

Inclusive education in North Africa: summary of available evidence – Version 2



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Query: What is the evidence on inclusive education in North Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) in terms of national policy, and access and learning outcomes for children with disabilities? What is the evidence on the barriers for children with disabilities accessing education in the region?

Enquirer: DFID Children Youth and Education Department

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1. Overview

High numbers of children with disabilities are still excluded from both integrated and segregated education services across North Africa and the Middle East. The reasons for this are complex but are generally based on stigma, negative beliefs about disability, poverty and lack of access for children with disabilities to education, particularly in rural areas (Alkhateeb et al, 2016).

This report provides a rapid review of the evidence on inclusive education in North Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), including a review of national educational policies for disability inclusion; evidence of outcomes for children with disabilities both in terms of access to education and learning outcomes; and barriers to inclusion. The purpose of this review is to support DFID advisers and partners designing and implementing inclusive education programmes in the region.

After outlining the methodology in Section 2, Section 3 provides a summary of available evidence on inclusive education in the three focal countries, including a review of national educational policies, and data on outcomes for children with disabilities – both in terms of access and learning outcomes, as well as highlighting key gaps in the evidence. Section 4 then provides a summary of available data on factors affecting access for people with disabilities including individual factors and environmental, attitudinal and institutional barriers.

This review finds that available evidence and data on access to education and educational outcomes for children with disabilities is extremely limited in the three focal countries, with significant gaps in the evidence base including on the numbers of children with disabilities both within and out of school and their educational outcomes; factors impacting on their inclusion including a lack of evidence on the experiences of children with different types of impairment; the lived experiences of children with disabilities and the impact of educational exclusion; which types of children are most educationally marginalised; and finally evidence on the effectiveness of approaches to increase access to education.

Overall the policy environment is unsupportive of inclusive education, with an over-reliance on medical/charity-based approaches to education for children with disabilities. Although all three countries

have signed and ratified the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and both Tunisia and Morocco have ratified its Optional Protocol, evidence suggests slow domestication and continued existence of discriminatory legislation across the region. **Tunisia appears to have a more integrated approach to inclusive education** than other countries in the region in line with the national plan for school integration. However, for all three countries, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities notes concern with their medical and social welfare approach to disability (rather than rights-based), and an overreliance on the NGO sector, a lack of inclusive education legislative frameworks, implementation plans and investment, and a lack of teacher training and other classroom-based support mechanisms (UNCRPD 2011, 2017, 2018a).

Available evidence suggests **most educational programming for children with disabilities in the region falls outside of the mainstream education sector**. Whilst there is limited evidence on access overall, evidence suggests **children with disabilities have poorer educational outcomes, and significant numbers may be either out of school or within schools but not identified by school systems**. In all three countries, some measures have been taken to help increase educational inclusion, although evidence of the effectiveness of these approaches is lacking.

A summary of the key factors affecting access to education programming is provided in the table below (see Section 4 for further information and examples).

Factors affecting access to education programming for people with disabilities			
Individual	Environmental	Attitudinal	Institutional
<p>Intersecting and compounding forms of discrimination and disadvantage, with barriers differing depending on type and severity of impairment, and:</p> <p>Universal factors (fixed aspects of one's identity regardless of setting), including age, gender, disability and health status.</p> <p>Contextual factors (more complex and changeable factors and those that vary by setting), including language, caste, migration and refugee status, family status.</p> <p>Note: Girls with disabilities have poorer educational outcomes than boys with disabilities</p>	<p>Physical inaccessibility and a lack of specialist equipment, materials and rehabilitation/habilitation facilities</p> <p>Challenges and safety issues to get to school</p> <p>Inaccessible transport</p> <p>Lack of accessible curricula</p>	<p>Negative societal attitudes towards children with disabilities attending regular schools</p> <p>Stigma and discrimination</p> <p>Harassment on the way to school</p> <p>Negative family attitudes</p> <p>Negative attitudes of school leadership</p>	<p>Segregated school systems</p> <p>Uneven implementation of policies at the school level</p> <p>Lack of sufficient training for teachers and administrators</p> <p>Lack of funding, implementation, strategies and oversight.</p> <p>Discriminatory legislation and policies.</p> <p>Over-reliance on NGOs</p> <p>Lack of coordination between government departments</p> <p>Lack of disability disaggregated data within education systems.</p>

2. Methodology

This rapid research query has been conducted as systematically as possible within 5.5 combined days of researcher and expert time. The methodology is described below.

Search strategy: Studies were identified through a variety of search strategies;

- **The review prioritised existing syntheses, evidence reviews, and systematic reviews** where possible in order to draw on the fullest range of evidence possible. However, the two systematic reviews on inclusive education identified (Van Mieghem et al, 2018; Amor et al, 2018), do not include evidence from Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia.
- **Google and relevant electronic databases** (PubMed, Science Direct, and Google Scholar) for priority sources using a selection of key search terms¹.
- **Review of key disability portals and resource centres**, including the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, Disability Data Portal, Source, International Centre for Evidence in Disability, the Impact Initiative, and Sightsavers Research Centre.
- **Disability-focused journals**, such as Disability & Society, and the Asia-Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal.

