagogy can be defined as "how teachers respond to individual differences, their *choices* about group work, and *how* they utilize specialist knowledge that differentiates inclusive practice from other pedagogical approaches and frames teachers as thinkers and decision-makers." (Florian & Graham 2014, p. 466)

Answer: As the project is ongoing, assessing the unintended consequences—both negative and positive—is difficult at this time. However, based on the initial findings, potential unintended consequences may exist in areas of screening, OPD engagement and instructional methods and will be explored in more detail at later stages of the MCSIE evaluation.

Recommendations

Inclusive education is a new area for many donors and implementing partners, and findings from this report help build the evidence base by highlighting lessons learned and programmatic aspects that should be replicated in the future. Initial recommendations based on the interim findings for each evaluation question are listed below in two parts: short-term actionable recommendations that can be considered by USAID and Reading for All, and future programming recommendations that can be considered broadly by USAID when planning and designing upcoming solicitations.

1. **Process**

   Short-term actionable recommendations:
   1. Increase the utilization of content experts in the field of inclusive education to support all areas of programming.
   2. Develop additional MEL indicators that go beyond disability disaggregation of data but collect other important information on inclusive education.

   Future programming recommendations:
   1. Given that inclusive education is an emerging area for many donors, donors may want to undertake an extensive situational analysis prior to designing and procuring a new program in a country.
   2. Consider embedding disability in general reading programs or seek to overlap the timelines of activities that are funded with the intention of collaboration.
   3. Promote and allow for additional time to pilot tools, resources, and approaches before scale up, and consider possible government delays in necessary approvals.
   4. Plan for longer start-up times to allow more extensive and robust professional development and to review partners' capacity in the area of inclusive education.
   5. To promote meaningful OPD engagement, allow for budget and time to build these valuable organizations' capacity.

2. **Identification**

   Short-term actionable recommendations:
   1. Expand OPD engagement as trainers in all future activity trainings.
   2. Conduct additional technical verification of the CFM as a screening tool to determine validity.
   3. Ensure parental consent forms and ethics protocols are followed for all screening materials and handouts.

4. Find opportunities to share lessons learned on screening with global platforms to fill the evidence gap.

Future programming recommendations:
1. Allow substantial time and budget to pilot and validate screening tools, including those that are validated for vision and hearing.
2. Continue discussions to determine the best way to obtain MEL data on learning outcomes in environments where comprehensive screening and evaluations are not yet taking place.

3. **Training**
Short-term actionable recommendations:
1. Explicitly highlight successful cases of including learners with intellectual disability in future trainings.
2. Consider a repository of inclusive education information that could aid teachers by providing additional knowledge and resources for them to use on their own.
3. Provide participants with training materials prior to or during the training (including remote trainings) to help facilitate learning and engagement.

Future programming recommendations:
1. Embed principles of inclusion, including USAID's adopted UDL approach, throughout all training materials.

4. **Instructional Approaches**
Short-term actionable recommendations:
1. Ensure disability accommodations are provided for all trainings and gatherings so that persons with disabilities can equitably participate.
2. Use statistical software to produce descriptive and inferential statistics, following EGRA standards for analysis as outlined in the USAID EGRA Toolkit, and conduct psychometric item analysis on the baseline and/or endline dataset(s).

Future programming recommendations:
1. With the support of experts in instrument design and adaptation, assessments should strive to offer accommodations and limit modifications as much as possible in order to provide comparative data.
2. For discussions related to instrument development or revision for children with disabilities, implementers should gather multiple stakeholders who have direct experience or expertise related to *each disability type*.
3. Strive to pilot test the assessment instruments with at least 50 individuals from each disability category to calculate the internal constancy (Cronbach's alpha) and correlations.

4. Provide guidance on how to adapt EGRA for different populations of disabilities using international best practices on test adaptations and accommodations.

5. **Unintended Consequences**

Unintended consequences are still being explored; recommendations are not provided at this stage but will be included within the final report.

The findings to support the evaluation question answers are detailed in the full report. In addition, the report provides short-term actionable recommendations as well as future programming recommendations and next steps for MCSIE research. All findings and recommendations listed in the Executive Summary and detailed in the full report are not final conclusions. Subsequent data analysis and reporting will cover project activities from August 2021 through project close date to produce final findings and recommendations and will be available in a subsequent report.

Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of the MCSIE evaluation's purpose, the R4A program, and this interim report.

Purpose of Evaluation

The U.S. Agency on International Development (USAID) is partnering with Inclusive Development Partners (IDP), through the Long-Term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (LASER PULSE) mechanism led by Purdue University, to conduct a three-and-a-half-year evaluation of three USAID inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. These inclusive education activities represent USAID's most concerted effort to date to build systems to ensure students with disabilities have access to quality education. The Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) seeks to derive lessons about what works, for whom, and in what context to sustainably advance teaching and learning outcomes for children with disabilities in the target countries. Toward this goal, IDP is using a process-evaluation design to develop individual case studies of the inclusive education system in each country and to show how the USAID-funded interventions have affected the respective systems. Five key themes provide a framework for the study: process, identification, training, instruction, and unintended consequences.

USAID and its partners will use the MCSIE evaluation to inform adaptations to its inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal and to plan for new inclusive education programming globally. The data for this report was collected in real time, and the findings are not indicative or predictive of future project activities or final project outcomes. Evaluations of this type should be considered part of an iterative and responsive research methodology that generates knowledge over time. The following report outlines initial evaluation findings from Reading for All (R4A)-Nepal, while cross-national comparisons will be made at MCSIE's endline phase.

Overview of Reading for All Inception and Current Programming

USAID's R4A program was awarded in 2018 to Humanity & Inclusion (HI), in partnership with World Education, Inc. (WEI), and was originally a three-year, $3.88 million activity focused on improving early grade reading (EGR) outcomes among children with disabilities in grades 1–3 in 16 districts of Nepal. Due to delays in gaining approvals and establishing formal partnerships with the Government of Nepal (GoN), aspects of project implementation were behind by a full year and further stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of these setbacks, R4A was granted an extension; the project is now set to end in September 2022. In addition to the extension, the project scope was modified to reduce the number of intervention districts and to add an objective related to remedial instruction and support in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, R4A is a $5.5 million activity being implemented in 3,415 schools in 10 of the 16 National Early Grade

Reading Program (NEGRP) focus districts (Banke, Surkhet, Bhaktapur, Kaski, Mustang, Dhankuta, Parsa, Dang, Kailali, and Dadeldhura). The activity intends to strengthen the GoN's institutional capacity at the federal, provincial, and local levels to implement its constitutional and policy commitments to disability inclusive education. See Annex A for more information on the R4A project.

Purpose of Interim Report

MCSIE is comprised of four phases: (1) inception, (2) initial data collection, (3) midline data collection, and (4) endline data collection.[5] During the inception phase, IDP developed a framework that sought to identify promising practices in inclusive education that are both contextualized and aligned at the local level and to identify where gaps exist in practice. To familiarize IDP, local partners, and stakeholders with MCSIE, IDP conducted an initial inception visit to each of the three countries. Following the inception visit to Nepal (November 9–15, 2019), IDP produced a report presenting core findings and analyses generated from key informant interviews (KIIs) and stakeholder engagements conducted during the visit. These findings informed the development of an evaluation-design matrix, along with a data collection plan, to guide the implementation phases of the evaluation for Nepal.

Since MCSIE's start date began after project implementation commenced in Nepal, IDP was unable to collect data during the start-up and early implementation phases. IDP proposed an interim report as an alternative to an initial or midline report due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which put a halt on all in-country data collection for the MCSIE team and delayed many of R4A's activities. This interim report includes a review of secondary source data from the implementing partner, an implementing partner survey, a pre-post survey of teachers who received training, and the KIIs and focus group discussions (FGDs) with R4A staff, government stakeholders, and organization of persons with disabilities (OPD) and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners. The collection of household data and classroom observation data was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic school closures and country lockdowns. Classroom observation data, comparative case studies, parent interviews, teacher interviews, and school director interviews are all forthcoming and will be included in subsequent reports. In April 2022, three IDP researchers were able to travel to Nepal to work with local teams and conduct a series of meetings with project staff and partners, national and local government officials, school administrators, teachers, and parents to inform the interim report findings.

This interim report seeks to provide a snapshot of the available evidence to answer each of the five areas of inquiry or evaluation as they pertain to the R4A project. The report also serves to shed light on the status of inclusive education programming for relevant stakeholders in Nepal, others within the USAID network, and global stakeholders who would like to learn from the

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[5] These phases are subject to change based on the COVID-19 pandemic and shifts in data collection plans and project end dates.

evidence generated.

Methodology

This methodology section provides a general overview of the methods used to obtain data for the report, including information on data collection and analysis methods, the role of evaluative rubrics and checklists, and the limitations of this study.

General Overview

For each of the study's five themes, USAID generated an evaluative question (EQ) to inform the project of individual country programs as well as programming across the three countries:

1. **Process:** What worked well/poorly in the process of setting up an efficient, effective, and sustainable system to focus on improving the quality of education for learners with disabilities?
2. **Identification:** What methods worked best to identify learners with disabilities?
3. **Training:** What training model(s) worked best to provide teachers with the resources and support they need to best meet the needs of learners with disabilities?
4. **Instruction:** What instructional models worked best to improve classroom instruction and reading outcomes among learners with disabilities?
5. **Unintended consequences:** Were there any unintended consequences of the activity? What were they?

Although not part of the original EQs, this study also examines for whom the programs work or do not work and what specific contextual factors may influence successes or create barriers.

Methods

For this report, IDP and Kathmandu University (KU) conducted KIIs, FGDs, and surveys; observed training events; and reviewed project materials. Primary data was collected and analyzed from August 2020–July 2021. Findings from this data should be considered formative in nature as the project activities are currently ongoing. Below provides a summary of these methods (see more details in Annex A):

● **Key informant interviews.** The MCSIE team conducted 10 KIIs with government stakeholders (7 national and 3 district level) and 9 KIIs with OPD/NGO partners during October 2020. The team also conducted 12 KIIs with R4A staff from April–July 2021. (See Annex B.)

● **Focus group discussions.** The MCSIE team conducted FGDs with a total of 31 individuals. These stakeholders included two FGDs with 10 participants from R4A's October 2020 Screening Training; four FGDs with 17 participants from R4A's February

2021 EGR Instructional Training; and one FGD with four of R4A's inclusive education officers in July 2021. (See Annex C.)

- **Surveys.** IDP developed and sent out an R4A staff survey in September 2020 that was completed by 150 staff across HI and WEI (n=47) and the OPD/NGO partners (n=103). In addition, in August–September 2020, IDP conducted a pre-post survey of teachers who received EGR Instructional Training that was completed by 61 participants. (See Annex D.)

- **Training observation.** IDP local staff observed two screening trainings in August–September 2020 and seven EGR instructional trainings in November–December 2020. All observed trainings were conducted remotely. (See Annex E.)

- **Material review.** In total, the evaluation team reviewed 120 official project documents, including training materials, screening materials, datasets, and project reports. Some documents were brief, such as event participant lists or job descriptions, while others were much longer, such as various reports. Annex F provides a full list of referenced materials and project documents reviewed for this project.

To provide a consistent set of evaluation criteria to help IDP staff draw conclusions, staff used a series of evaluative rubrics to identify strengths and potential gaps in activities related to overall project processes as well as screening, training, and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) activities. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and timing restrictions, IDP was only able to observe a limited number of R4A's virtual training activities related to screening and EGR instruction (some observations were conducted in real time, while others were after-the-fact using recordings provided by R4A) but none of the screening implementation. In addition to training observation data and training recipients' surveys, IDP used evaluative rubrics to initially assess activities based on available data and followed up with questions in KIIs and FGDs to clarify issues or questions that emerged from the survey, rubrics, and/or project reports.

To support local data collection, IDP's international research team conducted remote enumerator training with IDP's local staff member and senior members of the KU team on August 20, 2020, to prepare for stakeholders' KIIs and FGDs. This training introduced MCSIE, familiarized local enumerators with the data collection tools and procedures, provided a how-to training for conducting KIIs and FGDs, reviewed ethical considerations, and provided time for interview skills practice. The training also provided background on the R4A program and its related activities. Additionally, IDP trainers reviewed the data collection protocol specifically for KIIs with members of government and ODPs. To validate report findings, a series of meetings were help with a variety of project stakeholders in April 2022.

Limitations

Because of ongoing project activities and project changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IDP collected all the relevant secondary source information available to the research team to date. The team was only minimally able to collect data in person; thus, data has not been fully triangulated with data collection activities taking place in the future (classroom observations, teacher interviews, in-person training observations, and more).

The MCSIE research team did not consistently receive advanced notice from R4A of observable activities. At times, the MCSIE team had limited ability to conduct in-person or virtual observations due to late or short notice of project activities. When possible, the MCSIE team would quickly maneuver project staff and reprioritize activities to conduct observations. R4A explained that late notices were the result of the project itself changing and adjusting plans up until the event began.

Finally, use of data collected from secondary source materials and post-hoc KIIs has its limits. Although IDP was able to identify programmatic challenges and successes through the secondary source data, the reasons behind programmatic decisions were not always apparent. The purpose of the KIIs and FGDs was to shed light on decision points not always readily apparent in secondary source materials.

Findings

Process

This section provides initial answers with supporting findings to the evaluation question on process as well as short-term actionable and long-term strategic recommendations.

Process Evaluation Answer and Supporting Findings

> **EQ1: What worked well/poorly in the process of setting up an efficient, effective, and sustainable system to focus on improving the quality of education for learners with disabilities?**

Answer: R4A made concerted efforts to ensure sustainability of the project, including embedding R4A staff in the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) and building OPD and non-governmental organization (NGO) capacity. Having large percentages of staff with disabilities as well as staff with close personal connections with persons with disabilities are strong and innovative elements of the project. The evaluation found that although staff had disability experience, many individuals had limited background in the technical area of inclusive education. In the early stages of the project, R4A used external consultants' and HI's headquarter (HQ) staff's technical guidance and expertise in literacy instruction and screening to supplement knowledge gaps and used training and field visits to develop OPD-partner capacity.

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- **The initial solicitation contained many exciting and interesting elements intended to move inclusive education forward in Nepal, including strong partnerships with OPDs. Many KII participants expressed that the timeline and budget were limited for such an ambitious scope of work (SOW).** The solicitation, with an original budget of $3.88 million, requested that activities within 16 districts in Nepal build on the work already undertaken in those districts by USAID's Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP). The solicitation included several areas of intervention, including technical support related to identifying learners with disabilities, strengthening the Education Management Information System (EMIS), piloting a mobile assessment team, strengthening the capacity of the ministries at the central and district levels, providing support for Nepali Sign Language (NSL) and low vision resource classrooms (RCs), and supporting in-service and pre-service training for teachers in general education classrooms. In addition, the implementing partner added several unsolicited activities, such as individualized education plan (IEP) training, informational brochures, and a digital newsletter, which further increased the complexity of the project. USAID also indicated that, in hindsight, a less prescriptive solicitation would have been better suited for an emerging field of practice (inclusive education) and for the timeline and budget.

- **Co-creation with the government helped build government buy-in, but the timing of this process created challenges.** R4A held a two-day co-creation workshop with the GoN and other stakeholders after the budget and SOW were already developed, making it challenging to shift scope or add activities. USAID noted in hindsight that a longer co-creation phase with more involvement from resource partners may have been better.

- **A solicitation requirement was to coordinate closely with USAID's EGRP, implemented by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International, but the different timelines of the two projects have caused there to be limited opportunities for collaboration.** The interactions between the two projects have included early inception meetings and EGRP representation at EGRA instrument-adaptation workshops. In early 2020, EGRP also invited R4A to join a consultation meeting related to teaching and learning materials development. Specifically, EGRP invited R4A to contribute expertise content related to NSL and dyslexia. Additionally, as both projects have staff embedded within the MoEST, there have been opportunities to engage there and in the Thematic Working Group. Where there has been overlap in some districts, R4A and EGRP teams have worked together. KIIs indicated that the lack of more collaboration was due to the two projects' timelines and that the projects were not actively implementing in the same locations at the same time.

- **25.3% of all project staff identify as having a disability, with 64.4% reporting having a close relationship with an individual with a disability.** In addition to the team from HI/WEI, the project employs many staff through its OPD and NGO partners in the districts.

The figures for staff from HI/WEI with a disability or close relationship to someone with a disability are higher (27.7% and 70.2%, respectively) than those reported by their OPD and NGO partners (24.3% and 61.1%, respectively). This provides strong representation of persons with disabilities in the program and is consistent with the international disability motto of "nothing about us without us."

● **42.6% of HI/WEI staff and 64.1% of OPD/NGO staff reported not having any previous experience working on inclusive education for learners with disabilities.** Of HI/WEI staff, half (51% or N=24) had four years or less of experience in inclusive education, and 4.3% (N=2) had more than five years. Of OPD/NGO staff, 29% had four years or less of experience, and 4% had more than five years.

● **HI and WEI received support from international and regional staff and experts for general project management, for screening and identification efforts, and to prepare for teacher training.** HI's HQ staff provided R4A technical and managerial support, particularly in the early phases of the project, including input on project design and document deliverables as well as remote support for screening efforts. HI's regional staff also supported monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL); finance; human resources (HR); and logistics as needed. In addition, these HQ and regional staff supported the development of key R4A deliverables. WEI's country office director reported engaging with the project as needed, including communicating with USAID. WEI also engaged a U.S.-based consultant, who is an academic and expert in EGR and adult learning and has a background in inclusive education, to provide support in developing training materials and direct training to R4A staff on how to train teachers on inclusive EGR instruction. However, the consultant did not remain engaged as R4A rolled out teacher training.

● **During the start-up phase, all project staff received a two-day orientation in inclusive education and a field visit to resource rooms.** The list of topics covered during the orientation included education policies, federal structure, instructional models, IEPs, braille literacy, identification and assessment tools, community mobilization, and gender inclusion.[6] HI and WEI staffs' field visits to segregated schools and RCs during start-up were "conducted as part of capacity-building and to understand the different approaches on inclusive education."

● **KII participants reported high staff turnover, resulting in a need for additional training as new staff are hired.** The project has struggled to retain staff, in part due to better paying opportunities in the education sector. Among OPD and NGO partners, some staff positions were only partially funded by the project, and these organizations have lost staff due to their inability to provide the remaining portion of those salaries. A KII participant

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[6] The MCSIE team requested additional information about the event, such as agendas, materials, and evaluation data, but R4A was unable to share this information.

from R4A noted that orienting and training new staff incurs additional time and expenses that were not planned for in the project.

- **The MEL plan is aligned with USAID requirements and shows that many activities and data related to screening and identification are precursors for a number of R4A's performance indicators, including the goal-level indicators that measure the overall success of the project.** The R4A project design and subsequent performance measures rely heavily on screening and identification. This can potentially present challenges as identifying learners with disabilities is an emerging practice with limited guidance for implementing partners. Because of this, rigorous testing is needed. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted R4A's ability to implement its screening activities on schedule, and activities were significantly delayed. This, in turn, impacted other activities tied to screening data.

- **OPD partners expressed satisfaction with their engagement on the R4A project. Although some OPD and NGO partners expressed they experienced inconsistent communication in the early phases of implementation, the project has quickly adjusted to improve communication and support capacity needs of these organizations.** To facilitate communication during the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project leveraged multiple methods to disseminate information, including newsletters, social media, virtual meetings, presentations, and trainings. In interviews, OPD/NGO partners indicated that, generally, they have a positive, though often nonspecific, sense of the project and that the project's extensive delays in starting implementation work at the local level resulted in inconsistent communication, causing some partners to initially feel unclear about their roles. Project staff noted that the frequency of communication with partners increased during the pandemic, as staff began using Skype and other platforms to touch base informally between scheduled monthly meetings. During the trip, the IDP team was able to meet with four district OPD partners. All representatives present in the meetings were generally very pleased with their engagement on the R4A project and felt their organizations had been strengthened. Aspects of the project they said could be improved included providing more training to OPD staff, allowing OPD staff to use their knowledge and expertise to better contextualize training materials, and finding a way to close the gap in support for families whose child is in need of medical diagnosis after screening.

- **KIIs revealed that embedding consortium staff within GoN offices has been mutually beneficial and has contributed to the project's efforts to build the GoN's capacity related to inclusive education, which may lead to sustainability.** Staff reported that being proximal to GoN counterparts has been extremely valuable and important as it allows easy communication and collaboration and a free and informal exchange of ideas. The GoN stated that it appreciated having R4A staff within the office as the R4A project works with a variety of learners from different disability categories and

supports the broader goal of inclusion for all learners with disabilities regardless of their disability label. R4A noted that this process has taken extensive time and effort but is seen as generally worthwhile.

Process Short-Term Actionable Recommendations

R4A and other implementing partners working in the field of inclusive education should consider the following short-term recommendations regarding process.

1. **Increase the utilization of content experts in the field of inclusive education to support all areas of programming.** Given the emerging nature of inclusive education programming, increased or more consistent involvement and oversight from international, regional, and national experts in this area, in addition to the implementers' HQ staff, may have helped ensure the project used international standards and evidence-based practices.

2. **Develop additional MEL indicators that go beyond disability disaggregation of data but collect other important information on inclusive education.** Because the goal of R4A is to increase reading outcomes for children with disabilities, measuring the goal level indicator is dependent on baseline and endline EGRA data, disaggregated by disability. However, it would have been useful for the program to develop goal and outcome level indicators that were not dependent only on the status of disability, given the limitation that a scaled and validated early screening system in Nepal does not exist and that R4A did not use a validated screening tool at the beginning of the program. There is less opportunity to evaluate and monitor changes related to reading outcomes. The project could consider alternative non-person indicators for measuring program progress and impact, such as increases in inclusive education practices demonstrated by teachers, evidence-based literacy instructional practices, the accessibility of schools, accessible student learning materials, caregiver engagement in supporting literacy at home, and/or the number of referrals made for services. These could be suitable alternatives that supplement or even replace disability disaggregated data (person-specific indicators) as inclusion programming works to determine the best approach to identification.

Process Future Programming Recommendations

The following recommendations could provide opportunities to learn from and strengthen future inclusive education programs. These recommendations may be beneficial to donors, implementing partners, and OPDs working to advocate for inclusive education nationally and internationally.

1. **Given that inclusive education is an emerging area for many donors, donors may want to undertake an extensive situational analysis prior to designing and procuring a new program in a country.** Overall, there is a lack of documentation on

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the situation of learners with disabilities, not only in Nepal but in most low-and middle-income countries. Conducting a robust situational analysis prior to funding can help implementers determine areas of strength to leverage in program design as well as opportunities for growth. This information can also help inform the solicitation and help donors focus on key implementation areas as well as potential challenges, including capacity issues.

2. **Consider embedding disability in general reading programs or seek to overlap the timelines of activities that are funded with the intention of collaboration.** For learners with disabilities to achieve quality education and improved learning outcomes, disability inclusion must be embedded in all education programs, including those focused on educating the general population. Finding opportunities to work with other education implementers to learn from their experiences as well as provide lessons learned on disability inclusive education will only strengthen education for all children.

3. **Continue with a strong co-creation process and allow partners to revise the budget and SOW to integrate USAID's and the government's commitments.** Co-creation can be a strength for many projects as it allows government buy-in and promotes sustainability. For these efforts to be fully realized, donors should schedule co-creation meetings before finalizing budgets or SOWs so input from governments and USAID can be appropriately addressed and included.

4. **Promote and allow for additional time to pilot tools, resources, and approaches before scale up, and consider possible government delays in necessary approvals.** Embedding substantial time at the beginning of the project to pilot any tools, resources, and approaches is important for all projects but especially in inclusive education projects, where there is a lack of evidence-based practices in low-resourced settings. Projects that account for the need to pilot activities and materials, with the associated time and budget and considering potential delays outside of the project's control, will help build the evidence base and strengthen future programming.

5. **Plan for longer start-up times to allow more extensive and robust professional development and to review partners' capacity in the area of inclusive education.** In many countries globally, expertise in inclusive education is developing, and many staff and partners who have worked previously in the field of education and disability rights may have limited exposure to inclusive education pedagogy. Projects should have an extended start-up time to allow partners to adequately train all staff and should bring in outside experts in inclusive education to train staff, as needed. Such staff training should span at least a week to fully explore many of the key issues of inclusive education.

6. **To promote meaningful OPD engagement, allow for budget and time to build these valuable organizations' capacity.** A lesson learned from the R4A project is that additional time and budget are needed to fully engage OPDs as active partners and support capacity development needs. This information will be helpful in the future to ensure that time and budget are allocated to allow this meaningful involvement to

take place. In addition, to make the most of OPD's deep community connections and lived experience, increase engagement with OPD partners in areas of technical content versus just logistical support.

Identification

This section provides initial answers with supporting findings to the evaluation question on identification as well as short-term actionable and long-term strategic recommendations.

Identification Evaluation Answer and Supporting Findings

EQ2: What methods worked best to identify learners with disabilities?

Answer: R4A's efforts to include OPDs and local government within the referral process is an innovative strength of the project in many ways. The solicitation required using the Washington Group Questions as an early detection tool, building on HI's pilot of the tool in 2017.[7] R4A made concerted efforts to pilot the child functioning model (CFM) for classroom use with parents and, in many cases teachers, serving as respondents, and these results provide valuable information on attempts to adapt the CFM. During the IDP team's trip to Nepal, substantial positive feedback was provided from a range of stakeholders who described firsthand the ways that R4A's screening activities had significantly raised awareness and changed behavior among school and government personnel, in particular, and facilitated needed supports to children. Data from the project's technical verification (TV) of the screening, however, showed the CFM correctly flagged[8] only 27.10% of children who had functional limitations in the domains of vision, hearing, mobility, and communication and did not identify 72.90% of children who had functional limitations. Secondary analysis of the TV report and data showed several analysis errors. Given several methodological concerns with the first TV process, R4A initiated another round of TV, to take place in May 2022. With the results from this second TV effort pending, this EQ cannot be fully answered at the time of this report.

- **Prior to screening rollout, the project's partner OPDs conducted the mapping of services for referral.** KIIs revealed that working with OPDs that are familiar with services in their communities is a great way to engage OPD leaders as well as map services. The project has yet to report how OPDs facilitated the referral process for learners who were screened as having a potential disability and their families, and this will be further explored in subsequent reports.

- **The CFM was modified significantly from the original design, and there was not consistent nor validated use of the CFM in practice by teachers.** Although the CFM

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[7] Please note that evaluators do not have access to how this tool was used or the original pilot data to assess accuracy.

[8] The overall sum was calculated using the domains of vision, hearing, mobility, and communication only.

Manual for Interviewers (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2018) directs enumerators to ask questions related to possible functional limitations and suggests that interviewers probe or provide examples, R4A deviated from these recommendations by developing mini assessments to determine if learners have functional limitations. The mini assessments were not based on validated tools or approaches (e.g., the project instructed hearing assessors to put children in a group and call out each child's name to see if the children had appropriate responses).

- **R4A made concerted efforts to validate the CFM tool before scaling its use across the project districts; however, this was not in the original program description nor was a budget allocated for this activity.** R4A did significant work to validate the CFM by conducting a TV activity several months after collecting the initial pilot screening data. This involved engaging medical professionals to conduct evaluations of children flagged and not flagged by the CFM tool during the pilot test. R4A then compared the TV findings with the CFM findings. KIIs indicate that several staff thought this process could have been stronger and more thorough if there had been advance planning and a corresponding budget to ensure verification was done effectively. USAID had planned an independent study for the CFM tool through a third party but decided to cancel this due to the delay in program implementation and reduced timeline. USAID noted that, in hindsight, they should have moved forward with the study and looked at how the program could be adapted within the shortened timeframe. While a year was allocated for testing screening tools, delays in receiving the necessary GoN approvals greatly shortened the available timeframe.

- **Findings from the R4A project pilot and TV yielded important information, but did not provide evidence that the CFM accurately flags functional limitations for children in classrooms in Nepal.** The CFM is an effective census-level tool, but due to new use in classrooms, it's accuracy must be established. Validity was not demonstrated by the original technical verification process conducted by R4A, but due to several methodological challenges encountered, a new technical verification of the screening tool will take place in May 2022. The original TV data shows that a significant proportion of students screened were not actually flagged, which could result in a lack of referrals to services. In addition, the MCSIE team found several statistical errors that led to inaccurate results. New technical verification data will be reviewed in subsequent reports to evaluate validity of the screening tool.

- **There was no alternative plan in place for screening in the event that the CFM could not be used with accuracy.** Due to the design of the project at the solicitation stage, R4A was unable to explore if alternative screening methods (such as vision or hearing screening) might be more accurate or even appropriate to the Nepali context if attempts to validate the tool were unsuccessful.

- **Activities and data related to screening and identification are necessary for many of R4A's performance indicators, including the goal-level indicators that measure the overall success of the project.** The R4A project design and subsequent measures of performance rely heavily on the screening and identification process that is still being developed and honed and needs more research. For example, according to the project design and MEL plan, R4A needs screening data to inform the student sample for the EGRA; the list of students identified as having a disability will form the basis from which the EGRA student sample is drawn. In turn, R4A needs the EGRA data to provide evidence of the project's impact on learning outcomes. The screening data also links to numerous other MEL indicators.

- **Screening data flags individual students and is entered into the EMIS sub-system before the student has received a medical diagnosis.** Entering data related to suspected disability into an EMIS sub-system before diagnosis could place students at risk and merits further investigation. Since screening activities are currently ongoing and medical verification has not taken place yet, evaluators will examine this topic in more depth in subsequent reports. If EMIS, even temporarily, contains student data based only on findings from the screening process, many of which were inaccurate, this may result in students being missed or not receiving adequate services.

- **Despite the concerns about the validity of the CFM tool for use in schools and whether children are being missed, the screening process has, nevertheless, significantly raised awareness and caused positive behavior change among school and government personnel, in particular, and facilitated needed supports to children.** This finding is based on interviews with R4A staff, OPD partners, school personnel, and government officials during IDP's trip to Nepal in April 2022. Numerous individuals expressed the surprise among stakeholders when they saw the screening data, because they had no idea that there may be so many children with functional limitations who are struggling to learn in school as a result. Administrators and the OPD staff who supervise implementation said in KIIs that teachers have become more patient and supportive with students they had previously assumed were badly behaved, administrators and local governments are eager to continue screening and scale to other grades, and OPDs have gained more visibility and legitimacy for their role in facilitating the process and advocating for inclusive education.

Identification Short-Term Actionable Recommendations

R4A and other implementing partners working in the field of inclusive education should consider the following short-term recommendations regarding identification.

1. **Expand OPD engagement as trainers in all future activity trainings.** OPD engagement is a strength of the R4A project, and the project has involved OPDs in the referral process after screening. Engaging OPDs in trainings on screening, as well as all trainings related

to inclusive education, would further strengthen the project.

2. **Conduct additional technical verification of the CFM as a screening tool to determine validity.** As a new technical area, screening is a challenge for many organizations. The CFM is a proven tool for census data collection but has not yet been determined effective within the classroom setting. Given the challenges with validity, R4A should conduct additional technical verification activities. Institutionalizing a tool that might not effectively identify learners with disabilities could result in students with disabilities not receiving appropriate supports and services. R4A should explore alternative screening methods, like vision and hearing screening with validated tools such as the LEA chart and app-based hearing tools. IDP learned, during its visit, that another round of technical verification will take place in May 2022.

3. **Ensure parental consent forms and ethics protocols are followed for all screening materials and handouts.** Although KIIs stated that parental consent was part of the process, these forms and the protocols are not included in the training materials and training guides. In addition, the project should provide clearer guidance to screeners so children are not screened in the presence of other children to allow confidentiality. R4A should develop a consistent process for consent and confidentiality, clearly document it and other ethical concerns, and make these materials available to all staff.

4. **Find opportunities to share lessons learned on screening with global platforms to fill the evidence gap.** R4A is clearly working hard to find ways to support learners with disabilities in Nepal, including addressing screening in a global environment that lacks evidence-based practices. R4A's challenges are due to the gap in the knowledge base and do not reflect their commitment to inclusive education. To support the global practice of inclusive education, R4A should share their experiences, challenges, and lessons learned at a national and international level so others can learn from their experience and adapt programming as needed.

Identification Future Programming Recommendations

The following long-term recommendations could provide opportunities to learn from and strengthen future inclusive education programs. These recommendations may be beneficial to donors, implementing partners, and OPDs working to advocate for inclusive education nationally and internationally.

1. **Allow substantial time and budget to pilot and validate screening tools, including those that are validated for vision and hearing.** R4A made concerted efforts to validate the CFM tool before scaling its use across project districts. However, as validation was not in the original budget, the project faced challenges providing budget and adapting the timeline to allow for this important step. The CFM is not considered a validated screening tool within the classroom setting at this time, so additional time to validate it is needed.

Future programs should allow sufficient time and budget to validate any tools, especially those that are newly adapted. Likewise, even with validated tools such as LEA charts or certain app-based hearing screenings, activities should be piloted in the country before taking them to scale.

2. **Continue discussions to determine the best way to obtain MEL data on learning outcomes in environments where comprehensive screening and evaluations are not yet taking place.** It is important to be able to assess how learners with disabilities are included in USAID projects as well as to assess how those projects impact learning outcomes. However, disaggregating by disability when students with disabilities are not yet appropriately identified poses significant challenges to implementing partners. In addition to adding broader inclusion indicators as recommended under the process sections future programming recommendations, donors, partners and OPDs—at the national and international levels—will need to continue to discuss this important topic and develop evidence-based practices and, ultimately, guidance on how implementers can address this challenge.

Training

This section provides initial answers with supporting findings to the evaluation question on training as well as short-term actionable and long-term strategic recommendations.

Training Evaluation Answer and Supporting Findings

EQ3: What training model(s) worked best to provide teachers with the resources and support they need to best meet the needs of learners with disabilities?

Answer: R4A's training plans were developed with technical support from an international expert in early grade literacy and adult-learning approaches and in collaboration with the Inclusive Education section of the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), within the MoEST. The project introduced new pedagogies and inclusive approaches through the teacher training activity by using lively and interactive modes of instruction, such as case examples, quizzes, and opportunities for group discussion, that participants viewed as effective. R4A conducted training in collaboration with OPDs, whose staff served as facilitators at times and provided logistical support. Data collected from participants afterward indicated that teachers were already using some of the inclusive education approaches taught during the training (e.g., group work), and they were encouraged to expand their repertoires. Materials provided instruction on disability and on literacy, but a clear and continuous link between inclusive pedagogy[9] and

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[9] Inclusive pedagogy can be defined as "how teachers respond to individual differences, their *choices* about group work, and *how* they utilize specialist knowledge that differentiates inclusive practice from other pedagogical approaches and frames teachers as thinkers and decision-makers." (Florian & Graham 2014, p. 466)

![LASER PULSE — Delivering Practical, Research-Driven Solutions to Global Development Challenges]

literacy concepts was not observed. Training provided participants with opportunities to discuss their perceptions of disability and, while teachers reported feeling more prepared to teach students with physical disabilities, attitudes toward educating learners with intellectual disability did not shift as much.

- **86% (6/7) of the instructional trainings MCSIE staff observed were led in collaboration with OPD partners based in the districts where the trainings took place.** WEI and HI staff were the primary facilitators, with OPD staff serving in support roles mostly behind the scenes. However, OPD staff led the training session that introduced disability. During IDP's trip to Nepal in April 2022, OPD staff noted that they could have provided more contextual content for training materials, and also said that including board members and/or staff who are permanent (versus only those hired for the project) could have helped to provide more continuity and smoother transitions when project staff turned over.

- **Training materials are aligned with international definitions of disability and access to inclusive education.** Original training materials covered a wide range of evidence-based literacy and inclusive education domains within a three-day or five-day period. These teacher trainings largely focused on inclusive policy awareness, reading strategies, and inclusive education innovations such as the IEP. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, R4A switched to virtual training and further adjusted the content. Virtual training content included the physical arrangement of the classroom, the seating arrangements in classrooms, the use of learning materials, the discrimination-free environment, the learning environment, teaching activities, materials use, and the reading assessment. Due to delays in procurement, the MCSIE team was unable to review the full resource book for teachers that R4A finalized and provided to training participants.

- **Materials provide instruction on disability and on literacy, but there is not a clear and continuous link between inclusive pedagogy and literacy concepts.** Training materials for literacy instruction do not clearly or directly connect with core concepts of inclusive education strategies, including UDL. While the R4A solicitation was released in 2017, before USAID formally adopted the UDL approach to inclusive education, and therefore UDL was not a requirement, a KII indicated that at least some R4A staff were familiar with USAID's UDL Toolkit prior to the start of teacher training.