Criteria for inclusion: To be eligible for inclusion in this rapid review of the literature, studies had to fulfil the following criteria:

- **Focus:** Relevant data and evidence on both mainstream educational programmes as well as specialised programmes targeting children with disabilities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.
- **Time period:** 2008² – 2019.
- **Language:** English, French (please note this is not a comprehensive review of all documentation available given the limited timeframe involved in the query)
- **Publication status:** publicly available and published online.
- **Geographic focus:** Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

3. Evidence on inclusive education in North Africa

This section summarises the evidence base on inclusive education in North Africa (specifically Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia).

Available evidence and data on access to education and educational outcomes for children with disabilities is extremely limited in the three focal countries. This review identified two recent systematic reviews of inclusive education (Van Mieghem et al, 2018; Amor et al, 2018), neither of which included data on Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia. This review found a lack of peer-reviewed academic articles or evaluations of initiatives in the region, with the majority of available evidence from grey literature.

There remain considerable **gaps in the evidence base** on inclusive education/educational outcomes for children with disabilities in the region, reflecting limited inclusive programming in these countries to date. Key gaps from the region include:

- A lack of data on the numbers of children with disabilities both within and out of school;

¹ Key search terms included: education AND inclusive/ disabled / disability / disabilities, impairment, deaf, blind, wheelchair AND interventions, programmes, evaluations, reviews, research, study AND North Africa/ Tunisia/ Morocco/Algeria

² Note: The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk reviews evidence from 2008 onwards as this is the year that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol came into force.

- A lack of evidence on educational outcomes of children with disabilities within the school system;
- A lack of evidence on the lived experiences of children with disabilities and the impact of educational exclusion;
- A lack of data on disability and intersectionality – and specifically which types of children are most educationally marginalised;
- A lack of evidence on the effectiveness of approaches to increased inclusion;
- A lack of evidence on children with psychosocial and mental health related impairments.

With these key gaps in mind, the following provides a brief summary of the limited data and evidence available by country:

3.1 Algeria

Education Policy

In Algeria, the 2002 Protection and Promotion of Persons with Disabilities Act recognises the right of persons with disabilities to access education, health, training and employment. The right to education is enshrined in Arts. 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the Education Act (Act No. 08-04 of 23 January 2008), and includes provisions for special needs³ although there is no specific mention of disability or definition of 'special needs' - it is worth noting that the State's definition of disability is also non CRPD compliant⁴. Several regulations are intended to ensure children with certain disabilities have access to schooling including opening of special classes in schools, assessments and school examinations for children with visual or hearing impairments (UNCRPD, 2015a).

Algeria signed and ratified the UNCRPD in 2007 and 2009 respectively, although it has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol meaning an independent complaints mechanism for the Convention has yet to be established.⁵ In the Concluding Observations on the initial (and to date) only submission in 2015 to the Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee highlights concern that Algeria has yet to harmonise its legislation in line with the Convention including Law No. 02-09 of May 2002 and Executive Decree No. 14-204 of 15 July 2014, which are mostly based on the medical model of disability. Specifically, this legislation fails to recognise the principles of non-discrimination and equality for persons with disabilities, including discriminatory policies and stigmatising derogatory terms. Further, the Committee reports there is no policy on the right to inclusive education for children with disabilities, or strategy to improve inclusiveness of the education system (UNCRPD, 2018a).

Educational outcomes for children with disabilities

There is a lack of data on the educational outcomes of children with disabilities in Algeria, including on the numbers of children both in and out of school. However, according to figures listed in Algeria's 2018 Reply to the List of Issues of the CRPD⁶, **a significant number of children with disabilities are either out of school or are in school but have not been identified as having an impairment**. A significant

³ Article 14 stipulates: "The State ensures that children with special needs enjoy the right to education. The national education system works with hospitals and other relevant entities to ensure that pupils with disabilities or chronic illnesses receive appropriate educational support and have access to schooling".

⁴ The term disability is defined in Algeria's 2002 Disability Act as "*anyone, regardless of age or gender, who has one or more hereditary, congenital or acquired disabilities and is limited in the exercise of one or more basic activities of everyday personal and social life owing to an impairment of his or her mental and/or motor and/or physiological-sensory functions*". (UNCRPD, 2015a, p.9)

⁵ <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>

⁶ The reply cites a 2006 disability study which identified a 0.1% prevalence rate for children age 0-19 with disabilities which would mean 67,728 children with disabilities. The report states 4,530 pupils are in special classes (partial integration) and 32,550 studies are fully integrated into mainstream classes. This would leave 30648 children with disabilities unaccounted for.

number of children with disabilities are still living in residential alternative care institutions (UNCRPD, 2018). A 2017 report by the US State department notes that **most programmes for children with disabilities are in social centres, rather than schools** (USDS, 2017). Algeria's 2015 submission to the UNCRPD Committee notes that in 2013/14 there were 201 '**specialized establishments**' catering for the needs of children with disabilities. According to the same report, 18,846 children and adolescents attended these establishments in 2013/14, with over two-thirds (12,951 people) enrolled in centres for children with intellectual disabilities (UNCRPD, 2015).

The limited data on educational outcomes suggests that **children with disabilities within educational programming are less likely to complete higher levels of schooling**:

- Anecdotal reports from advocacy groups suggest that children with disabilities rarely attend school beyond secondary level (USDS, 2017).
- According to the 2015 submission to the Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2015), in the 2012/13 end-of-year examinations children with disabilities educated in both specialised centres and mainstream schools achieved a 92% pass rate in primary education, a 58% pass rate in lower secondary education, and a 47% pass rate for high school diploma.
- A study presented at a 2016 convention organised by the Algerian Government's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research reported a small increase in the proportion of students with special needs taking the Baccalaureate examination between 2010 (0.034% or 162 people) and 2016 (0.059% or 487 people) (Oumokrane et al, 2016).⁷

Available evidence suggests **most educational programming for children with disabilities falls outside of the mainstream education sector in Algeria**, with provision varying by region and amongst mainstream and specialised schools:⁸

- In their Concluding Observations to Algeria's 2015 submission, the CRPD note concern that the education of children with disabilities falls under the Minister of National Solidarity, rather than the Ministry of Education, leading to **segregated education for children with disabilities** (UNCRPD, 2018a).
- A 2016 study by Handicap International (HI) (now Humanity and Inclusion) in three provinces in Algeria (Wilaya de Tizi Ouzou, Wilaya de Batna and Wilaya d'Oran) identified 493 children with disabilities in 15 mainstream and 14 specialised centres, including 54% boys and 46% girls.⁹ Of these 493 children, the vast majority 86% (426) were being educated in 'specialised establishments', with the remaining children (67) attending mainstream schools (HI, 2016a).
- The 2015 submission to the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities notes that **pilot classes for children with 'slight intellectual impairments'**¹⁰ **have started in mainstream schools** in a number of regions of Algeria (UNCRPD, 2015). However, the report does not include any further details, and this review was unable to identify any available data on the results of this pilot.

3.2 Morocco

Education policy

In Morocco, Article 1 of Act No. 07-92 stipulates that the upbringing, education, training, rehabilitation and social integration of persons with disabilities are a national duty and responsibility. Under the 2004

⁷ Please note the methodology for this study was unclear.

⁸ Please note that whilst some of the below articulates barriers to children with disabilities accessing quality education, section 3 summarises barriers across the three contexts.

⁹ Please note the methodology for this study was unclear in the report.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Algeria's submission to the UNCRPD uses non rights-based language throughout.

Family Code, children with disabilities are also entitled to special care including education and training appropriate to their disability in order to facilitate their integration into society (UNCRPD, 2015b).

Morocco signed the CRPD on 30 March 2007 and ratified it and its Optional Protocol on 4 December 2009 (Kanter et al, 2015a). According to Morocco's 2015 submission to the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the 14th pillar of the National Charter on Education and Training, calls for an improvement in educational conditions and the provision of care for persons affected by disabilities or facing physical, psychological or learning difficulties and requiring support to enable them to overcome those difficulties. It does not give evidence of how this is being guaranteed in practice, although the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training has issued various memoranda, decrees and guidelines in support of this aim. These include a memorandum (No. 98/104) concerning the right of all children with mild or moderate disabilities to enrol in both integrated and regular classes in public schools, and a memorandum (No. 3-2274 of 30 April 2013) concerning the adaptation of supervision and qualifying examinations to the needs of students with writing and speaking difficulties (UNCRPD 2015b).

In the concluding remarks on Morocco's initial report, the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities notes with concern that *'the concept of disability in various national laws, adopted before the ratification of the Convention, is contrary to the human rights model of the Convention. It also notes the prevalence of the medical approach, focusing mainly on the prevention of impairments and on health treatment or attention that is not in line with the recognition of persons with disabilities as human-rights holders'* (UNCRPD, 2017, p.2).