- **88% of training participants reported they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the inclusive education EGR training.** A statistically significant portion of participants reported that they felt more prepared to teach students with disabilities or learning difficulties post training. Pre-post survey data showed that participants who reported feeling prepared to a "great extent" increased by 11% (from 30% to 41%). When combining "some extent" and "great extent" participants' feeling of preparedness increased from 71% to 87% (16% increase) as a result of the training. This increase was primarily reported by

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teachers who said they had no close contact with disability in their personal life. As an outcome of the training, teachers noted that they began to treat children with disabilities (if they identified any) with greater "care" rather than assuming they were naughty or troublemakers. This positive attitude change was confirmed through conversations during school visits on the April 2022 trip to Nepal.

- **56% of participants reported that they would implement strategies learned "to a great extent" in their daily work after training but that they may not have access to materials** (16% reported "to some extent" and 23% reported "to limited extent" or "to no extent"). Strategies most often mentioned included allowing extra time for struggling learners; presenting and receiving information in different ways; using preferential seating; using small group work, work in pairs, or other peer engagement; using games, songs, or movement activities; and providing additional lessons for or attention to struggling learners. Other strategies that appeared less feasible for teachers to adopt included the use of images, manipulatives, flashcards, and braille. FGD data indicated that many teachers did not have access to such learning materials due to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which include procurement delays and loss of materials encountered during school closures when schools were used for quarantine centers.

- **Data show a statistically significant[10] improvement in perceptions about the ability of children with physical disabilities to learn to read in regular schools. No statistically significant improvements in perception were found for the ability of children with intellectual disability to learn to read in regular schools.** Survey findings demonstrate that at the start of training, 46% of participants "strongly agreed" that students with physical disabilities can learn to read in regular education settings and only 32% felt the same way about students with intellectual disability. Post training, 66% of participants "strongly agreed" that students with physical disabilities can learn to read in regular education settings (a 20% increase that is statistically significant) and 48% felt the same way about students with intellectual disability (a 16% increase that is not statistically significant), which indicates that more training and support may be necessary to support the inclusion of students with intellectual disability. In three of the four FGDs, teachers discussed that identifying disabilities was an important aspect of their teaching and indicated that children with "simple" disabilities can be easily included, but children with "complex" disabilities require special resource rooms.

- **39% of teachers indicated they require additional training to support learners with disabilities.** Because most teachers' knowledge of and experience with inclusive education is foundational, many training participants expressed a desire for further

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[10] A result from data that is not likely to occur randomly or by chance but is instead likely to be attributable to the teacher training.

training, practice, and support. Due to the shift to virtual trainings, teachers could benefit from practicing the inclusive education techniques learned and receiving feedback on their application of techniques. While R4A has a proposed plan to provide coaching in this area to some training participants (those in Model C), at the time of this report, full rollout of this activity has not occurred and will be examined in subsequent reports.

- **The shift from in-person to virtual training impacted the variety and nature of interactive activities that took place during training and the teachers' access to materials.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, R4A needed to shift training opportunities from in-person to virtual models to adhere to safety protocols. The shift to virtual training shortened sessions and required R4A to prioritize the most important concepts to keep. Feedback from KIIs and FGDs highlighted the loss of interactive components—demonstrations, the ability to practice key concepts being taught, and discussions among participants—as impacting the perceived effectiveness of the training. Although participants shared that the training concepts were useful and good to know, the ability to apply their newfound knowledge and receive feedback would have improved their skills. To an extent, technical limitations, including internet connectivity, the electronic device used (phone, tablet, computer, etc.), and unfamiliarity with online meetings, impacted training participants' engagement.

- **Some training participants struggled to engage with the training because Nepali is not their primary language.** R4A delivered all trainings and materials in Nepali; however, R4A realized that in more remote areas of Nepal teachers were teaching in other local languages. These teachers reported they were mostly able to follow the training presentations but were limited in their ability to interact due to their inability to speak in Nepali. R4A staff noted during a KII that the project team was working to address this issue in future trainings through translated materials and trainers from the local area who speak the teachers' primary language.

As inclusive education is an emerging area within Nepal, ongoing training will build teachers' capacity. Furthermore, a repository of inclusive education information could aid teachers by providing additional knowledge and resources for them to use on their own.

Training Short-Term Actionable Recommendations

R4A and other implementing partners working in the field of inclusive education should consider the following short-term recommendations regarding training.

1. **Explicitly highlight successful cases of including learners with intellectual disability in future trainings.** This could also be coupled with examining prevailing discriminatory views toward this population to combat stigma and stereotypes. When

conducting these trainings, ensure that the inclusion of children with intellectual disability in the general education system is highlighted as a core element, referencing that this is consistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and evidence-based practices.

2. **Consider a repository of inclusive education information that could aid teachers by providing additional knowledge and resources for them to use on their own.** R4A has produced several strong inclusive education guides and supporting materials. Having long-term access to these materials may support new teachers and others working in this field.

3. **Provide participants with training materials prior to or during the training (including remote trainings) to help facilitate learning and engagement.** Although providing physical copies of materials is more challenging for virtual trainings, electronic copies of presentation slides and other resources can be shared online with participants.

Training Future Programming Recommendations

The following long-term recommendations could provide opportunities to learn from and strengthen future inclusive education programs. These recommendations may be beneficial to donors, implementing partners, and OPDs working to advocate for inclusive education nationally and internationally.

1. **Embed inclusive principles, including USAID's adopted UDL approach, throughout all training materials.** Training materials should make an explicit and continuous connection between inclusive pedagogy and literacy instruction. For example, slides on reading approaches should present evidence-based literacy techniques and embed multiple inclusive education approaches to literacy. In addition, the UDL principles (engagement, representation, and expression) should be embedded within literacy components.

Instructional Approaches

This section provides initial answers with supporting findings to the evaluation question on instructional approaches as well as short-term actionable and long-term strategic recommendations.

Instructional Approaches Evaluation Answer and Supporting Findings

EQ4: What instructional models worked best to improve classroom instruction and reading outcomes among learners with disabilities?

Answer: There was no available data at the time of this report to provide preliminary findings in relation to this EQ, because implementation in schools was on hold due to COVID-19. School-based data that is to be collected by the MCSIE team, as well as learning assessment data to be collected by R4A, will inform the answer to this EQ in subsequent reporting. Therefore, in this report the MCSIE team focused its attention on R4A's efforts to prepare for learning assessments via the EGRA. R4A's approach to assessing learners with disabilities was based on adapting the EGRA, an international normed and validated assessment instrument for reading. In adapting the EGRA, R4A included input from diverse stakeholders, learnings from other organizations' adaptation efforts, and informal field testing during the tool design phase. Although the pretest sample was not large enough to establish the validity and reliability of the adapted instruments, given the project's plans to track progress among the same sample of learners from baseline to endline, the pretesting was sufficient to work out the main issues in the instrument and implementation. R4A reports showed that teachers with hearing and vision disabilities were engaged to conduct the adapted EGRAs during the pretest. However, the half-day training for these teachers on how to conduct the pretest was not accessible, resulting in these teachers struggling to understand the training content and, thus, being inadequately prepared to implement the instruments.

- **R4A brought together diverse stakeholders to collaboratively develop adapted EGRAs for students with vision, hearing, and intellectual/cognitive disabilities.** In early 2019, R4A gathered participants at a two-day adaptation workshop to determine the subtask selection and adaptation for R4A's EGRA instruments. In addition to R4A staff, the workshop was attended by 16 individuals, including teachers of students with disabilities (one each from RCs for students who are blind, students who are deaf, and students with intellectual disability), a program officer from the Nepal Association for the Welfare of the Blind (NAWB), and representatives from the inclusive education section of the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) and the Education Review Office (ERO) of the MoEST. The R4A team based the adapted EGRAs on the instrument originally adapted to the Nepali context by the USAID EGRP team.

- **Staff indicated during interviews that before gathering local stakeholders for instrument adaptation, they sought guidance on how to adapt the EGRA for students with disabilities from other organizations and projects that had previously done similar work.** In particular, staff mentioned the sign language EGRA conducted in Morocco by School to School International in 2018. Staff also noted that the MoEST did not ultimately accept or approve some of the R4A team's suggestions, such as adding expressive and receptive vocabulary subtasks, which are pre-reading skills, to collect more data on students' language abilities.

- **Staff indicated that the existing standard EGRA tool in Nepal was lengthy and contained passages and words not appropriate for children with disabilities.** The

group minimized grammar and used simple, familiar words that had only single signs in NSL. In addition, staff revised reading passages to be more factual and less imaginary. Staff indicated they conducted informal field testing in several schools and RCs and made further revisions and refinements to the tools based on some dialect differences in NSL. Compared to a standard EGRA, the adapted EGRAs had fewer words, fewer comprehension questions, and more time available for students to take the assessment. For students with intellectual disability, the comprehension questions were asked throughout the listening or reading passage instead of at the end, as is typically done. Some of the changes could be classified as accommodations but others, such as allowing listening comprehension instead of reading comprehension for learners with intellectual disability, signify a shift in construct and thus result in a modified test.

- **The training for RC teachers who conducted the pretest did not include disability accommodations or adequately prepare these teachers to implement the EGRA.** The RC teachers are people with disabilities; R4A reported that during the half-day training, teachers who have low vision were unable to read the handouts, and teachers who are deaf were not provided an NSL interpreter and struggled to understand the materials. During the pretest itself, R4A reported it became evident that some of the teachers conducting the EGRA did not understand their role, as these teachers tried to teach the students the tasks rather than assess the students' responses.

- **The pretest sample included 40 children (16 who are deaf, 9 who are blind, and 15 who have an intellectual disability), and because of the small sample, the analysis of pretest data lacked the necessary rigor to establish the EGRA instruments' validity and reliability for broader use, though for the purpose of tracking progress among a cohort of children in the project over time, the testing R4A was able to conduct was likely sufficient.** Per EGRA standards, instruments needed more rigorous testing with much larger sample sizes (at least 50 individuals per instrument/disability type) in order to conduct data analysis to establish the instruments' validity and reliability. Despite the inability to conduct validity and reliability testing on the instruments, R4A did use the pretest experience to make further adjustments to the tools based on their observations of children taking the assessment. These included settling on the number of words and the number of comprehension questions and changing the protocol for asking questions of children with intellectual disability.

Instructional Approaches Short-Term Actionable Recommendations

R4A and other implementing partners working in the field of inclusive education should consider the following short-term recommendations regarding instructional approaches.

4. **Ensure disability accommodations are provided for all trainings and gatherings so that persons with disabilities can equitably participate.** All trainings should include accommodations such as sign language interpretation, provide materials in electronic or alternative formats, and take place in physically accessible venues.

5. **Use statistical software to produce descriptive and inferential statistics, following EGRA standards for analysis as outlined in the USAID EGRA Toolkit, and conduct psychometric item analysis on the baseline and/or endline dataset(s).** Because the sample size for the pretest was too small to allow for instrument validity and reliability testing before baseline, and given the challenges experienced by teachers conducting the pretest, it will be important to conduct thorough and rigorous analysis of the baseline and/or endline EGRA dataset(s), including psychometric item analysis, as the sample size allows, before scaling the adapted EGRA instruments beyond the R4A project in Nepal. This may reveal a need for additional revisions to the instruments future rounds of adapted EGRAs take place, for example if an entire subtask is shown during analysis to not be performing as expected. In addition, it may yield valuable information for the broader community of international implementers using EGRA for children with disabilities.

Instructional Approaches Future Programming Recommendations

The following long-term recommendations could provide opportunities to learn from and strengthen future inclusive education programs. These recommendations may be beneficial to donors, implementing partners, and OPDs working to advocate for inclusive education nationally and internationally.

1. **With the support of experts in instrument design and adaptation, assessments should strive to offer accommodations and limit modifications as much as possible in order to provide comparative data.** The important distinction between accommodations and modifications has not yet been well explored when adapting EGRAs for children with various types of disabilities. While it is important to allow everyone to equitably participate in learning assessments such as an EGRA, additional global knowledge and understanding is needed to obtain comparable data between children with and without disabilities. Donors should continue to support guidance development and professional development in this area so that when assessments are adapted for learners with disabilities, they follow international best practice.

2. **For discussions related to instrument development or revision for children with disabilities, implementers should gather multiple stakeholders who have direct experience or expertise related to *each disability type*.** More people (at least two or three stakeholders for each type of disability) may lead to more debate and a longer path to consensus, but the instruments will be better informed and have greater validity. People with disabilities, as well as teachers of students with disabilities, should be included.

3. **Strive to pilot test the assessment instruments with at least 50 individuals from each disability category to calculate the internal constancy (Cronbach's alpha) and correlations.** Achieving the recommended EGRA pilot test sample size of 100–150 non-zero score assessments per instrument is challenging with a subpopulation such as children with disabilities and is a well-known and much discussed dilemma within the

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EGRA community of practice. Nevertheless, conducting the pretest in more RCs and special schools and with more children from each location, including older children with more established reading skills, can provide a large enough sample dataset for testing an instrument's reliability and validity.

4. **Provide guidance on how to adapt EGRA for different populations of disabilities using international best practices on test adaptations and accommodations.** Additional knowledge on how to adapt EGRAs is needed. Using evidence on how children with disabilities learn to read and relevant expertise from the inclusive education field of research and practice can help implementers push for a wider and more tailored range of subtasks and include more content related to language and pre-reading skills. Using the evidence base will be particularly important in contexts where a standard EGRA has been formally adopted by the government for broad use in the education system.

Unintended Consequences

This section provides initial answers with supporting findings to the evaluation question on unintended consequences as well as short-term actionable and long-term strategic recommendations.

Unintended Consequences Evaluation Answer and Supporting Findings

1.   EQ5: Were there any unintended consequences of the activity? What were they?

Answer: As the project is ongoing, assessing the unintended consequences—both negative and positive—is difficult at this time. However, based on the initial findings, potential unintended consequences may exist in areas of screening, OPD engagement and instructional approaches and will be explored in more detail at later stages of the MCSIE evaluation.

Unintended Consequences Next Steps

The potential unintended consequences that have emerged from the data collected to date and will be explored more in future reports. To address certain areas of inquiry, the MCSIE team will collect additional data in the areas of screening, OPD engagement and instructional approaches to further understand the issues.

Screening
● What activities are other actors conducting related to the screening and identification of children with disabilities in Nepal? What worked well? What didn't work well and why? What efforts have been made (if any) to localize screening tools, particularly foreign-source screening tools, to the Nepali culture and context? Who has been involved in this process, in what ways, and what can we learn from them?

- How are these activities feeding into the EMIS, and how are government officials using the EMIS data related to screening activities? What role does the GoN wish to have in supporting the screening and identification of children?

- How has the project connected screening results to medical verification and referral to services?

- What are the results of the second technical verification activity conducted in May 2022?

- How does having data on children's disability status relate to providing inclusive education in mainstream schools?

- What policies, practices, systems, (community) resources, and/or partnerships (improvements thereof) are needed to support these next steps?

OPD Engagement
- What national and local systems are in place to support OPDs in their district/area of focus?

- What visions do OPDs have for their organizations and how they partner with donor-led activities?

- How have OPDs supported the implementing partners' project activities? What technical assistance or capacity building do OPDs feel they need?

- How have OPDs collaborated with schools and teachers to support inclusive education, screening, and identification?

Instructional Approaches

- How do teachers' attitudes towards teaching learners with disabilities change or not change as result of R4A trainings?

- How does the level of training teachers receive across implementation models change instructional practices in the classroom?

Recommendations

The exhibit below provides a summary of both the short-term actionable recommendations as well as the long-term strategic recommendations for the evaluation questions related to process, identification, training, and instructional approaches. As unintended consequences are still being explored, recommendations are not provided at this stage but will be included within the final report.

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Summary of Recommendations

Evaluation Theme	Short-term Actionable Recommendations	Future Programming Recommendations
Process	1. Increase the utilization of content experts in the field of inclusive education to support all areas of programming. 2. Develop additional MEL indicators that go beyond disability disaggregation of data but collect other important information on inclusive education.	1. Given that inclusive education is an emerging area for many donors, donors may want to undertake an extensive situational analysis prior to designing and procuring a new program in a country. 2. Consider embedding disability in general reading programs or seek to overlap the timelines of activities that are funded with the intention of collaboration. 3. Continue with a strong co-creation process and allow partners to revise the budget and SOW to integrate USAID's and the government's commitments. 4. Promote and allow for additional time to pilot tools, resources, and approaches before scale up, and consider possible government delays in necessary approvals. 5. Plan for longer start-up times to allow more extensive and robust professional development and to review partners' capacity in the area of inclusive education.

		6. To promote meaningful OPD engagement, allow for budget and time to build these valuable organizations' capacity
Identification	1. Expand OPD engagement as trainers in all future activity trainings. 2. Conduct additional technical verification of the CFM as a screening tool to determine validity. 3. Ensure parental consent forms and ethics protocols are followed for all screening materials and handouts. 4. Find opportunities to share lessons learned on screening with global platforms to fill the evidence gap.	1. Allow substantial time and budget to pilot and validate screening tools, including those that are validated for vision and hearing. 2. Continue discussions to determine the best way to obtain MEL data on learning outcomes in environments where comprehensive screening and evaluations are not yet taking place.
Training	1. Explicitly highlight successful cases of including learners with intellectual disability in future trainings. 2. Consider a repository of inclusive education information that could aid teachers by providing additional knowledge and resources for them to use on their own 3. Provide participants with training materials prior to or during the training (including remote trainings) to help facilitate learning and engagement.	1. Embed principles of inclusion, including USAID's adopted UDL approach, throughout all training materials.
Instructional	1. Ensure disability accommodations are provided for	1. With the support of experts in instrument design

Approaches	all trainings and gatherings so that persons with disabilities can equitably participate.	and adaptation, assessments should strive to offer accommodations and limit modifications as much as possible in order to provide comparative data.
	2. Use statistical software to produce descriptive and inferential statistics, following EGRA standards for analysis as outlined in the USAID EGRA Toolkit, and conduct psychometric item analysis on the baseline and/or endline dataset(s).	2. For discussions related to instrument development or revision for children with disabilities, implementers should gather multiple stakeholders who have direct experience or expertise related to *each disability type*.
		3. Strive to pilot test the assessment instruments with at least 50 individuals from each disability category to calculate the internal constancy (Cronbach's alpha) and correlations.
		4. Provide guidance on how to adapt EGRA for different populations of disabilities using international best practices on test adaptations and accommodations.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This interim evaluation attempted to answer five evaluation questions broadly focused on process, screening/identification, training, instruction, and consequences. The sections above detailed the interim evaluation findings related to each of the evaluation questions. Inclusive education is a new area for many donors and implementing partners, and findings from this report help build the evidence base by highlighting lessons learned and programmatic aspects that should be replicated in the future.