Educational outcomes for children with disabilities

Available data and evidence from Morocco suggests a **significant disparity between the educational outcomes of children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers**. Evidence includes:

- According to a 2015 UNICEF report, **only 32% of children with disabilities are enrolled in school** in Morocco (UNICEF, 2015). This is supported by results of the 2014 national census which found that that **66.5% of people with disabilities have never attended school**, in comparison with 35.3% of people without disabilities (Lkhoul, 2017).
- A mixed-methods survey in Morocco and Tunisia found that **children with disabilities have generally achieved a lower level of basic skills** (reading, writing and mathematics) than children without disabilities (Trani et al, 2017).
- The 2014 census (which used the Washington Group short set of questions) found that **67.1% of people with disabilities were illiterate, compared with 30% of people without disabilities**, whilst the great majority (79.5%) of women with disabilities had no educational attainment compared to just over half (53.4%) of men with disabilities (Lkhoul, 2017).
- In terms of the educational attainment levels of people with disabilities compared to non-disabled people, the census found the following:
 - 17.1% of people with disabilities compared with 28.6% of people without disabilities had educational attainment at **primary level**;
 - 9.8% of people with disabilities compared with 25.1% of people without disabilities had educational attainment at **secondary level**;
 - 1.5% of people with disabilities compared with 6.4% of people without disabilities had educational attainment at **higher level** (Lkhoul, 2017).
- A 2016 HI study on educational service provision in two regions in Morocco (Rabat Salé Zemmour Zaer (RSZZ) and Souss Massa Drâa (SMD)) found a **greater proportion of boys (68%) than girls (32%) with disabilities receiving education** (n=1034). Over half of these children (60%) were at specialised centres, 35% in integrated classes, and just 5% in mainstream schools (HI, 2016c).

Available evidence suggests **most educational programming for children with disabilities falls outside of the mainstream education sector** in Morocco:

- The UNCRC notes that Morocco has not engaged in building an inclusive system of education and that it **relies too much on NGOs** for the provision of specialised services to children with disabilities (UNCRC, 2014). Hayes & Bulat (2017) support this finding, noting that Morocco has a limited budget allocated for special education or inclusive education, hence its **over-reliance on NGOs and civil society** to educate children with disabilities.
- According to Morocco's submission to the UNCRPD, in 2013 there were 555 integrated classes established to support children with disabilities in 383 educational institutions throughout the country. A total of 5,998 male and 2,226 female students benefited from these provisions. The report also notes that in 2004 over 60,000 children with motor impairments or chronic diseases were attending regular classes alongside other children (UNCRPD 2015b). However, the UNCRPD's response to this submission noted that **most children with disabilities are in segregated special education rather than included in the mainstream education system** (UNCRPD, 2017).
- The UNCRC notes that **the vast majority of children with disabilities in Morocco do not benefit from sufficient support**, such as the presence of a multidisciplinary specialised team, social workers, and an individual follow-up process to ensure their inclusion in mainstream classes (UNCRC, 2014).
- The same report notes that children with disabilities are often placed in '**centres de sauvegarde**' [safeguarding centres] together with child victims of violence, children in street situations, children removed from their family environment and children in conflict with the law. According to the UNCRC, children in these facilities are deprived of their liberty and are often subject to poor living conditions which amount to ill treatment (UNCRC, 2014). Similarly, the concluding observations of the UNCRPD report also highlights reports of '*violence against, abuse of and use of corporal punishment on children with disabilities, including abandoned children with disabilities, in the home, in alternative care and day-care settings and in schools*' (UNCRPD, 2017, p.3).
- In 2014, the UNCRC expressed concern that **Morocco is continuing to apply a medical understanding of disability**, which allows for the integration of children with disabilities as long as their capacities allow, rather than seeking to eliminate the physical, socioeconomic and cultural barriers that prevent the full inclusion of children with disability in schools and society and the full enjoyment of their rights (UNCRC, 2014).
- The 2016 HI study found 27 mainstream schools where children with disabilities are educated amongst other children (15 in RSZZ and 12 in SMD), seven schools in each region with 'integrated classes' (which are part of mainstream schools but where children with disabilities are educated separately, sometimes with links to mainstream classes), three specialist centres in SMD and one specialist centre in RSZZ (these often cater to specific types of disability).¹¹ In the 12 mainstream schools studied, children with disabilities represent 4% of enrolled pupils in RSZZ and 3% in SMD (HI, 2016c).

3.3 Tunisia

Education policy

In Tunisia, the 2008 Law No. 9 has a provision, in Art. 4, that the state shall endeavour to ensure that children with special needs are able to enjoy the right to education. However, there is no specific

¹¹ Please note that the methodology for this study was unclear.

mention of disability or definition of 'special needs'. Article 17 of the Child Protection Code has a provision that children with mental or physical disabilities have the right to medical care and treatment, and to sufficient education and rehabilitation to ensure their self-sufficiency and facilitate their active participation in society (UNCRPD, 2010).

Tunisia signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 30 March 2007 and ratified it and its Optional Protocol in 2008 (one of the first State Parties to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol) (Kanter et al, 2015b) According to Tunisia's first 2010 submission to the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, children with disabilities have the right to enter public schools without restriction or condition. Art. 4 of Law No. 80 (2002), which was revised and supplemented by Laws No. 9 and No. 10 of 2008, provides that the State shall endeavour to create the appropriate conditions for children with special needs to enjoy that right (although again there is no specific mention of disability or definition of 'special needs'). Art. 10 of law No. 83 (2005) provides that the State shall ensure that children with disabilities have the right to tuition, education, rehabilitation and training as other children, and that they shall enjoy that right on an equal basis (UNCRPD, 2010).