Many aspects of the project's delivery could not be evaluated by the time of this report because R4A's implementation in schools had not begun in earnest due to the COVD-19 pandemic school closures. Additional data collection methods will be employed in the next steps of this evaluation and will include:

- Observations of R4A training provided to EGRA enumerators, data managers, and RC teachers.
- Two rounds of KIIs with head teachers and teachers in a sample of R4A and control schools in four districts: Banke, Bhaktapur, Kaski, and Surkhet (with possible additional control schools in Lalitpur).
- Two rounds of classroom observations of reading lessons in grades 1 and 2 in the same districts.
- A household survey with families of children with disabilities.
- A final round of KIIs with R4A staff, GoN stakeholders, and OPD-partner staff.
- An examination of project documents received after this interim report, including teaching and learning materials (TLMs) provided to teachers.

Upcoming data collection will particularly focus on elements of R4A implementation that have not begun and are not included in this report, such as school-based support to teachers through coaching and mentoring and follow-up support provided to students and families after screening took place. R4A's implementation plan from the time of this report to the end of the project includes many exciting activities, and the MCSIE team looks forward to learning about these to provide final answers to the evaluation questions and, ultimately, tangible, and useful information to support USAID's ongoing inclusive education programming.

Glossary

access The ability of all students to have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their disability.

accessibility Ensuring that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, such as the education system. These measures shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility. Additionally, accessibility is defined by as the notion that all students should have an unobstructed opportunity to demonstrate their understanding on constructs being measured.

accommodations Necessary and appropriate modification and adaptations where needed in a particular case to ensure people with disabilities access education on an equal basis with others. Accommodation means that some aspect of a system—for example a document or facility—has been adapted or modified to meet the needs of a specific individual or group. Accommodations are patches or fixes applied retroactively to overcome barriers in the environment or system. Accommodation is not the same as accessibility. Whereas accessible systems are designed to be usable by as many people as possible, regardless of disability or assistive technology, accommodations are reactive and may not effectively address everyone's access requirements. While it is important to understand that there will always be a need for accommodation and remediation in inaccessible systems, concepts of accessibility and inclusive design reflect the social model of disability, in which systemic barriers are minimized for the good of all.

availability The available resources and materials in alternative formats that may be beneficial for students with disabilities, such as braille, large print, and digital textbooks.

awareness raising The process of informing and educating stakeholders on the areas related to the project scope including, but not limited to, general disability awareness; screening and identification; support and services for persons with disabilities; inclusive education; and early grade literacy with the intent to influence knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

capacity building Any processes or activities implemented by the project to aid stakeholders in obtaining or improving their skills, knowledge, and resources related to supporting inclusive education principles and practices.

community of practice A group of stakeholders who engage in ongoing interactions related to a shared interest.

context The program's contextual factors (e.g., policies; institutional, linguistic, and socio-economic factors; stakeholder technical and operational capacity) that affect users or deliverers of the program. Context is traditionally understood as factors that are external to and operate

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outside of a program's control but may influence the implementation of the program. Considering the impact of context also increases understanding of how unforeseen and unplanned contingencies can affect program mechanisms, resources, and expected outcomes.

comprehensive evaluation   Often referred to as "Assessment," a comprehensive evaluation is a process conducted by a multidisciplinary team using multiple tools that can provide information about a student's academic strengths, challenges and what accommodations might mitigate those challenges.

contextual suitability The extent to which contextual factors are considered in program design and planning, especially those related to local system and stakeholder technical and operational capacity.

data quality assessment A distinct phase within the data quality life cycle that is used to verify the source, quantity, and impact of any data items that breach pre-defined data quality rules. There are five aspects of data quality—validity, reliability, timeliness, precision, and integrity; IDP has added fairness and psychological testing to ensure issues related to inclusive practices are adequately represented in a data quality review.

deaf education   A system that allows students who are deaf to access information and communicate freely with peers, teachers, and administrators in local sign language while learning the written language of the country.

disability IDP recognizes disability as a social construct that can best be defined through the social model of disability. This model aligns with the CRPD definition of disability, stating "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations, 2006, Art. 2). The two key elements of this definition are impairments and the identification of barriers that may hinder full participation.

The social model of disability lacks specificity about the types of psycho-social, intellectual, or sensory impairments that are most often present with children in schools. To better identify these, IDP draws upon definitions in the United States Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This definitions states "a child with a disability means a child evaluated in accordance with §§300.304 through 300.311 as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as ''emotional disturbance''), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related service." Together, these definitions recognize the social model of

disability and well as the full spectrum of individuals who may benefit from special education services.

disabled persons' organizations (DPOs)   Organizations in which persons with disabilities constitute a majority (over 51%) of the staff, board, and volunteers and where persons with disabilities are represented throughout the leadership of the organization.

early grade reading assessment (EGRA)   A diagnostic instrument designed to quickly assess foundational skills for literacy acquisition of students in the early grades of primary school. An adapted EGRA, in this report, refers to the modifications of diagnostic instruments to accommodate students with vision and hearing disabilities.

effectiveness   The ability of the implementing partner to achieve stated goals or objectives, judged in terms of both output and initial impact. Put simply, effectiveness answers this question: Is the program achieving the goals and objectives it had intended to accomplish?

identification   Applying a phased process using both screening and evaluation techniques to determine if a student would benefit from additional learning support or special education services. This process should be conducted by trained individuals within the classroom setting.

inclusive education   A term that describes a learning environment wherein students with disabilities are educated in age-appropriate, local school classrooms with their peers without disabilities to the fullest extent possible. Inclusive education is not only about "placing" children with disabilities in general education schools; it also concerns education systems themselves. It requires an adaptation of the general education system to ensure education can be accessed by everyone. Specifically, inclusive education means general education systems respond to and support the needs of all children, rather than the creation of separate systems to serve some children. The road towards this kind of change is long, and thus, the suggested approach involves defining the goal of inclusion and finding a strategic pathway that leads toward meeting this goal. Processes and aims may shift as student demographics and teacher capabilities vary, but what is most important is a shared commitment toward the goal.

Note: The definition of inclusive education for learners who are deaf or hard of hearing differs from that of other learners. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) specifies that for education to be inclusive for learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, education must also take into consideration the cultural and linguistic identity of the deaf community. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing need to be educated in a sign language-rich environment where they can communicate with educators and peers in a shared language, such as Nepali Sign Language.

inclusive education system   The policies, programs, and resources dedicated to ensuring children with disabilities are fully included in the general education system as defined by the CRPD. While Article 24 of CRPD proclaims the right to inclusive education for persons with

disabilities as a human rights standard, states may choose how they will achieve this goal, considering local variations and institutional arrangements. The United Nations handbook on executing the CRPD states, "Each State must take measures to realize economic, social, and cultural rights progressively, using the greatest amount of available resources to do so. This obligation, commonly referred to as progressive realization, acknowledges that it often takes time to realize many of these rights fully, for example, when social-security or health-care systems must be created or improved" (United Nations, 2007, p. 19).

in-service training Training or professional development activities that teachers participate in to enhance their knowledge, skills, and competence in their current teaching profession.

integrated education Placing children with disabilities in existing mainstream education without changing the system of education delivery. Integration involves placing a student with a disability in a regular class but without any individualized supports and with a teacher who is unwilling or unable to meet the learning, social, or disability support needs of the child. Many people mistakenly call this "inclusion" but unless the student receives the support needed, it is not.

least dangerous assumption An inclusive approach to educational policy and pedagogy. It holds that in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions should be based on assumptions that, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the student.

monitoring, evaluation, learning (MEL) plan Describes how the project intends to monitor implementation and measure progress.

partnership Formal or informal communities of practice, professional relationships, and working groups which project staff joined or established related to the project scope of work to aid in the implementation of project activities and capacity building.

performance indicator tracking table (PITT) Lists indicators at the sub-IR level with clear dates and targets for baseline data collection as well as data targets for subsequent years and how the data will be disaggregated.

pre-service training Training or professional development activities student teachers participate in to enhance their knowledge, skills, and competence in the teaching profession prior to undertaking any teaching position.

presume competence Belief that students with disabilities have the capacity to think, learn, and understand and that they should be exposed to all core subjects. This approach takes the assumption that students are inherently capable and need the right supports and systems to help them succeed.

segregated education When students with disabilities are educated in separate environments (classes or schools) designed for students with disabilities. Segregation is clearest when students

with disabilities attend a school only for students with disabilities, but it also happens when students are educated in separate classes in a regular school. These are sometimes called resource (or integrated) classes.

strengths-based approach Focuses on what students do well by helping students discover their strengths and intentionally creating opportunities for students to use those strengths in their learning and assessments. This is in contrast to a deficit approach which seeks to mitigate students' learning challenges.

struggling learner A student who struggles to make academic progress due to a variety of factors which may include disability, hunger, absenteeism, poverty, trauma, and more. The term can be used to describe students who are unable to make academic progress using the current instructional approach. Ongoing vision and hearing screening, classroom-based assessment, and responsive teaching pedagogies (such as response to intervention or UDL) are measures used to support struggling learners.

sustainability The ability to maintain program activities and benefits over time. The continuance of activities is planned beyond the termination of the initial support (project funding) used to deliver the program. Specifically, this means having the human, financial, technological, and organizational resources to provide services to meet needs and attain results towards a stated goal on an ongoing basis and requiring the organizational and programmatic infrastructure to carry out core functions independent of individuals or one-time opportunities. Donor related: The act of decreasing dependence on one source of funding and shifting financial support for program implementation to an ongoing funding stream.

teaching and learning materials (TLMs) Refers to any collection of materials and resources that a teacher may use in teaching and learning situations to help achieve desired learning objectives.

unintended consequences Consequences, both positive and negative, that were not foreseen or accounted for and may impact project objectives, implementation, and outcomes.

universal design for learning (UDL) An educational framework that guides the development of flexible learning environments and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences. UDL is characterized by three core tenets: multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression.

vision and hearing screenings A screening that assesses if a person has challenges with their vision or hearing. In a school-based setting, it is often used to identify students who would benefit from a more comprehensive vision or hearing exam given by a medical professional.

Annex A: Reading for All Program Description and Interim Report Methodology

USAID's R4A program was awarded in 2018 to HI, in partnership with WEI, and was originally a three-year, $3.88 million activity focused on improving EGR outcomes among children with disabilities in grades 1–3 in 16 districts of Nepal. Due to significant delays in gaining approvals and establishing formal partnerships with the GoN, aspects of project implementation were behind by a full year and further stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of these setbacks, R4A was granted an extension; the project is now set to end in September 2022. In addition to the extension, the project scope was modified to reduce the number of intervention districts and to add an objective related to remedial instruction and support in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, R4A is a $5.5 million activity being implemented in 3,415 schools in 10 of the 16 National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP) focus districts (Banke, Surkhet, Bhaktapur, Kaski, Mustang, Dhankuta, Parsa, Dang, Kailali, and Dadeldhura and shown below in **Exhibit 1**). The activity intends to strengthen the GoN's institutional capacity at the federal, provincial, and local levels to implement its constitutional and policy commitments to disability inclusive education. These commitments were most recently made in Nepal's 2017 Disability Rights Act and Inclusive Education Policy for Persons with Disabilities.

This work builds on previous efforts undertaken by HI and WEI, along with the Resource Center for Rehabilitation and Development (RCRD) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to promote early identification and support for children with disabilities in Nepal. In 2016, this collaborative group piloted a screening process intended to facilitate referrals to medical providers and early intervention services and began building a database of information on disability in the country, thereby allowing stakeholders to better coordinate efforts.

Exhibit SEQ Exhibit * ARABIC 1. R4A Geographical Coverage
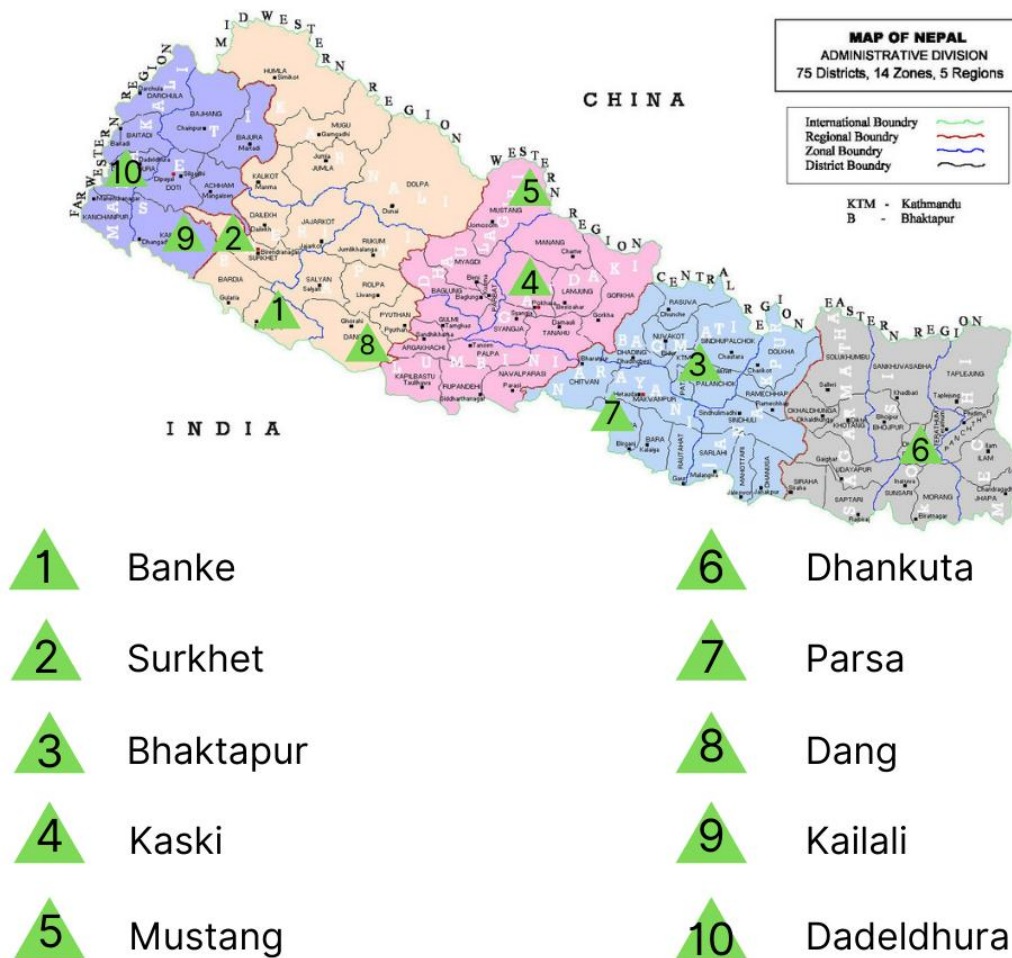
R4A has three objectives from the original scope of work and one that was added in December 2020 as part of the contract extension and modification:

1. Improve data quality on children with disabilities.
2. Enhance institutional and technical capacity at various levels to deliver quality reading instruction and support children with disabilities.
3. Test inclusive instructional models that can be scaled for specific groups of children with disabilities.

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4. Provide teaching and learning support to children with disabilities to mitigate and respond to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In relation to Objective 3, the project will test three intervention approaches, outlined below in **Exhibit 1**.

Exhibit 1. R4A's Three Intervention Approaches

Model A	Model B	Model C
● Smallest arm of intervention, implemented in 12 resource classes (RCs) in Banke and Surkhet districts. (RCs are housed within "integrated schools.") ● 20 RC teachers of blind/low vision students to receive 10 days of training on teaching reading using braille to build on existing experience/training teaching braille. This will be followed by on-site support to teachers. ● 20 RC teachers of deaf/hard of hearing students to receive 10 days of training on teaching reading using NSL to build on existing experience/training teaching NSL. This will be followed by on-site support to teachers. ● Teachers to receive support/coaching from project staff and partner DPOs.	● Largest arm of intervention (the "core"), implemented in grades 1–3 in 3,415 general education[11] schools in all 10 R4A districts. (General education schools are those without resource classes.) ● Light touch: inclusive instructional training provided to head teachers who are to support teachers.	● "Core plus," implemented in 257 general education schools (771 classrooms) within four focus municipalities in Banke and Surkhet. ● Includes all elements of Model B. ● Grade 1–3 classroom teachers receive three days of inclusive early grade reading training to supplement 15 days of training already received from USAID's Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP). ● Social mobilizers (DPO staff) trained for 10 days to provide support and coaching to Model C teachers and schools. Social mobilizers assigned to 10 schools each.

The project description provides the following rationale for the project's design (R4A-Nepal, 2018b, p. 27):

> The rationale for testing models outside of integrated schools is that the majority of children with disabilities in Nepal have not been identified as such (early

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[11] IDP uses the term "general education" to refer to what R4A calls "mainstream" classrooms and schools. "General education" is preferred in the U.S. when referring to settings that are fully inclusive because "mainstream" typically means a setting where students with disabilities are segregated during lessons related to the core curriculum, but are included for elective classes.

screening should address this) and attend schools without access to specialist supports such as Resource Teachers or resource classes. The GoN remains concerned about the costs of additional training and materials, and whether these should make a difference to learning outcomes. To address these concerns, Reading for All should test models both with extra training and materials (i.e., intensive) and without extra training and materials (i.e., core) to enable comparison of results and costs.

R4A's theory of change (ToC)), which undergirds the R4A design, assumes that providing effective inclusive reading instruction to learners with disabilities in general education settings requires the combination of accurate data on these learners' disabilities (Objective 1) as well as targeted professional development for educators (Objective 2). Each of the instructional models being tested under Objective 3 relies on the screening data being collected under Objective 1.

Methodology

This methodology section provides a general overview of the methods used to obtain data for the report, including information on data collection and analysis methods, the role of evaluative rubrics and checklists, and the limitations of this study.

General Overview

This chapter describes the general evaluation methods used to answer the five target questions about process, identification, training, instruction, and unintended consequences. For this interim report, IDP and its local partner, KU, developed and implemented a general R4A staff survey as well as a pre-post survey of teachers who received EGR instructional training; collected and reviewed 120 secondary sources, including reports and training materials that were developed by the R4A project (see Project Documents Reviewed); and conducted KIIs or FGDs with 40 individuals. These stakeholders included core R4A staff from HI, WEI, and subcontracted partners; DPOs; central- and district-level government officials; and others.

To provide a consistent set of evaluation criteria to help IDP staff draw conclusions, staff used a series of rubrics to identify strengths and potential gaps in activities related to overall project processes as well as MEL, screening, training, and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) activities. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and timing restrictions, IDP was able to observe a limited number of R4A's virtual training activities related to screening and EGR instruction (some observations were conducted in real time, while others were after the fact using recordings provided by R4A), but none of the screening implementation. In addition to training observation data and the survey of training recipients, IDP used rubrics to make preliminary assessments of activities based on available data and followed up with questions in KIIs and FGDs to clarify issues or questions that emerged from the survey, rubrics, or reports. The subsections below provide additional information on the interview and rubric methodologies. Primary data was collected and analyzed from August 2020–July 2021. Findings from this data should be considered formative in nature as the project activities are currently ongoing.

Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

In line with MCSIE's data-analysis plan, IDP conducted KIIs and FGDs with project staff from HI and WEI; DPOs; central- and district-level government officials; and a selection of teachers from the EGR instructional training to inform the interim report.

Sampling

Sampling was purposive in nature and limited to only people with deep familiarity with the project (aside from DPOs) or with recent experience as project beneficiaries via attending training workshops. When collecting data with qualitative instruments, the research team selected participants who could describe, in detail, the program's benefits and challenges. R4A also provided recommendations at the project and government level. Although IDP aimed for gender parity in interviews and focus groups, males predominately hold governmental offices in Nepal

and were found to be more prevalent in DPO leadership as well. In contrast, most of the teachers who had been trained at the time of IDP's interviews were female. Therefore, to the extent possible, IDP recruited diverse perspectives with available participants in particular categories, while acknowledging these limitations. KU also interviewed DPOs active in project activities; this included nine DPOs in seven districts. **Exhibit 2** below outlines the KII and FGD sample by stakeholder and sex.

Exhibit 2. KII and FGD Sample

Stakeholder Type	Total	Male (%)	Female (%)
Implementing partner staff	17	65%	35%
National government	7	86%	14%
Subnational government	3	100%	0%
DPOs	9	100%	0%
Teachers	27	29%	71%
Total	**63**	**56%**	**44%**

Enumerator Training

IDP's international research team conducted remote enumerator training with IDP's local staff member and senior members of the KU team on August 20, 2020, to prepare for stakeholders' KIIs and FGDs. This training introduced MCSIE, familiarized local enumerators with the data collection tools and procedures, provided a how-to training for conducting KIIs and FGDs, reviewed ethical considerations, and provided time for interview skills practice. The training also provided background on the R4A program and its related activities. Additionally, IDP trainers reviewed the data collection protocol specifically for members of government and DPOs. Once participants discussed and understood the procedures for data collection (including informed consent), IDP's international team reviewed the interview tools, facilitated interactive discussions, and introduced activities for practice. The training concluded after a discussion on various scenarios that might be encountered in data collection and a question/answer session. Following the IDP-led training, the senior KU researchers delivered the same training, which included two practice sessions, to the five junior researchers on the KU team (see **Exhibit 3**).

Exhibit 3. Enumerator Training Participants

Organizational Affiliation		Sex		Disability Status		Total
KU	IDP local consultant	Male	Female	Person with a disability	Person without a disability	
10	1	8	0	1	10	11

Data Collection

KIIs and FGDs were conducted from August 2020–July 2021. While some interviews were shorter or longer, most interviews were approximately one hour in length. Most interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom or telephone. All KIIs and FGDs were recorded, and verbal consent was

obtained for each; KIIs and FGDs were then analyzed through transcription and thematic coding or rapid analysis. IDP shifted from transcription and thematic coding to rapid analysis of interviews and discussions to help improve efficiency and streamline analysis.

The U.S.-based members of the IDP team conducted interviews in English with R4A staff who indicated they were comfortable communicating in English. KU staff transcribed interviews and focus groups conducted in Nepali, and a professional translation firm in Nepal translated these transcriptions into English. IDP provided the translation firm with guidance on the appropriate translation of disability terminology into English to ensure IDP could understand the intended meaning as conveyed in Nepali by interviewees. The translation firm performed quality checks on the KU transcriptions when any ambiguities arose, and KU and IDP's local consultant assisted in quality checking a selection of translations completed by the professional translation firm. IDP researchers sought clarification for any ambiguities in the final English translations, finding few. Using Otter transcription software, IDP researchers transcribed interviews and discussions conducted in English that were analyzed via thematic coding. A second IDP researcher performed a quality check for all transcriptions. Individual transcripts were imported into NVivo software for coding and analysis and de-identified for this report. Researchers used an IDP-developed Microsoft Excel template with thematic groupings for interviews and discussions analyzed via rapid analysis. To conduct the rapid analysis, IDP researchers listened to audio recordings of interviews or discussions conducted in English and reviewed transcripts of interviews and discussions translated from Nepali. A separate IDP researcher, who conducted the interviews or discussions, performed a quality check for all rapid analysis data and was de-identified for this report.

Data Analysis

IDP conducted qualitative analysis using a combination of approaches. First, IDP researchers developed a series of thematic deductive codes into a codebook related directly to the EQs for this project. Qualitative analysts developed additional deductive codes when interviewees presented outliers or anomalies in the data. The principal investigator oversaw the development of the qualitative research initial codebook as well as the inductive codes identified during preliminary analyses. Additionally, IDP developed a Microsoft Excel template with thematic groupings, using the deductive and inductive codes, to complete rapid analysis. The principal investigator also oversaw the development of the rapid analysis template. The IDP team coded or conducted rapid analysis on all KII and FGD data for analysis and synthesis in this report. Researchers collected data on a rolling basis along with secondary source data analysis throughout this evaluation and used data to triangulate and clarify any substantial inaccuracies in the secondary source data analysis. **Exhibit 4** lists the tools used to collect qualitative data and describes the analysis that the IDP team conducted.

Exhibit 4. Qualitative Data Analysis

Tools	Utilization of Analyses	Descriptive Analyses	Content Analyses
Government KIIs	Understand perceptions and roles of local and national government officials in MCSIE projects.	Government evaluation of programming and linkage to policy and existing initiatives. Focus on gender as mediating influence.	Particular focus on deductive codes "identification", "training", "instruction", "EGRA", and "consequences" as well as sensitizing concept analysis of implementing partner (IP)/government relationships and process analysis of policy development.
DPO KIIs	Understand perceptions, roles, and contributions of DPOs to MCSIE projects.	DPO perceptions of involvement, human rights perspectives, and project consequences. Focus on gender as mediating consideration.	Particular focus on "identification", "training", "instruction", and "consequences" as well as sensitizing concept analysis of DPO/IP relationships.
R4A KIIs	Understand perceptions and roles of R4A staff in relation to project implementation.	R4A perceptions of program activities, strengths, and areas for improvement.	Particular focus on "process", "partnerships", "identification", "training", "EGRA" as well as the relationships between HI and WEI, the relationship with the government, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Trained teacher FGDs	Understand teachers' perceptions following training workshops in relation to the quality and usefulness of the training.	Trainee perceptions of screening, inclusive instruction, and the format and quality of the training received.	Particular focus on "identification", "training", and "instruction" as well as the impact of resource availability and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective of Evaluative Rubrics and Checklists

Based on the results framework, IDP developed evaluative rubrics (King et al., 2013) and checklists to guide the review of inclusive education and related project materials developed or used in the USAID-funded EGR programs (Cambodia, Nepal, and Malawi). Rubrics offer a process for making the explicit judgments in an evaluation (Davidson, 2005) and are used to measure the quality, value, and/or importance of the materials used in conjunction with specific EGR activities. Rubrics are made up of evaluative criteria, the aspects of performance on which

the evaluation focuses, merit determinations, and the definitions of what performance looks like at different ranking levels.

Rubrics have the potential to be used either holistically or analytically.[12] For this report and in support of the ethos of progressive realization,[13] IDP researchers used an analytical approach for this evaluation. Using this analytical approach, researchers mapped data against evaluative standards from both international and local inclusive education and literacy evidence bases. This process allowed the research team to identify where projects aligned with promising practices related to literacy and inclusive education and where there were gaps. It also allowed the team to take the country and project context into perspective and note specific areas of progress. This approach allows for individualization within the rubrics while ensuring consistency of measurement across each MCSIE country for comparability. The rubric and checklist approach led to scores and narrative summaries that provided an overview of practice, describing areas of strength as well as areas for recommended improvement within the project and possible causes.

Methods for Evaluative Rubrics and Checklists

The rubric and checklist design process began by identifying core domains related to the area of interest and outlining the evaluative criteria. For example, the rubric for screening training was informed by a review of literature on training and professional development for inclusive education (Hayes & Bulat, 2017; Hayes et al., 2018; McCollow et al., 2015; Tristani & Bassett-Gunter, 2019); this rubric also examined the following domains: training participants, modalities, content, degree of accessibility, and potential for sustainability after the life of the project, as it pertained to screening training specifically. For each domain, IDP developed standards that provided a more nuanced understanding of the respective domain. These standards were then placed on a rating scale for assessment. In addition, for each standard, IDP developed rich descriptions for all ratings to aid reviewers using the rubric.

Rating scales varied slightly depending on the rubric, but most used a five-level rating scale, such as the one displayed below in **Exhibit 5**.

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[12] King, McKegg, Oakden, and Wehipeihana (2013) discuss two possible ways to use rubrics: holistically or analytically. Where rubrics are used holistically, an analyst makes a single, quick-to-administer judgment, considering all evaluative standards. Where rubrics are used analytically, an analyst makes separate judgments of each evaluative standard in a step-by-step process. These judgments are sometimes then synthesized into one overall evaluation claim.

[13] This term references the concept of "progressive realization" toward the expectations of the CRPD by signatory countries. The CRPD recognizes that countries have disability rights and unique inclusive education contexts but should all be making policy changes and economic investments to progressively realize the aims of the treaty.

Exhibit 5. Rating Scale

N/A	Not applicable
0	No evidence
1	Limited evidence
2	Some evidence
3	Strong, high-quality evidence

IDP piloted each rubric/checklist with a multidisciplinary team based on researchers' areas of expertise. The team scored rubrics independently and discussed divergent scores until consensus was achieved. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the team and its varying levels of familiarity with the educational context of Nepal, this approach was favored over inter-rater reliability. The team revised scores based on the pilot results to ensure context and the conceptual validity of the area of inquiry. The team then developed narrative templates to summarize the findings for inclusion in the interim evaluative reports. A description of each rubric/checklist can be found below in **Exhibit 6**.

Exhibit 6. Rubric/Checklist Descriptions

Evaluation Question	Rubric/ Checklist	Purpose
Process	Process Checklist	To review the IP's technical implementation of their project and any impact it has on meeting the contractual obligations under the statement of work, particularly as it relates to inclusive education. Evaluators will review organizational, planning, and reporting documents to identify elements that showcase beneficial implementation practices as well as note any missing information or programming delays and changes.
Process	MEL Plan Rubric	To evaluate each activity against USAID guidance and best practices in MEL; to gain insight into how progress and outcomes are measured and reported, particularly as they relate to inclusive education.
Identification	Screening Rubric	To evaluate each activity's screening tools and protocols as aligned with current standards related to target population, ethical considerations, validity, reliability, fairness, referrals, and data use/sharing.
Training	Training Checklist	To evaluate each training activity in terms of target audience, content, delivery, accessibility, and sustainability.

Instruction	EGRA Rubric	To evaluate each activity's adapted EGRA process for children with identified disabilities, from design and instrument development through assessor training, pilot testing, and data collection to analysis and reporting. Evaluation criteria are derived from the *USAID EGRA Toolkit* (RTI International, 2015). Information related to accommodations or modifications for children with disabilities is captured using the rubric and examined against available, relevant literature but not evaluated against standards specific to the EGRA, as these are not yet established for children with disabilities.
Instruction[14]	Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) Rubric Inclusive Education and Literacy	To evaluate the degree of alignment between TLMs and evidence-based international standards for inclusive literacy instruction, with standards derived from core inclusive education principles referenced in the *Universal Design for Learning to Help All Children Read* toolkit (Hayes et al., 2018) and core reading principles as outlined by the National Reading Panel (2000).

In total, the evaluation team reviewed 120 official project documents, including training materials, screening materials, datasets, and project reports. Some documents were brief, such as event participant lists or job descriptions, while others were much longer, such as various reports. A full list of project sources reviewed is detailed in Annex G.

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[14] R4A had not begun implementation in schools at the time of this report due to COVID-19 closures and implementation delays. Therefore, a review of instructional materials is not included this report but will be included in subsequent reporting.

Annex B: Key Informant Interviews

#	Type	Stakeholder	Date
1	GON	Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD)	Oct 2020
2	GON	CEHRD, Inclusive Education Section	Oct 2020
3	GON	Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD)	Oct 2020
4	GON	Curriculum Development Centre	Oct 2020
5	GON	Curriculum Development Centre	Oct 2020
6	GON	Education Development and Coordination unit (EDCU, Banke)	Oct 2020
7	GON	Education development and coordination unit (EDCU, Kailali)	Oct 2020
8	GON	Education development and coordination unit (EDCU, Surkhet)	Oct 2020
9	GON	Education Review Office (ERO)	Oct 2020
10	GON	National Center for Education Development (NCED)	Oct 2020
11	OPD	Disable Empowerment and Communication Center (DEC) Nepal	Oct 2020
12	OPD	Disable Empowerment Centre-Surkhet (DEC-Surkhet)	Oct 2020
13	OPD	Holistic Disability Development Society Nepal (HDDSN- Kailali)	Oct 2020
14	OPD	Independent Living Center (CIL-Pokhara) Kaski	Oct 2020
15	OPD	National Federation of Deaf Nepal (NFDN)	Oct 2020

#	Type	Stakeholder	Date
16	OPD	Nepal Association for the Welfare of the Blind (NAWB)	Oct 2020
17	OPD	Samabesi Apanga Sangh	Oct 2020
18	NGO	Social Organization District Coordination Committee (SODCC- Parsa)	Oct 2020
19	OPD	Voice for Equal Opportunity (VEO)	Oct 2020
20	IP	Humanity and Inclusion	June 2020
21	IP	Humanity and Inclusion	June 2020
22	IP	Humanity and Inclusion	June 2020
23	IP	Humanity and Inclusion	June 2020
24	IP	Humanity and Inclusion	June 2020
25	IP	Humanity and Inclusion	June 2020
26	IP	Humanity and Inclusion	July 2020
27	IP	World Education, Inc.	May 2020
28	IP	World Education, Inc.	May 2020
29	IP	World Education, Inc.	May 2020
30	IP	World Education, Inc.	May 2020
31	IP	World Education, Inc.	July 2020

Annex C: Focus Group Discussions

FGD #	Number of participants	Stakeholders	Date
1.	5	Screening Trainees in Banke	Oct 2020
2.	5	Screening Trainees in Surkhet	Oct 2020
3.	5	EGR Instructional Trainees in Banke	Feb 2021
4.	4	EGR Instructional Trainees in Banke	Feb 2021
5.	4	EGR Instructional Trainees in Banke	Feb 2021
6.	4	EGR Instructional Trainees in Banke	Feb 2021
7.	4	R4A IE Officers	July 2021

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Annex D: Surveys

Implementing Partner Survey Findings

In August 2020, IDP conducted an online survey of R4A's staff. The survey link was shared across all project staff, and there was a high response rate (150 total responses). Notable findings are presented in **Exhibit 1** for the 47 personnel who identified as being from HI/WEI as well as for the 103 personnel who identified as being from a OPD/NGO. These figures show that roughly a quarter of all R4A staff identify as having a disability, and the majority are close to someone (friend or family member) with a disability. These figures are slightly higher for the HI/WEI staff compared to the OPD/NGO partner staff. Experience or familiarity with disability among so many staff is a strength, as it may increase the likelihood that staff are motivated and invested in the goals of the project and understand the need for inclusive education.

Exhibit 1. R4A Staff with Lived Experience with Disability

Characteristic	HI/WEI staff N=47	OPD/NGO staff N=103
Female	42.6% (N=20)	45.6% (N=47)
Male	57.4% (N=27)	54.4% (N=56)
Identify as having a disability	27.7% (N=13)	24.3% (N=25)
Have a disability diagnosis	27.7% (N=13)	18.4% (N=19)
Close to someone with a disability	70.2% (N=33)	61.1% (N=63)
Worked for current org. over 10 years	17% (N=8)	5.8% (N=6)
Worked for current org. 4–10 years	14.9% (N=7)	10.7% (N=11)
Worked for current org. 1–3 years	36.2% (N=17)	26.2% (N=27)
Worked for current org. less than 1 year	31.9% (15)	57.3% (59)

A minority of HI/WEI and partner staff reported working for four years or longer at their current organization, while most began three years ago or less (with their hires likely coinciding with the project award). Large numbers of new project-related hires are to be expected.

Most HI/WEI and partner staff working on this project had very little to no experience working on issues related to disability-inclusive education prior to this project (see **Exhibit 2**). When asked to describe the nature of their experience, those who had some inclusive education experience mentioned the following types of work: inclusion in education; school safety and child protection; climate-induced disasters/disaster risk reduction (DRR) approaches; advocacy work in education

and support with local government for children with disabilities; conducting various trainings on increasing access to education; and working to identify potential disabilities of children in community schools and creating the necessary environment for those children to succeed.

The largest proportion (42.6% or N=20) of the HI/WEI staff reported not having any previous experience working on disability-inclusive education prior to this project. Half (51% or N=24) had four years or less, and 4.3% (N=2) had more than five years of experience. When a subset of 32 technical staff[15] from HI/WEI were asked to describe the nature of their experience further, some responses included: conducted various trainings on increasing access to education and took initiatives to increase easy access to justice and security; work experience related to disability-inclusive education and little management; planning, monitoring, and evaluation; and developed and led the project with international assistance.