Tunisia formulated a **national plan for school integration** for the period 2003-2010¹². The plan provided for the integration of persons with various disabilities in mainstream schools (UNCRPD, 2010).

Educational outcomes for children with disabilities

Limited available data and evidence from Tunisia suggests that **educational access for children with disabilities is limited, and educational outcomes are poorer for children with disabilities than those without disabilities**. Evidence includes:

- According to UNESCO's 2018 report on education and disability across a range of countries, in Tunisia, **75.3% of people aged 15-29 with disabilities have ever attended school**, with significantly more males (80.1%) than females (67.7%) having done so.
- A 2014 report by UNICEF highlights a **high dropout rate among children with disabilities over the years of schooling**, with only one quarter attending college (UNICEF, 2014b).
- A mixed-methods study undertaken by Humanity and Inclusion in 2014 in Tunis and Beja¹³, found that **children with disabilities attained significantly lower levels of education** than their counterparts without disabilities (HI, 2014)¹⁴ The study found that 38.3% of people with disabilities over the age of eight can read and write, compared with 65.2% for the non-disabled control group. It also found that 50.3% of people with disabilities have ever attended school, compared with 73.7% for the control group (HI, 2014).
- In terms of **school dropout** the study found that 31.1% of people with disabilities had attended primary school. Furthermore, 19.2% had attended school beyond primary level, compared with 38.3% of people without disabilities. In total, 19.4% of people with disabilities **cite their disability itself** as the reason for dropping out suggesting self-stigma and attitudinal barriers, with a similar proportion giving **failure at school** as the reason. The other cases of school dropout are explained by a lack of financial resources. Of the people with disabilities surveyed who had access to school, 30% faced difficulties. During interviews they cited a lack of transport or unaffordable transport costs as problems they encountered. A minority of people with disabilities also experienced **harassment on the way to school (including physical violence)** and the issue of not having anyone to accompany them to school (HI, 2014).

¹² Note that this is the latest information available in English from the UNCRPD; a 2018 update exists in Arabic, however.

¹³ The study included a household survey of 2,935 households containing 12,269 people, of which 695 were detected as disabled using the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, and of which 653 were surveyed (excluding children under 5 who were deemed too young to do an individual survey)

¹⁴ Note that data from this report is at population level (rather than exclusively focusing on children).

- Another 2016 HI study on disability inclusive education in three regions of Tunisia (Bizert, Siliana and Kebili) identified 402 children with disabilities receiving education, with **more boys (63%) than girl (37%) with disabilities in education**.¹⁵ It is noteworthy that Siliana had slightly more girls with disabilities receiving education than boys with disabilities (40 compared to 39), whilst the other two regions had far greater numbers of boys with disabilities in education. This report covered three private preschools, 18 primary schools (one of which is private), and seven specialised centres for children with disabilities (6 of which are private) (HI, 2016b).

Evidence suggests **education for children with disabilities largely falls outside of the education system, despite the national plan for school integration:**

- According to their submission to the UN Committee for the rights of persons with disabilities, **education for children with disabilities falls under the Ministry of Social Affairs, rather than the Ministry of Education** (UNCRPD, 2010). This is not in line with the UNCRPD.
- In the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities concluding remarks, in practice **the inclusion strategy is not equally implemented in schools and many integrated schools are ill-equipped to receive children with disabilities, with the lack of training for teachers remaining a key concern**. (UNCRPD, 2011)
- According to a 2016 report by the US State Department, there are **approximately 300 government-administered schools for children with disabilities**, five schools for blind students, one higher-education school, and one vocational training institution in Tunisia (USDS, 2016).
- Tunisia also has a network **of 279 specialised education centres** managed by associations, covering 80% of the country and catering for 16,000 persons with disabilities. The centres provide tuition, rehabilitation and training (UNCRPD, 2010).

4. Barriers for children with disabilities to access education in the region

The following section summarises the evidence on factors affecting access to education for children with disabilities in the region, based on a framework used by the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk that combines a recognition of **individual factors** that can marginalise people with disabilities (e.g. multiple intersecting factors such as age, gender, impairments) and the **environmental, attitudinal and institutional barriers** that limit or exclude people with impairments.¹⁶

4.1 Individual factors

DFID's **Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development 2018-23 recognises that people with disabilities face intersecting and compounding forms of discrimination**. Disability intersects with other sources of discrimination or social disadvantage which may limit access to education programming such as age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, impairment type, or economic poverty (Wapling, 2018; DFID, 2018).

In this report, we use a **marginalisation framework**¹⁷ to distinguish between individual factors affecting access to education. This framework highlights intersections between disability, and other aspects of an individual's identity (such as age and gender), and contextual factors (such as refugee status, geography and economic situation).

¹⁵ Please note the methodology for this study was unclear.