Exhibit 2. Experience Working on Disability-Inclusive Education Prior to the R4A Project

Experience	HI/WEI staff N=47	OPD/NGO staff N=103
No previous experience	42.6% (N=20)	64.1% (N=66)
Less than 1 year	17% (N=8)	9.7% (N=10)
1–2 years	23.4% (N=11)	11.7% (N=12)
3–4 years	10.6% (N=5)	7.8% (N=8)
More than 5 years	4.3% (N=2)	3.9% (N=4)

Regarding the educational background among the subset of 32 HI/WEI technical staff, 13 (40.6%) reported having a post-graduate degree and nine (28.1%) reported having a graduate degree. Seven technical staff (21.8%) listed education, including teaching, as their degree, and one individual listed disability-inclusive/special education as their degree. Other degrees reported included social science; rural development; and finance, policy and/or administration. Among the OPD/NGO partners, only two staff reported having a degree in disability-inclusive/special education.

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[15] "Technical staff" refers to a subset of HI/WEI staff after those with administrative or financial roles were removed from the analysis.

Implementing Partner Staff Background Survey

Sample: All implementing partner staff and sub-contractor staff who have a greater than 15% level of effort dedicated to implementation of the disability-inclusive education program.

Purpose: To assess the background roles, responsibilities, and knowledge (education and training) of implementing partners as related to disability-inclusive education and the program.

Administration: Online survey (Google Forms) distributed via weblink

Questions:

1. Today's Date: _____

Country:

- Cambodia
- Nepal
- Malawi

Name of Organization that you currently work for:

- Abt Associates
- Juarez and Associates
- KAPE
- Humanity and Inclusion
- Open Institute
- RTI International
- Room to Read
- Save the Children
- SIL Lead
- World Education
- World Vision
- Other, please state: _____

Gender (select one) (optional)

- Male
- Female
- Do not know / Do not wish to respond

Current Age (optional)

- 18-24

- 25-39
- 40-60
- Over 60

Do you identify as having a disability? (optional)

- Yes
- No

If yes, what type of disability do you have: (optional)

- physical
- intellectual
- vision
- hearing
- learning
- other, please state: _____

Do you have a relationship with someone who has a disability? (optional)

- Yes
- No

If yes, what is your relationship? (select all that apply) (optional)

- Parent
- Spouse
- Caregiver
- Sibling
- Other family relationship
- Friend
Other, specify: _____

Number of years working with organization (select one):

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- More than 10 years

Job Title:_____

Main job responsibilities (select one that best matches your work)

- Technical
- Administrative
- Project management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Finance and accounting
- Management
- Research
- Other:_____

Please list your highest equivalent level of education (select one):

- Primary
- Some secondary (not complete)
- Secondary
- Post secondary
- Graduate degree
- Post graduate degree
- Other, Please explain: _____

If you have received a university degree in what topic is your degree (Select as many as apply)

- Education
- Disability studies
- Disability-inclusive education/Special education
- Finance, policy and/or administration
- International Studies
- Others: Please explain: _____

Before your participation in this current project, have you received training on disability-inclusive education?

- Yes
- No (Skip to Q19)

If yes, how many trainings on disability-inclusive education have you received?

- 1 training
- 2 trainings
- 3-5 trainings
- More than 5 trainings

If yes, across all the trainings you have received what topics did the training(s) cover (select all that apply):

- Advocacy
- Blind education
- Deaf education
- Disability awareness
- Disability laws or policies
- OPD engagement
- Effective instructional approaches for students with and without disabilities
- Identification of students with disabilities
- Understanding the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Others: Please explain: _____

If yes, who provided the training on disability-inclusive education (select all that apply)

- Formal education (College)
- Employer
- NGO
- OPD
- Government entity
- Other: Please explain_____

Have you received training on disability-inclusive education while working on this project?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how long was the training?

- 1-2 hours
- 3-5 hours
- 1 day
- 2-3 days
- 4-5 days
- More than 5 days

Prior to this project, how many years of experience do you have working on disability issues (disability issues can include disability-inclusive education or other topics related to the rights of persons with disabilities such as accessible health services, employment, etc.) (select one)?

- No previous experience
- Less than one year

- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- More than 6 years

Prior to this project, if you have work-related experience on disability issues, please describe the nature of your experience: _____

Prior to this project, how many years of experience do you have working on issues related to disability-inclusive education (select one)?

- No previous experience
- Less than one year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- More than 6 years

If you have work experience related to disability-inclusive education, prior to this project, please describe the nature of your experience: _____

EGR Instructional Training Pre-Post Survey Findings
### *MCSIE Pre-Training Survey Results*

In August and September 2020, the MCSIE team sent online pre-training surveys and, after the training, post-training surveys to teachers and head teachers from Banke and Surkhet who participated in R4A's virtual EGR instructional training. To send the surveys, the team used training participants' contact information shared by the project. The survey's purpose was to gather data on trainee profiles and to detect changes in knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions among teachers as a result of the training. A total of 61 trainees completed both pre and post surveys. This included 55 teachers (90%) and five head teachers (8%). Most respondents (72%) were female, and some of the trainees had personal experience with a disability themselves (10%) or with a family member (26%). **Exhibit 1** below provides an overview the MCSIE survey's participants.

Exhibit 1. MCSIE Pre/Post Training Responses (Percentages by Demographic Category)
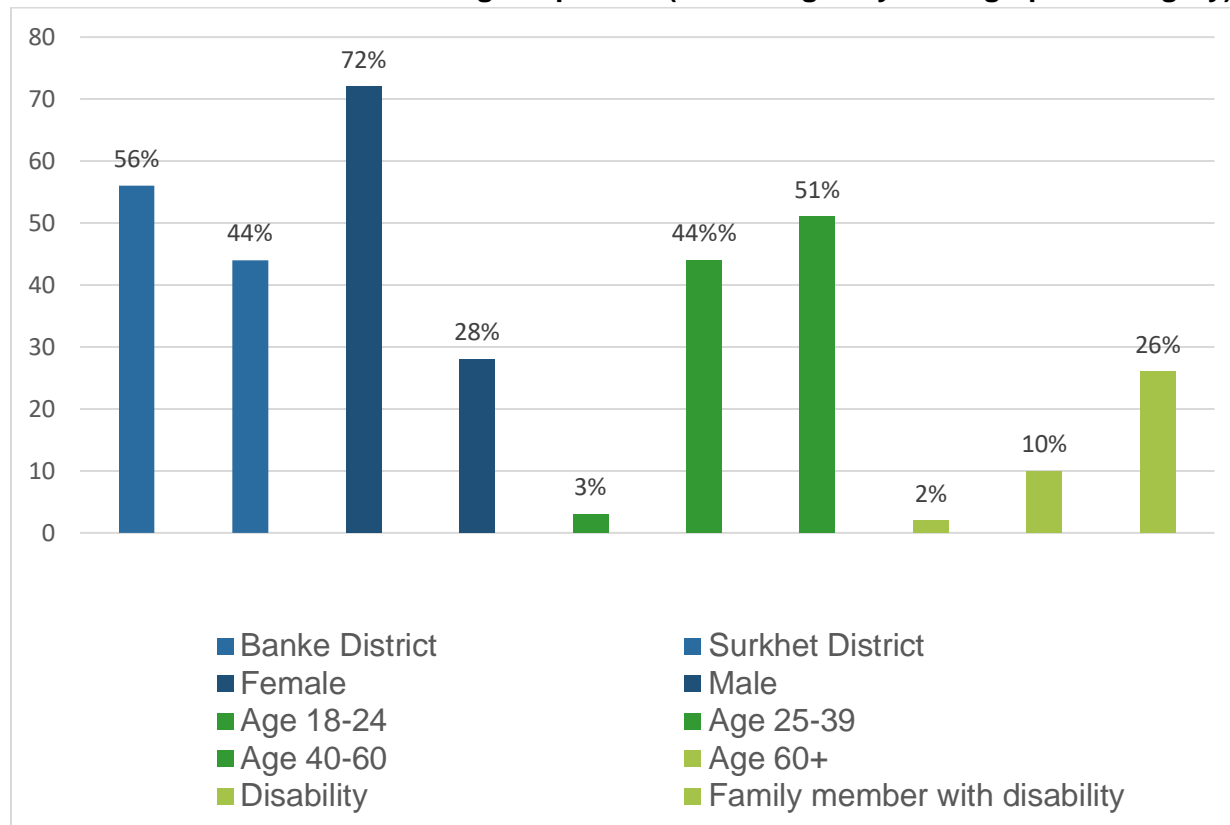
In addition, survey respondents were predominantly experienced teachers. The graph below (**Exhibit 2**) demonstrates the relative percentage of survey participants by years of experience. The majority of teachers (75%) had seven or more years of experience.

Exhibit 2. Teachers' Years of Experience
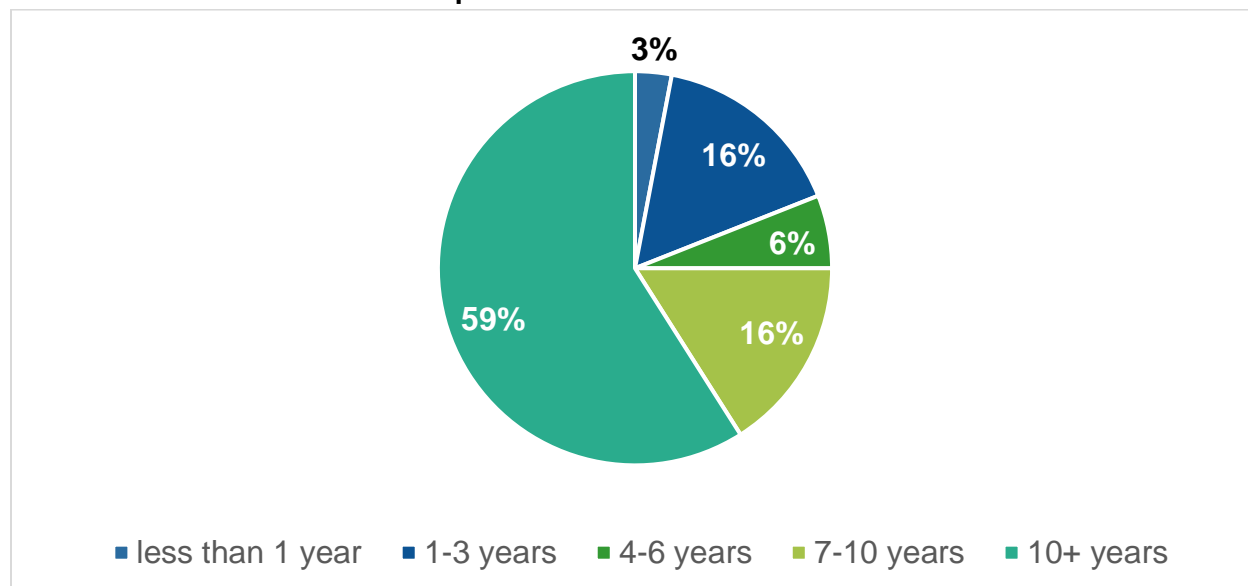
The majority of survey respondents (n=48, or 79%) reported having received in-service training on *teaching literacy* in the early grades prior to the USAID project. In contrast, only 11% (n=7) of survey respondents reported having previous pre-service training on *disability-inclusive education*, indicating the topic was new for the majority of teachers being trained.

When asked about the presence of students with disabilities in their classroom, respondents were almost evenly split: 29 (48%) said "no" and 28 (46%) said "yes." Four respondents (7%) chose not to respond.

When asked in the pre-training survey about the organization of their classroom to engage students to meet the learning needs of everyone, 39 teachers (66%) said they used small-group work or pairs; 38 teachers (64%) stated they placed struggling learners close to the front of the room; 23 teachers (39%) said they used games, songs, or movement activities; and 22 teachers (37%) used role modeling or role playing.

Exhibit 3. Methods to Engage Students (Pre-Training)
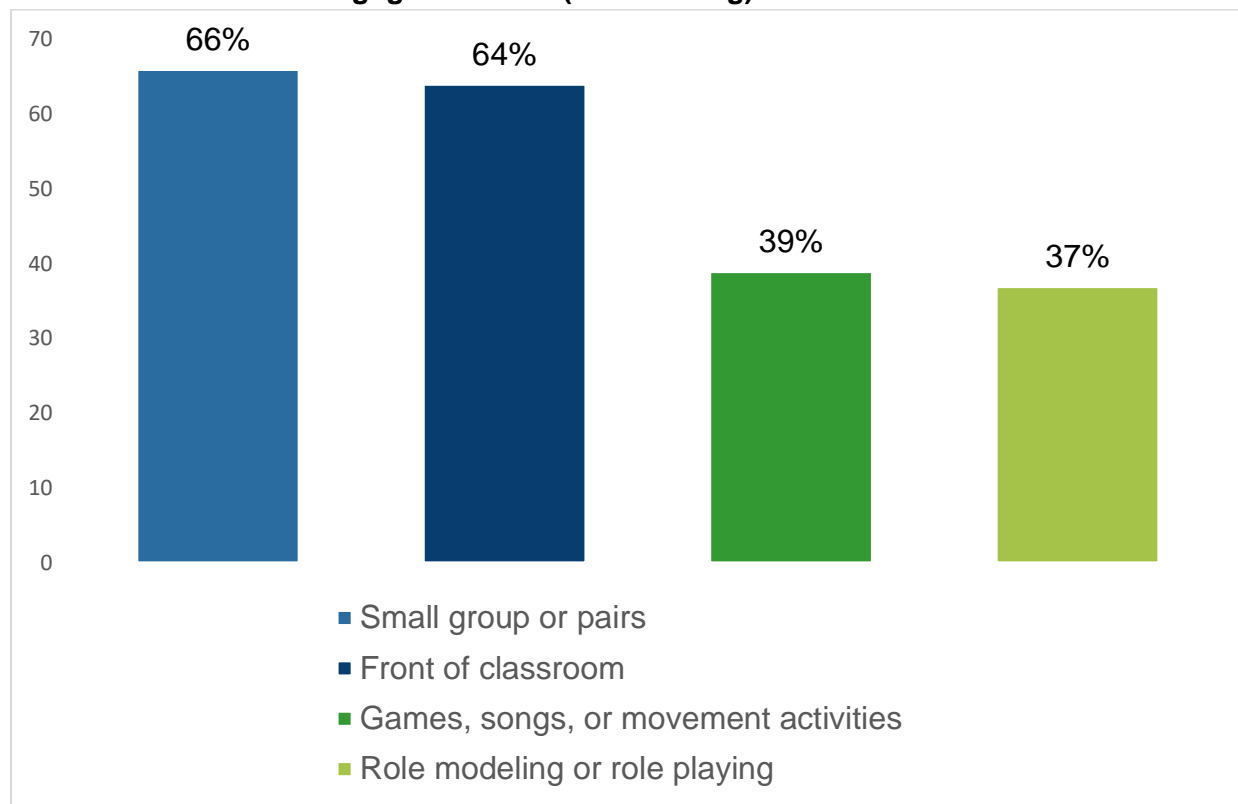
Additionally, the pre-training survey asked how teachers support struggling learners in their classrooms. Thirty-nine teachers (70%) responded that they provide additional lessons or attention for struggling learners, 35 teachers (63%) replied that they allow struggling learners to take extra time when needed, 34 teachers (61%) said they present information in different ways (e.g., orally, in writing, verbally, etc.), 31 teachers (55%) responded that they provide detailed instructions or break complex tasks into smaller steps, and 10 teachers (18%) reported they used braille, sign language, or assistive technologies.

Exhibit 4. Models of Support to Struggling Learners (Pre-Training)
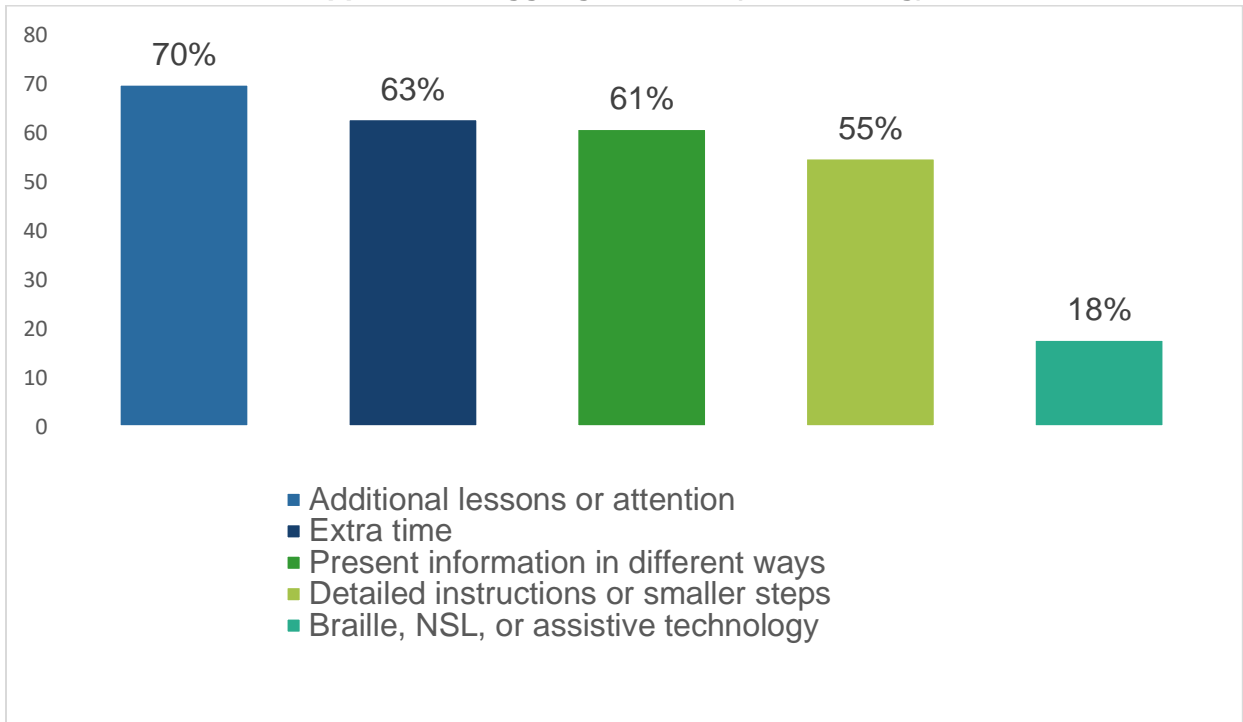
When asked about their satisfaction with the training in the post-test, a majority (n=40, or 65%) reported being satisfied to "some extent," while nearly a quarter of respondents (n=14, or 23%) said they were satisfied to "a great extent." Only a few rated their satisfaction at "limited" (n=4, or 7%), and only one person was "not at all" satisfied. **Exhibit 5** provides a visual depiction of trainee satisfaction levels.