¹⁶ Disability Inclusion Helpdesk training by Lorraine Wapling (December 2018)

¹⁷ As used by DFID's Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) programme to understand who is marginalised based on their universal and contextual characteristics (Wapling, 2018).

Evidence suggests **girls with disabilities have poorer educational outcomes than boys with disabilities**:

- In Tunisia, the proportion of young women (aged 15-29) with disabilities who reported having ever attended school was significantly lower than the proportion of men the same age with disabilities (67.7% compared with 80.1%) (UNESCO, 2018). In Morocco, far more boys than girls (5,998 compared with 2,226) have benefitted from integrated classes for children with disabilities (UNCRPD, 2015b).
- Other evidence from the 2014 Moroccan census shows that women with disabilities have significantly lower levels of educational attainment compared to men with disabilities (79.5% compared with 53.4%) (Lkhouf, 2017).
- A mixed-methods study from Morocco and Tunisia shows that **boys with disabilities are more likely to attend school than girls with disabilities** (Trani et al, 2017).

In addition to gender, evidence from Tunisia highlights other individual factors affecting access to education more broadly including **poverty levels, regional disparities, child labor and age** (with the probability of being outside of the school system increasing with age). (UNICEF, 2014a). Humanity & Inclusion's mixed-methods study in Tunisia found that **27.9% of people with disabilities cited poverty** as the reason for not attending school, compared with 13.8% of people without disabilities. (HI, 2014). Trani et al (2017) note **financial barriers** in both Morocco and Tunisia, with the cost of transport costs to school mentioned in addition to other school costs. Evidence from Morocco and Tunisia suggests that **children with disabilities in rural settings are less likely to attend school** than those in urban settings (Trani et al, 2017).

Evidence from a mixed-method survey in Tunisia and Morocco suggest that the **age at which a child acquires an impairment impacts on their educational outcomes, with children who have impairments at younger ages more at risk**. The survey found that children who acquire their impairment before the age of nine are less likely to attend school than those who acquire it after that age and compared to children without disabilities. Furthermore, where an impairment is acquired after age nine, there is no statistically significant difference in school attendance in Morocco, and in Tunisia there is a lower risk of not attending school than for children whose impairment already existed prior to them starting school (Trani et al, 2017).

It is important to note that **barriers can differ depending on the types and severity of impairment** and can require different solutions to access education programming.

4.2 Environmental factors

The educational system and educational programmes may be **less accessible** for people with disabilities. Examples of environmental barriers cited in the literature include:

- **Physical inaccessibility and a lack of specialist equipment, materials and rehabilitation/habilitation facilities** (UNCRPD, 2011; UNICEF, 2014). A Humanity & Inclusion report notes that 11.4% of people with disabilities surveyed in two regions of Tunisia report that school inaccessibility was the reason for their lack of attendance at school (in comparison with 5.7% of people without disabilities) (HI, 2014). In Algeria the extent to which school infrastructure is accessible varies across provinces, depending on impairment type and whether the school is mainstream or specialised. The 2016 HI study found 60% schools and 43% specialised centres have pathways that are inaccessible to wheelchairs. This situation is worse in Tizi Ouzou (82%) compared with 45% in Batna and 14% in Oran. Furthermore, whilst 57% of specialised centres are equipped with signage for blind or partially sighted pupils, no schools were identified as having such accessible signage (Oran does better on this, with 71% of its specialised centres having such signage, compared with only 18% and 17% in Tizi Ouzou and

Batna respectively (HI, 2016a). In terms of the differences between mainstream schools and specialised centres:

- 7% mainstream schools have accessible higher storeys compared with 50% of specialised centres;
- 67% mainstream schools have accessible classrooms compared with 71% of specialised centres;
- Less than half (47%) of mainstream schools have accessible common areas compared with 79% of specialised centres (HI, 2016a).

In the HI study in Morocco, no mainstream schools or specialised centres had accessible signage for blind or partially sighted students (HI, 2016c). In terms of the differences between mainstream schools and specialised centres:

- 20% mainstream schools had **accessible higher storeys** compared with 50% of specialised centres;
- Just over half (54%) of mainstream schools had **accessible classrooms** compared with 75% of specialised centres;
- Half of mainstream schools had **accessible common areas** compared with 75% of specialised centres (HI, 2016c).

In the HI Tunisia study, over half (57%) of schools and 43% of specialised centres had pathways that are inaccessible to wheelchairs. This is the case in 90% of educational establishments in Kebili, compared with 50% in Siliana and 20% in Bizerte. In terms of the differences in accessibility between mainstream and specialised centres:

- 5% mainstream schools had **accessible higher storeys** compared with 14% of specialised centres;
 - Just over half (52%) of mainstream schools had **accessible classrooms** compared with 57% of specialised centres;
 - Only 20% mainstream schools had accessible common areas compared with 50% of specialised centres (HI, 2016b).
- **Lack of accessible toilets** is a further barrier according to teachers surveyed in Morocco (Bakhshi et al, 2016). For example, in Algeria, HI found 33% of mainstream schools have accessible toilets compared with 64% of specialised centres; in Morocco just over half (53%) mainstream schools had **accessible toilets** compared with 75% of specialised centres; and in Tunisia less than half (43%) both mainstream schools and specialised centres had accessible toilets (HI, 2016a; HI, 2016b; HI, 2016c).
 - **Lack of people to accompany** children with disabilities to school and lack of safety during transit to school (HI, 2014).
 - **Lack of accessible transport** (Morocco and Tunisia) (UNCRPD, 2017; Kanter et al, 2015; HI, 2014). The HI study in Algeria notes that 33% mainstream schools and 36% specialised centres provide transport to and from school. Oran far exceeds the other provinces, with 71% of its schools/specialised centres offering this, compared to 27% and 18% in Tizi Ouzou and Batna respectively (HI, 2016a). The HI Morocco study notes that just 16% mainstream schools and 75% specialised centres provided transport to and from school (HI, 2016b). The HI Tunisia study found that while 86% (six out of seven) specialised centres provided transport to and from school, none of the mainstream schools included in the study provided accessible transport (HI, 2016b)
 - **Large class sizes**, which make inclusive education harder to deliver (Morocco) (Bakhshi et al, 2016).
 - **Lack of knowledge of sign language** (Morocco) (UNCRPD, 2017).

4.3 Attitudinal factors

Attitudinal and social barriers may discourage inclusion in particular:

- **Negative societal attitudes** towards children with disabilities attending regular schools (Morocco) (UNCRPD, 2017).
- **Stigma and discrimination** which impact on overall outcomes of people with disabilities, including educational outcomes (Trani et al, 2015).
- **Harassment on the way to school** (including physical violence and threatening behaviour) (HI, 2014).
- **Negative family attitudes towards children with disabilities attending school.** Research in Tunisia and Morocco found negative attitudes of extended family members towards sending children with disabilities to school (Trani et al, 2017). The same report cites evidence of some poorer parents using their disabled child's **poor academic results to justify them dropping out of school** (Trani et al, 2017). A doctoral thesis analysing the integration of children with psychosocial impairments into mainstream education in Algeria surveyed parents of children with and without psychosocial impairments and teachers. Only 3.3% of parents of children without impairments supported the idea of children with disabilities being educated in mainstream schools (believing instead that they should attend specialised centres), in comparison with 66.7% of parents of children with disabilities. This suggests that the **negative attitudes of other parents** may be an obstacle for children with disabilities attending mainstream schools (Boukhelif, M. 2014-2015, cited in Bouzid Baa and Mekhoukh, 2016).¹⁸
- **Parental refusal to send their children to school** was given as the reason for lack of school attendance by 38.6% of people with disabilities in a mixed-method report by Humanity and Inclusion in Tunisia. This compares to 19.2% of people without disabilities. The report notes that parental refusal is often linked to children's disability or to lack of financial resources (HI, 2014).
- **Attitudes of school leadership:** The mixed-method study in the Sous-Massa region of Morocco showed that **inclusion of children with disabilities in primary schools depends mainly on headteacher attitudes**. Primary headteachers interviewed were largely in favour of the principle of inclusive education but many were not familiar with the concept of 'inclusive education'. The study also showed that at lower secondary level, headteachers generally did not think their schools were a conducive environment for children with disabilities unless impairments were minor. Reasons for this belief include large class sizes (commonly over 40 students) and the inaccessibility of schools. Some headteachers had vague ideas about the needs of children with disabilities, noting that including them would be 'very complicated' and would require unaffordable additional measures (Bakhshi et al, 2016 p.71). Trani et al (2017) report anecdotal evidence of a child using a wheelchair in Morocco being banned from school by the headteacher.
- **Negative attitudes of teachers:** HI studies in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco have highlighted **negative attitudes of teachers as a barrier in all three countries**. In Algeria, 57% of teachers refused entry to children with disabilities whilst 13% complained about their inclusion in their schools (HI, 2016a). Just under a quarter (24%) of teachers in Tunisia (HI, 2016b) and 38% of teachers in Morocco (HI, 2016c) complained about the arrival of a child with disabilities or refused them entry. However, it is noteworthy that all three studies looked at low numbers of educational establishments. In the RSZZ region of Morocco, a third of teachers found that children with disabilities had the same problems as other children, whilst two thirds thought they had specific difficulties (HI, 2016c). The doctoral thesis referred to above showed that 40% of teachers surveyed were opposed to the concept of the inclusion of children with psychosocial impairments in mainstream classes, with just 6.7% are in favour. Only 36.7% of teachers

¹⁸ Please note the sample size for this study was not clear.

support the presence of children with disabilities in mainstream classes (Boukhelif, M. 2014-2015, cited in Bouzid Baa and Mekhoukh, 2016).

- **Negative attitudes towards inclusive education also exist amongst children with disabilities' peers.** Nearly 23% of students reported that children with disabilities should not be at school, with the same proportion not knowing their opinion on this matter. Such negative attitudes from both teachers and other students may make attending mainstream school particularly difficult for Moroccan children with disabilities (Ibid.).