Exhibit 5. Satisfaction with EGR Training
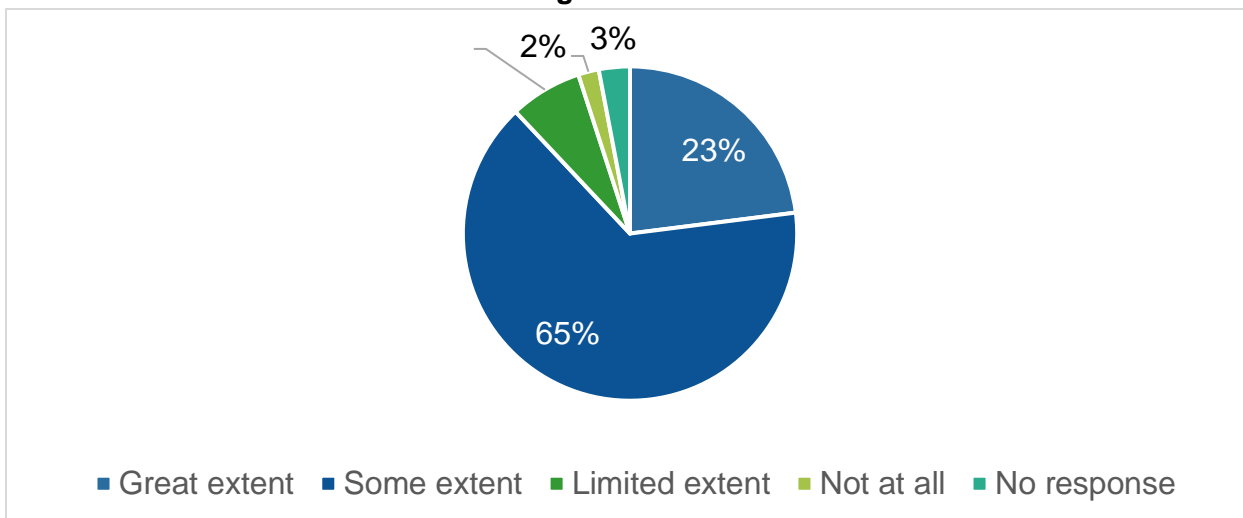
MCSIE Post-Training Survey Results

After the training, survey respondents noted which strategies they felt prepared to use from a list of options. Providing extra time, seating struggling learners near the front, and facilitating small-group or pairs work were among the most popular responses. Teachers felt less prepared to use visual or tactile aids such as images, manipulatives, flash cards, etc., and to use braille, sign language, or assistive technologies. Responses are provided in **Exhibit 6**.

Exhibit 6. Strategies Teachers Felt Prepared to Use Following Training

Strategy	Percent of Respondents
Allowing struggling learners to take extra time when needed	84%
Seating struggling learners close to the front of the room or where they learn best	80%
Small group work, work in pairs, or other peer engagement	79%
Use of games, songs, or movement activities	74%
Presenting and receiving information in different ways: orally, in writing, verbally, etc.	72%
Providing additional lessons or attention for struggling learners	72%
Use of images, manipulatives, flash cards, etc.	54%
Use of braille, sign language, or assistive technologies	54%
Providing detailed instructions or breaking complex tasks into smaller steps	33%

Respondents also indicated the information or supports that would be helpful to better meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities, in their school setting. No clear majority of respondents desired further information or support in any area, but approximately three or four out of 10 participants believed that additional training, school-based coaching, support from the head of the school, and teaching materials would be helpful to them. Responses are below in **Exhibit 7.**

Exhibit 7. Information or Support Needed

| Information or Support Needed	Percent of Respondents
Additional training	39%
School-based coaching or communities of practice	38%
Support from my head teacher or local school leadership	34%
Teaching and learning materials	33%

Changes in Participant Responses: Pre-Post

MCSIE performed a statistical t-test to examine if there were statistically significant differences between the average responses on questions in the pre-post survey. Statistical significance indicates that a change is more likely to have resulted directly from the intervention, in this case, the teacher training, than it is to have resulted from chance. T-tests were conducted for the overall sample, and further analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine if these differences were predicted by whether a participant had a personal connection to disability (defined as having a disability themselves or being close to someone with a disability).

T-test results indicated statistically significant differences in response patterns for the overall sample for participants' perceived preparation for teaching students with disabilities and participants' perceptions about the ability of students with physical disabilities to be able to learn to read in general education schools. The converse was also true for perceptions about students with disabilities in special schools. After the workshop, participants were less likely to perceive that special schools were the only place that children with disabilities could learn to read. In each of these changes, the change appeared to be more pronounced in participants who did not have a personal connection to disability. Those with personal connections did not demonstrate statistically significant changes in perceptions.

A statistically significant portion of participants reported that they felt more prepared to teach students with disabilities or learning difficulties post training. Pre-post survey data showed that participants who reported feeling prepared to a "great extent" increased by 11% (from 30% to 41%; see Exhibit 8). When combining "some extent" and "great extent" participants' feeling of preparedness increased from 71% to 87% (16% increase) as a result of the training. This increase was primarily reported by teachers who said they had no close contact with disability in their personal life. As an outcome of the training, teachers noted that they began to treat children with disabilities (if they identified any) with greater "care" rather than assuming they were naughty or troublemakers.

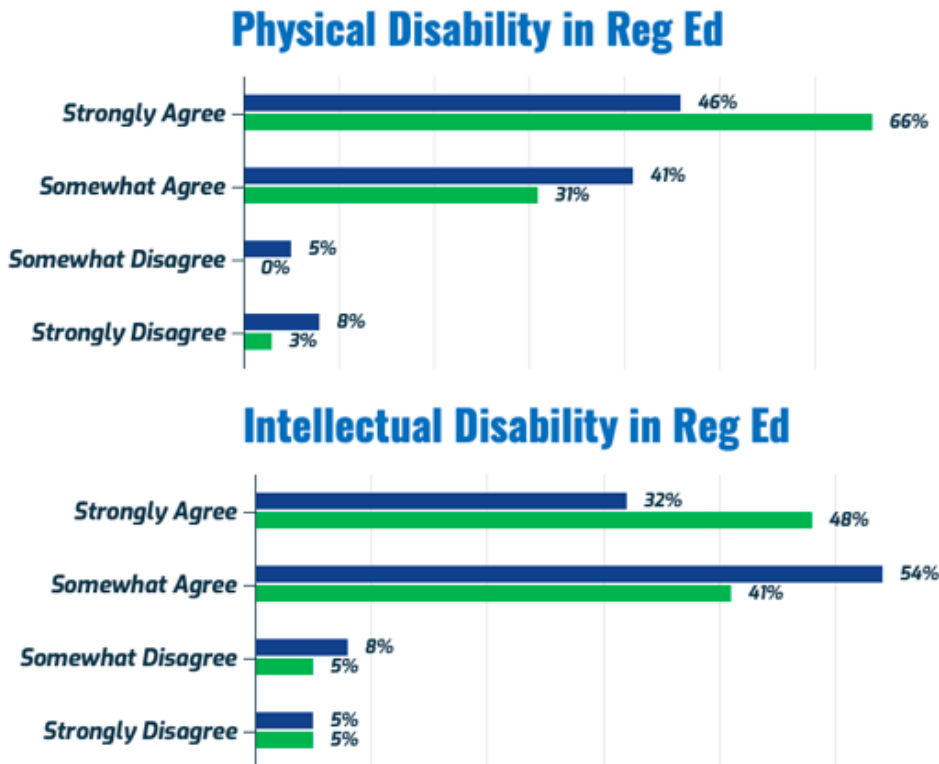**Exhibit 8. Perception of Preparedness from Pre to Post Survey**
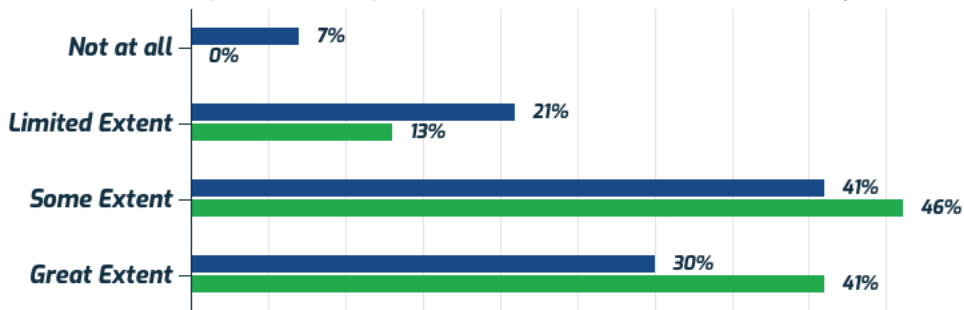
The absence of significant change among respondents who have a personal connection to disability may indicate that they already possessed a more inclusive mindset regarding teaching students with disabilities as well as regarding these students' ability to learn to read in regular school settings with appropriate support. By contrast, respondents without a personal connection may have been more likely to learn new information during the training, which served to challenge previously held beliefs and assumptions. R4A's training is commendable as it was able to shift these educators' perceptions and sense of preparedness, particularly related to physical disabilities, in a positive and more inclusive direction.

Despite the shifts in perceptions outlined above, there were several items for which there was a slight change in a positive direction, but no statistically significant change in perception, meaning that the change cannot, with confidence, be directly attributed to the training. For example, there was no statistically significant change in teacher comfort for teaching children with disabilities, no statistically significant change at all about children with intellectual disability (in relation to children's potential to learn to read and inclusive education), and no statistically significant change in perceptions related to the potential success in secondary education or beyond for children with physical disabilities.

For example, survey findings demonstrate that at the start of training, 46% of participants "strongly agreed" that students with physical disabilities can learn to read in regular education settings and only 32% felt the same way about students with intellectual disability. Post training, 66% of participants "strongly agreed" that students with physical disabilities can learn to read in regular education settings (a 20% increase that is statistically significant) and 48% felt the same way about students with intellectual disability (a 16% increase that is not statistically significant), which indicates that more training and support may be necessary to support the inclusion of students with intellectual disability (see Exhibit 9). In three of the four FGDs, teachers discussed that identifying disabilities was an important aspect of their teaching and indicated that children with "simple" disabilities can be easily included, but children with "complex" disabilities require special resource rooms.

Exhibit 9: Pre-Post Levels of Agreement Regarding Ability to Learn to Read Among Children with Physical and Intellectual Disabilities in Regular Classrooms

Physical Disability in Reg Ed

Strongly Agree	46% / 66%
Somewhat Agree	41% / 31%
Somewhat Disagree	5% / 0%
Strongly Disagree	8% / 3%

Intellectual Disability in Reg Ed

Strongly Agree	32% / 48%
Somewhat Agree	54% / 41%
Somewhat Disagree	8% / 5%
Strongly Disagree	5% / 5%

While it is worth noting that respondents did not come away with *less* inclusive beliefs and perceptions, there was a marked difference in their perceptions about the ability of students with intellectual disability to learn to read in regular school settings. The lack of statistically significant change among respondents in relation to intellectual disability may indicate respondents have less understanding about how to respond to and support these children in the classroom.

Lastly, some respondents provided additional feedback to an open-ended question at the end of the survey. A few common themes emerged from these responses, including preferred training format/modality, technical difficulties, length of training, and usefulness of the content. In several responses, participants stated they believe the training would have been better if done "direct" or face-to-face. Respondents cited the lack of discussion with peers and technical difficulties with internet connections as reasons for preferring face-to-face training. Respondents also shared that the content was very beneficial and detailed but that the length of the trainings was too short. One training participant stated, "I found it very useful. The materials were good, but due to lack of time, there was not much discussion." Training participants consistently expressed that training was

useful and could help facilitate learning for all students, but that overall effectiveness of the trainings could be improved if they had more training or practice with the content activities.

Instructional Training Pre-Post Survey Instrument

	Tool 4a: Instructional Training Pre-Post Survey
	Guidance: 1. This survey is intended for trainees receiving training from local partners. 2. Each survey will take approximately 35 minutes, which should be communicated to the respondent ahead of time. 3. Ensure that the respondent has a private, safe, and neutral place to complete the survey. 4. Make sure to review the informed consent and that the respondent understands participation is voluntary and no signature is required. 5. This survey is intended for initial and endline data collection periods. 6. Local enumerators will administer the survey in the local language and input data via tablet.
	Consent Language: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. Our study is called the Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education and its goals are to evaluate inclusive education for learners with disabilities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal to identify what works to advance learning for children with disabilities. You have been selected to participate in this study because your perspective will help us to learn about the education of your students. Your participation is very important, but you have the right to refuse to participate in the study at any time before, during, or after the survey process. You can skip any questions you do not want to answer. Your relationships with the school, head teacher and other teachers, or research team will not be affected if you choose not to participate. This Survey will take approximately 35 minutes. We want to ask you about questions about your role and experiences you may have had with inclusive education training, as well as your thoughts on inclusive education and strategies you use in the classroom. If you agree to participate, the information you provide us will remain confidential and your name and personal information will not be used in any way. We do not have any money or gifts to give you for your participation, but we know that your participation may provide information that can help improve the education of children with disabilities. If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Valerie Karr at valerie.karr@umb.edu If you would like to talk to someone about this study, or how you feel as a result of questions asked during this interview, you can contact: INSERT LOCAL IDP COUNTRY CONTACT HERE
	Do you agree to participate in this survey? ___ Yes ___ No

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	Background Data	
1	Date of Survey	
2	Country Location:	1 Cambodia 2 Nepal 3 Malawi
3	Name of Region/District	
4	Sex	0 Male 1 Female 99 No response/other
#	Question	Responses
5	What is your age?	1 18-24 2 25-39 3 40-60 4 Over 60 99 No response
6	Do you identify with, or think you have a disability?	0 No (Skip to Q9) 1 Yes 99 Do not know/Do not wish to respond
7	If yes, have you ever been formally assessed or examined for a disability?	0 No 1 Yes 99 No response/other
8	If yes, what type of disability do you have?	1 physical 2 intellectual 3 vision 4 hearing 5 learning 88 other, please state
9	Do you know someone in your family or your close circle of friends that has a disability?	0 No (Skip to Q11) 1 Yes 99 No response/other
10	If yes, what is your relationship? (Select all that apply)	1 Parent 2 Spouse 3 Caregiver 4 Sibling 5 Other family relationship 6 Friend 88 Other, specify 99 No response
11	How do you describe your current role or position?	1 Teacher 2 Head teacher 3 Disability-inclusive education teacher 4 Resource/Special Education teacher 88 Other, please specify 99 No response

12	How many years have you been working in your current role?	1 Less than 1 year 2 1-3 years 3 4-6 years 4 7-10 years 5 Over 10 years
13	What is your highest equivalent level of education? (select one)	1 Primary 2 Some secondary (not complete) 3 Secondary 4 Certificate or diploma 5 Post secondary 6 Graduate degree 7 Post graduate degree 88 Other, please explain
14	If you have received a diploma or university degree, in what topic is your diploma/degree? (Select all that apply)	1 Degree/diploma in non-education field 2 Education (includes teaching and administration) 3 Disability-inclusive education/Special education 4 Higher education 88 Other, explain 99 No response
15	Before your participation in this current project, did you receive in-service training related to teaching literacy in the early grades?	0 No (Skip to Q18) 1 Yes 99 Don't Know/No response
16	If yes, what is the total combined length of all prior early grade literacy training you have received?	1 Less than one day 2 1 days 3 2-3 days 4 4-5 days 5 6-10 days 6 more than 10 days
17	Who delivered the early grade literacy training? (Select all that apply)	1 Formal education 2 Employer 3 NGO 4 DPO 5 Government entity 88 Others, please specify
18	Before your participation in this current project, did you receive in-service training on disability-inclusive education?	0 No (Skip to Q22) 1 Yes 99 Don't Know/No response
19	If yes, what is the total combined length of prior disability-inclusive education training you have received?	1 Less than one day 2 1 days 3 2-3 days 4 4-5 days 5 6-10 days 6 more than 10 days

20	What topics did the in-service training cover? (select all that apply)	1 Advocacy 2 Blind education 3 Deaf education 4 Disability awareness 5 Disability laws or policies 6 Effective instructional approaches 7 Identification of students with or without disabilities 8 Understanding the CRPD 88 Others, please explain
21	Who delivered the disability-inclusive education training? (Select all that apply)	1 Formal education 2 Employer 3 NGO 4 DPO 5 Government entity 88 Others, please specify
22	If you are a teacher, how do you organize your classroom and and engage your students to meet the learning needs of everyone? (Select as many as apply)	0 I am not a teacher (Skip to question 24) 1 Small group work, working in pairs 2 Use of games, songs, or movement activities 3 Use of role modeling or role playing 4 Seating struggling learners close to the front of the room, or where they learn best 88 Others: Please explain: _____
23	If you are a teacher, how do you support struggling learners in your classroom? (Select as many as apply)	0 I am not a teacher (Skip to question 24) 1 Using braille, sign language, or assistive technologies 2 Providing additional lessons or attention for struggling learners 3 Allowing struggling learners to take extra time when needed 4 Presenting and receiving information in different ways: orally, in writing, verbally, etc. 5 Providing detailed instructions, or breaking complex tasks into smaller steps 88 Others: Please explain:
24	Are students with disabilities or learning difficulties currently included in your classroom?	0 No (Skip to Q26) 1 Yes 99 Don't Know/No Response
25	If yes, which disabilities or learning difficulties are present in your classroom?	1 physical 2 intellectual 3 vision 4 hearing 5 learning

		88 other, please state
26	To what extent do you feel <u>comfortable</u> teaching students with disabilities or learning difficulties in your school setting?	0 Not at all 1 To limited extent 2 To some extent 3 To great extent
27	To what extent do you feel <u>prepared to</u> teach (or train teachers to teach) students with disabilities or learning difficulties in your school setting?	0 Not at all 1 To limited extent 2 To some extent 3 To great extent
28	Children with <u>physical</u> disabilities can only learn to read when they are taught in special schools or classes.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
29	Children with <u>intellectual</u> disabilities can only learn to read when they are taught in special schools or classes.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
30	Children with <u>physical</u> disabilities can learn basic literacy skills in regular schools, but not advance to upper grades or advanced studies.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
31	Children with <u>intellectual</u> disabilities can learn basic literacy skills in regular schools, but not advance to upper grades or advanced studies.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
32	Children with <u>physical</u> disabilities have the ability to learn to read in regular schools when provided appropriate teacher instruction and support.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
33	Children with <u>intellectual</u> disabilities have the ability to learn to read in regular schools when provided appropriate teacher instruction and support.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
34	To what extent do you feel <u>comfortable</u> teaching students with disabilities or learning difficulties in your school setting?	0 Not at all 1 To limited extent 2 To some extent 3 To great extent
35	To what extent do you feel <u>prepared to</u> teach (or train teachers to teach) students with disabilities or learning difficulties in your school setting?	0 Not at all 1 To limited extent 2 To some extent 3 To great extent