4.4 Institutional factors

Institutional factors include:

- **Segregated school systems**, where education for children with disabilities are under the remit as social rather than educational ministries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) (UNCRPD, 2011, 2017, 2018a).
- **Lack of accessible integrated classes.** A 2016 mixed-method study in 729 primary schools and 148 secondary schools in the Sous-Massa region in Morocco found that between 2004 and 2015, **the number of 'integrated classes'¹⁹ increased from 14 to 57.** However, integrated education remains problematic in rural areas of the region since fewer schools are accessible or equipped for children with disabilities. In addition, 'integrated classes' within mainstream primary schools in Morocco are reported by headteachers as being at risk of becoming like "nurseries" rather than places of education if they are not correctly supervised. This poses clear risks for the quality of education received by children with disabilities placed in these classes (Bakhshi et al., 2016). This study comprised a survey and qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, children with and without disabilities, and their parents (Bakhshi et al., 2016).
- **Lack of accessible or tailored curricula** (Morocco) (UNCRPD, 2017, Bakhshi et al, 2016), and a lack of exam accommodations. The HI study in Algeria found that 86% specialised centres have a tailored curriculum for children with disabilities compared with only 20% mainstream schools. Reasons given by educational establishments for not tailoring their curricula include a lack of appropriate staff, a lack of information, a lack of experience, and that the national curriculum already applies to children with disabilities due to the principle of inclusion (HI, 2016a). The HI study in Tunisia found that 76% mainstream schools in the three regions had a tailored curriculum for children with disabilities compared with 43% of specialised centres (HI, 2016b).
- Lack of systems in place to **support the transition of children with disabilities from primary to lower secondary** (Bakhshi et al, 2016).
- **Uneven implementation of inclusive education policies at the school level** (Tunisia) (UNCRPD, 2011).
- **Lack of sufficient training for teachers and administrators** (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco) (UNCRPD, 2011; UNCRPD, 2017; USDS, 2017; UNICEF, 2014b), the insufficient number of specialised teaching staff (UNCRPD, 2015b) and lack of staffing in general in education centres for children with disabilities (Tunisia) (Kanter et al, 2015). For example in Algeria, HI found a huge variation in the training of teaching professionals across regions, with the vast majority (92%) in Wilaya Batna trained in disability issues²⁰ compared with just 18% and 7% in Wilaya d'Oran and Wilaya de Tizi Ouzou respectively. Furthermore, **only 13% of teaching**

¹⁹ Integrated classes are where children with disabilities are educated in separate classes within mainstream schools.

²⁰ Training in disability issues allows teaching professionals to understand the different kinds of disability and to improve their support for children with disabilities.

professionals across all three regions had received training in inclusive education²¹ (HI, 2016a). The CRPD also highlight a **lack of trained teachers, assistants and other professionals** to carry out a policy of inclusive education in Algeria (UNCRPD, 2018a). In Morocco, HI found that that 95% of teaching professionals working in specialised centres in the two provinces studied had received training in disability issues compared with only 60% of those in mainstream schools. Furthermore, no mainstream school teaching professionals had received training in inclusive education compared with 25% of those working in specialised centres (HI, 2016c). In Tunisia, 50% of teaching professionals have received training on disability, whilst only 27% have been trained in inclusive education (HI, 2016b).

- **The capacity of teachers and schools to respond to individual circumstances** including specific needs as a result of impairments (UNICEF, 2014).
- **Lack of funding, implementation strategies and oversight.**
- **Discriminatory legislation and policies.** For example, in Morocco, children with disabilities need a medical certificate diagnosing their disability before they can enter school (even inclusive ones), in contravention of the CRPD (Hayes & Bulat, 2017). The cost of the medical appointment required to obtain the certificate will limit educational opportunities for children with disabilities who come from low-income families. Hayes and Bulat further note that the medical certificate does not inform teachers about a specific student's educational needs.
- **Lack of a reporting mechanisms** for parents and children with disabilities who are denied access to education or reasonable accommodation (Morocco) (UNCRPD, 2017).
- **Over-reliance on NGOs** to provide support for children with disabilities. Hayes & Bulat (2017) note that, in Morocco, this leads to a situation of large discrepancies arising in the quality of service provision, a tendency of civil society not to follow the national curriculum, and, due to tuition costs, the exclusion from education of children with disabilities from low-income families.
- **A lack of follow up and accountability mechanisms** (Tunisia) (UNICEF, 2014b).
- **A lack of coordination between various government departments involved in supporting children with disabilities into education** (Tunisia) (UNICEF, 2014b).
- **The lack of integration between education, health and social systems** (Morocco) (UNCRPD, 2015b).
- **Lack of disability disaggregated data** within education systems.

²¹ Training in inclusive education comprises the measures to take to provide an adequate education to all children learning together.

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