36	Children with <u>physical</u> disabilities can only learn to read when they are taught in special schools or classes.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
37	Children with <u>intellectual</u> disabilities can only learn to read when they are taught in special schools or classes.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
38	Children with <u>physical</u> disabilities can learn basic literacy skills in regular schools, but not advance to upper grades or advanced studies.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
39	Children with <u>intellectual</u> disabilities can learn basic literacy skills in regular schools, but not advance to upper grades or advanced studies.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
40	Children with <u>physical</u> disabilities have the ability to learn to read in regular schools when provided appropriate teacher instruction and support.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
41	Children with <u>intellectual</u> disabilities have the ability to learn to read in regular schools when provided appropriate teacher instruction and support.	1 Strongly disagree 2 Somewhat disagree 3 Somewhat agree 4 Strongly agree
42	To what extent are you satisfied with the training you received?	0 Not at all 1 To limited extent 2 To some extent 3 To great extent
43	What information or supports would be helpful for you to better meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities, in your school setting? (Select all that apply)	1 Additional training 2 School-based coaching or communities of practice 3 Support from my head teacher or local school leadership 4 Teaching and learning materials 88 Other, please specify: _____
44	To what extent will you apply what you learned in this training about educating children with disabilities in your daily work?	0 Not at all 1 To limited extent 2 To some extent 3 To great extent
44 b	*Why or why not?*	*Open ended*

45	After attending this training, what specific teaching strategies do you feel prepared to use to meet the learning needs of all students in your classroom? (Select as many as apply)	1	Small group work, work in pairs or other peer engagement
		2	Use of images, manipulatives, flash cards, etc.
		3	Use of braille, sign language, or assistive technologies
		4	Use of games, songs, or movement activities
		5	Providing additional lessons or attention for struggling learners
		6	Allowing struggling learners to take extra time when needed
		7	Presenting and receiving information in different ways: orally, in writing, verbally, etc.
		8	Seating struggling learners close to the front of the room, or where they learn best
		9	Providing detailed instructions, or breaking complex tasks into smaller steps
		88	Others, please specify: _____
46	Is there anything else you wish to share about the training?		*Open ended*

Annex E: Training Observations

Screening Training Observation Findings

As part of the MCSIE evaluation, evaluators collected primary data for the virtual screening trainings by observing two screening trainings (one in Banke and one in Surkhet). The two screening trainings took place in September 2020 with observation time ranging from nine to eleven hours. In Banke (N=41, Female=17), participants included teachers, head teachers, DPO/NGO staff, and district supervisors. In Surkhet (N=33, Female=22), participants included teachers, head teachers, DPO/NGO staff, district supervisors, and additional trainers (ToT model). R4A provided training virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and training included lecture, slideshow presentations, demonstrations by facilitators, and video examples of the training content being applied in a classroom setting in Banke. Typically, screening trainings include practice sessions with peers or a small sample of the intended population. The trainings observed did not provide opportunities for participants to practice implementation of the CFM screening tool. Participants were provided opportunities to engage in discussion and provide verbal feedback about the training content; however, not all participants engaged. Observers noted that while the training reviewed the WG CFM questions and how to enter survey data using the SurveyCTO application, participants received little detailed guidance on how to implement the screening protocol from start to finish (e.g., what to do if staff encounter data errors, how children will be referred after screening, and how to maintain privacy and confidentiality).

Screening Training Observation Instrument

IDENTIFICATION / SCREENING TRAINING OBSERVATION TOOL

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

Instrument Administration: Training observation protocol to be administered by local partners.

Purpose: To evaluate the implementation of identification/screening training.

Sample: Identification/Screening Training for Teachers: Nepal, Cambodia, Malawi (1 TOT, 2 District-Level)

Evaluation Questions: Identification

Implementation Timeline: Initial (TOT) and/or Midline (District level)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBSERVERS: HOW TO USE THE INSTRUMENT

Step 1: Before observing, review the enumerator guide. Discuss with program personnel to verify you understand each item and how to record information about it.

Step 2: Obtain and review a copy of all training materials provided to participants, including training agenda, handouts, manuals, etc.

Step 3: Closely watch what is taking place during the training and record information about the items in the checklist. Mark "yes" if the behavior is observed at least once in the observation; Mark "no" if the behavior is not observed. Mark "N/A" if the behavior is not relevant (for example, if trainers do not use a slideshow presentation, mark N/A for "Trainers provide printed copies of slideshow to participants"). After the observation review items with the trainer to ensure activities were not missed, particularly practice opportunities.

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date of observation: _____

2. Name of Person Observing Training: _____

3. Length of time of training observed: _____

4. Name of the Region/District:

5. People present (check all that apply):

   ☐ Principals

   ☐ Teachers

   ☐ Head teachers

   ☐ Resource / special education teachers

   ☐ DPO/NGO staff

   ☐ District supervisors

   ☐ Trainers (Train the Trainer)

   ☐ Other, specify: _____

6. Focus of training (check all that apply):

   ☐ Identification / screening for disabilities

   ☐ Inclusive instruction

   ☐ Early grade reading / literacy

   ☐ Other, specify: _____

7. Total Number of Trainees: ___ (number only)

   a. Male: ____ (number only)

   b. Female: ____ (number only)

Part 2: Training Observation

Observable Behaviors	YES	NO	N/A
Training approach, modalities, and materials			
1. Trainers use multiple modalities to deliver training. If yes, select all that apply: ❏ Lecture ❏ A slideshow presentation to deliver content ❏ Providing printed copies of the slideshow ❏ Use of manuals, handouts, or other worksheets ❏ Trainer demonstrates the training content to provide a clear model ❏ Trainers use videos to show examples of training content being applied in a classroom setting Other, describe: _____			
2. Trainers provide opportunities for participants to engage in discussion and verbal feedback about training content			
3. Trainers provide accommodations for participants with disabilities (such as materials in Braille, sign language interpretation, accessible venue for training).			
4. Trainers write down questions and feedback from participants			
5. Trainers generally follow content and time as outlined in training agenda			
6. Participants practice applying training content through role-play exercises (with a partner or in a group)			
7. Participants practice applying training content with children during a visit to a local school			

Observable Behaviors	YES	NO	N/A
8. Participants practice applying training content remotely (via telephone or other device) with parent or caregiver			
Training content			
9. Training describes a variety of disabilities and learning difficulties If yes, select all that apply: ❏ physical ❏ intellectual ❏ vision ❏ hearing ❏ learning ❏ other, specify _____			
10. Training clearly describes the purpose(s) for screening and identification. If yes, select all purposes that apply: ❏ to determine placement into special school or resource classroom ❏ to refer to services outside of classroom or school (e.g., testing, assistive devices) ❏ to inform teacher instructional practices within mainstream schools ❏ to collect data for the government (e.g., EMIS) ❏ to collect data for the USAID project (e.g., M&E) ❏ other, specify _____			
11. Training includes detailed guidance on how to implement the identification/screening method			

Observable Behaviors	YES	NO	N/A
If yes, indicate the method(s) covered by the training: ❏ Washington Group Child Functioning Model questions (WG-CFM) ❏ checklist (other than WG-CFM) ❏ vision screening ❏ hearing screening ❏ other, specify _____			
12. Training describes conditions or environment necessary for conducting identification/screening exercise If yes, select all that apply: ❏ consent of child's parent or caregiver ❏ quiet location ❏ private location away from other students ❏ other, specify _____			
13. Training highlights diversity in student ability using positive and respectful language and terms			
14. Training includes instruction to *avoid* discussing identification/screening results with children during or directly after evaluation			
15. Training includes instruction on how to secure identification/screening results data			
16. Training includes instruction on how and with whom to share results data			
17. Training content includes discussion of referral options and resources available to parents based on identification/screening results If yes, select all services that are available:			

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Observable Behaviors	YES	NO	N/A
❑ medical clinic ❑ hearing testing ❑ vision testing ❑ cognitive testing ❑ other, specify _____			
18. The training specifically discusses strategies for participants to impart what they have learned with others in their school. If yes, what strategies are mentioned? (select all that apply) ❑ Trainees lead a small workshop or meeting to share new information with their colleagues when they return to school ❑ Trainees hold a meeting with their head teacher / school administrator / school principal ❑ Trainees follow up with colleagues through classroom observation ❑ Trainees share the content learned in a community of practice meeting / village/community meeting ❑ Other, describe: _____			

PART 3: OBSERVER REFLECTION (AFTER TRAINING ENDS)

	YES	NO	
19. Do you feel the trainers effectively explained and demonstrated the identification/screening approach? Please explain:			
20. In general, what aspects of the training were **most** effective?			

21. In general, what aspects of the training were **least** effective?

22. Do you feel those trained need any additional content or guidance?

EGR Instructional Training Observation Findings

MCSIE staff attended seven virtual EGR instructional training workshops in August and September 2020. Master trainers delivered these trainings to teachers and head teachers in Banke and Surkhet. MCSIE staff completed a structured observation form for each training session. The form included a mix of closed- and open-ended response items and collected information related to the training format and modalities, materials used, participant engagement, opportunities for practice, inclusive teaching strategies presented, and how disability was discussed.

Notable findings from the observations are as follows:
- **Trainers primarily delivered the workshop content through lecture with an accompanying slideshow.** Observers reported that there was little variety in the modality for delivering the training content.
- **Resources were not made available to participants as part of the training.** In some workshops, but not all, trainers referenced a manual and handouts and showed these on the screen—particularly in relation to developing IEPs and conducting literacy assessments—but trainers did not share these materials with participants in conjunction with the training.
- **In all cases, trainers encouraged participants to speak up, ask questions, and provide feedback on the content of the workshop.** Observers reported varying levels of participant engagement. In some cases, participants engaged only minimally. In others, only highly vocal participants spoke up. In one workshop, trainers made an effort to draw out the less vocal participants.
- **Trainers described a wide variety of disability types and highlighted diversity in student ability using positive and respectful language and terms.** Teaching strategies for including and supporting learners who are blind or have low vision, who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who have difficulty concentrating or sitting still were included in the training content. While the depth of attention given to each strategy varied across workshops, those observed included:
  - Seating students on the front bench
  - Calling students by name

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- - Telling students to write important points on the black/white board
  - Dividing work into small sections
  - Seating students with disabilities with nondisabled peers
  - Doing activities per students' interests
- **Participants did not have opportunities during the workshops to practice** the instructional techniques being described in the training (such as through role-play exercises with a partner or in a group).
- **The training content provided teachers with strategies or practical opportunities to develop inclusive practice.** The range of strategies covered in the training workshops varied, with some covering more than others. Overall, strategies included:
  - Using small group work, work in pairs, or other peer engagement
  - Using images, manipulatives, flash cards, etc.
  - Using braille, sign language, or assistive technologies
  - Using games, songs, or movement activities
  - Providing additional lessons or attention to struggling learners
  - Allowing struggling learners to take extra time when needed
  - Presenting and receiving information in different ways: orally, in writing, verbally, etc.
  - Seating struggling learners close to the front of the room or where they learn best
  - Providing detailed instructions or breaking complex tasks into smaller steps
- **In most, but not all workshops, trainers emphasized the importance of classroom physical safety and accessibility.**
- **Trainers briefly mentioned various inclusive materials and methods to help students express themselves in different ways (orally, visually, or physically)**, though this was observed in only in three of the seven training workshops and was not officially covered in the training materials.
- **Trainings generally did not cover assistive devices**, apart from two brief mentions.

Pivoting from face-to-face training to virtual training is a challenging undertaking. Observers thought the presentation slides and content, which were varied and interesting with pictures, graphics, and case studies, were the most effective aspects of the training. Another effective tactic was when trainers reviewed content at the end of each session; in at least one workshop, this review was participant-led. During another workshop, trainers invited participants to share some of their teaching experiences that connected with the training content. In addition, the informal chatting during breaks on Zoom was a positive way to keep participants engaged and to forge connections.

Less effective aspects of the training included the absence of materials and resources provided to trainees in conjunction with the workshop. Some participants requested these items, including materials shown on screen during the workshop, but participants were not provided these materials at the time of the training. Observers noted that the amount of content to be covered was too much for the abbreviated time available in a virtual setting. Observers also noted that

trainers and materials presented the content well, generally, but some topics and sessions felt rushed. In addition, in some workshops, observers witnessed trainers using outdated terminology for disabilities. Lastly, no demonstration and practice opportunities were provided. Trainers did not model the strategies described, and participants did not have time to practice these strategies.

EGR Instructional Training Observation Instrument

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TRAINING OBSERVATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

Instrument Administration: Training observation protocol to be administered by local partners.

Purpose: To evaluate the implementation of instructional training.

Sample: Instructional Training for Teachers: Nepal, Cambodia, Malawi (1 TOT, 2 District-Level)

Evaluation Questions: Training

Implementation Timeline: Initial (TOT) and/or Midline (District level)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBSERVERS: HOW TO USE THE INSTRUMENT

Step 1: Before observing, review the enumerator guide. Discuss with program personnel to verify you understand each item and how to record information about it.
Step 2: Obtain and review a copy of all training materials provided to participants, including training agenda, handouts, manuals, etc.
Step 3: Closely watch what is taking place during the training and record information about the items in the checklist. Mark "yes" if the behavior is observed at least once in the observation; Mark "no" if the behavior is not observed. Mark "N/A" if the behavior is not relevant (for example, if trainers do not use a slideshow presentation, mark N/A for "Trainers provide printed copies of slideshow to participants"). After the observation review items with the trainer to ensure activities were not missed, particularly practice opportunities.

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date of observation: _____

2. Name of Person Observing Training: _____

3. Length of time of training observed: _____

4. Name of the Region/District:

5. People present (check all that apply):
   - ☐ Principals
   - ☐ Teachers
   - ☐ Head teachers
   - ☐ Resource / special education teachers

☐ Trainers (Train the Trainer)
☐ Other, specify: _____

6. Focus of training (check all that apply):
☐ Inclusive instruction
☐ Early grade reading / literacy
☐ Other, specify: _____

7. Total Number of Trainees: ___ (number only)
   a. Male: ____ (number only)
   b. Female: ____ (number only)

PART 2: TRAINING OBSERVATION

Observable Behaviors	YES	NO	N/A
Training approach, modalities, and materials			
1. Trainers use multiple modalities to deliver training. If yes, select all that apply: ❑ Lecture ❑ A slideshow presentation to deliver content ❑ Providing printed copies of the slideshow ❑ Use of manuals, handouts, or other worksheets ❑ Trainer demonstrates the training content to provide a clear model ❑ Trainers use videos to show examples of training content being applied in a classroom setting Other, describe: _____			
2. Trainers model "I do / we do / you do" approaches in the instruction delivered.			
3. Trainers provide opportunities for participants to engage in discussion and verbal feedback about training content			
4. Trainers provide accommodations for participants with disabilities (such as materials in Braille, sign language interpretation, accessible venue for training).			
5. Trainers write down questions and feedback from participants			
6. Trainers generally follow content and time as outlined in training agenda			
7. Participants practice applying instructional approaches through role-play exercises (with a partner or in a group)			
8. Participants practice applying instructional approaches with children during a visit to a local school			
Training content			
9. Training content provides teachers with strategies or practical opportunities to develop inclusive practice. If yes, select all of the strategies or opportunities that were presented:			

Observable Behaviors	YES	NO	N/A
❏ Small group work, work in pairs or other peer engagement ❏ Use of images, manipulatives, flash cards, etc. ❏ Use of braille, sign language, or assistive technologies ❏ Use of games, songs, or movement activities ❏ Providing additional lessons or attention for struggling learners ❏ Allowing struggling learners to take extra time when needed ❏ Presenting and receiving information in different ways: orally, in writing, verbally, etc. ❏ Seating struggling learners close to the front of the room, or where they learn best ❏ Providing detailed instructions, or breaking complex tasks into smaller steps			
10. Training content describes a variety of disabilities and learning difficulties If yes, select all that apply: ❏ physical ❏ intellectual ❏ vision ❏ hearing ❏ learning ❏ other, specify _____			
11. Training content highlights diversity in student ability using positive and respectful language and terms			
12. Training content includes strategies for including and supporting students who are blind or have low vision (e.g., seating near front of class; providing magnifiers)			
13. Training content includes strategies for including and supporting students who are deaf or hard of hearing (e.g., seating near front of class; providing hearing aids; use of local sign language)			
14. Training content includes strategies for including and supporting students who have difficulty concentrating or sitting still (e.g., seating near front of class; providing breaks; giving extra time to complete tasks)			
15. Training content covers inclusive instructional strategies that are specific to teaching literacy			

Observable Behaviors	YES	NO	N/A
16. Training content includes how to intervene when a student with a disability is verbally, emotionally, or physically abused by another student or teacher			
17. Training content includes importance of seating students with disabilities with their peers without disabilities			
18. Training content includes importance of ensuring classroom is physically safe for ALL students (e.g., no visible risks that could cause physical harm)			
19. Training content includes strategies for students to receive and express information in different ways (e.g., orally, visually, physically)			
20. Training content includes <u>discussion</u> of assistive devices that schools/teachers can provide If yes, select all that apply: ❏ eyeglasses ❏ magnifier ❏ book stand ❏ hearing aids ❏ pencil with grip ❏ crutches ❏ wheelchair ❏ other, specify _____			
21. The training specifically discusses strategies for participants to impart what they have learned with others in their school. If yes, what strategies are mentioned? (select all that apply) ❏ Trainees lead a small workshop or meeting to share new information with their colleagues when they return to school ❏ Trainees hold a meeting with their head teacher / school administrator / school principal ❏ Trainees follow up with colleagues through classroom observation ❏ Trainees share the content learned in a community of practice meeting / village/community meeting ❏ Other, describe: _____			

PART 3: OBSERVER REFLECTION (AFTER TRAINING ENDS)

22. Do you feel the trainers effectively explained and demonstrated inclusive education strategies? Please explain:	**YES**	**NO**

23. In general, what aspects of the training were **most** effective?

24. In general, what aspects of the training were **least** effective?

25. Do you feel those trained need any additional content or guidance?

Annex F: References

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Annex G: Project Documents Reviewed

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