

LASER PULSE

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Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (PULSE)

Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) Final Evaluation Report

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

This report presents the results of an inclusive education evaluation completed under the Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) for learners with disabilities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal activities. The findings in this report will help the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its partners inform adaptations to its inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal and plan for new inclusive education programming globally. This project is supported through a buy-in from USAID's Center for Education (EDU) within the Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation (IPI) (USAID/IPI/EDU) through the Long-Term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER) mechanism. The LASER buy-in mechanism is currently in place between USAID's Research (R) Division in the Innovation, Technology, and Research (ITR) Hub within IPI (USAID/IPI/ITR/R). LASER Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (PULSE), is a consortium led by Purdue Applied Research Institute (PARI) at Purdue University under cooperative agreement #7200AA18C00009. The MCSIE study has been executed by Inclusive Development Partners (IDP) under a sub-contract with Purdue University.

ABOUT LASER PULSE

LASER PULSE is a \$70 million program funded through USAID's ITR Hub that delivers research-driven solutions to field-sourced development challenges in USAID partner countries. The consortium-led PARI, with core partners Purdue University, Catholic Relief Services, Indiana University, Makerere University, and the University of Notre Dame, implements the LASER PULSE program through a growing network of 3,700+ researchers and development practitioners in 86 countries. LASER PULSE collaborates with USAID missions, bureaus, independent offices, and other local stakeholders to identify research needs for critical development challenges and funds and strengthens the capacity of researcher-practitioner teams to co-design solutions that translate into policy and practice.

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Acronyms

ACL	All Children Learning
ACR-Cambodia	All Children Reading Cambodia
AIM	Areas of Intervention Mapping
CDPO	Cambodian Disabled People's Organization
CDR	Center for Development Research
CEHRD	Center for Education and Human Resource Development
CFM	Child Functioning Module
CIL-Kaski	Independent Living Centre
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSL	Cambodian Sign Language
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCHA	Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance
DDL	Development Data Library
DDWC	District Disable Welfare Committee
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DEC-Banke	Disable Empowerment and Communications Center Nepal
DEC-Surkhet	Disable Empowerment Centre
DEEP	Data and Evidence for Education Programs
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
E3	Economic Growth, Education, and Environment Bureau
ED	Office of Education
EDU	Center for Education at USAID
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHRD	Forum for Human Rights and Disabled
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HDDSN	Holistic Disability Development Society of Nepal
HI	Humanity & Inclusion
HRSADC	Human Rights, Social Awareness, and Development Centre
IDP	Inclusive Development Partners
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IET	Integrated Education and Training
IKI	Invest in Knowledge Initiative
IRB	International Review Board
J&A	Juarez & Associates
KII	Key Informant Interview
KT	Krousar Thmey
KU	Kathmandu University

LAB	U.S. Development Lab
LASER PULSE	Long-Term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine
MANAD	Malawi National Association of the Deaf
MCSIE	Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MoE	Ministry of Education – Malawi
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology – Nepal
MoYES	Ministry of Youth, Education and Science – Cambodia
MSL	Malawi Sign Language
MUB	Malawi Union of the Blind
NAWB	National Association for the Welfare for the Blind
NFDN	National Federation of the Deaf Nepal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISE	National Institute of Special Education
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
NSL	Nepali Sign Language
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
R4A Nepal	Reading for All Nepal
REFAM Malawi	Reading for All Malawi
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFTOP	Request for Task Order Proposal
RTI	Research Triangle Institute Inc.
SED	Special Education Department
SODCC	Social Organization District Coordination Committee
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UDA	Universal Design for Assessment
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VEO	Voices for Equal Opportunity
WEI	World Education Inc.
WG	Washington Group

1. Executive Summary

This executive summary provides a condensed overview of the comprehensive Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) Final Evaluation Report, conducted to assess the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of three U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded early grade literacy inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. These inclusive education activities represented USAID’s most concerted effort to date to build systems to ensure learners with disabilities have access to quality education. MCSIE sought to derive lessons learned about what works, for whom, and in what context to sustainably advance teaching and learning outcomes for children with disabilities in these specific countries. The report details the unique approaches and challenges faced in each country, reflecting on the effectiveness of various strategies and tools used in inclusive education. It highlights the importance of adapting to local contexts and the need for robust collaboration with local partners and stakeholders.¹ Due to variances across design, implementation, and context within each activity, this report is not comparative in nature. Instead, the objective is to provide readers with opportunities to learn from the three activities’ successes, challenges, and emerging practices. Lastly, the MCSIE Final Evaluation Report underscores the evolving nature of inclusive education and the necessity for flexible, responsive activity designs. The key findings and recommendations presented are instrumental in shaping future inclusive education strategies and interventions globally.

Key Objectives of MCSIE

The objective of the MCSIE evaluation was to identify adaptations to existing inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal and to inform plans for new inclusive education programming globally. Five key themes provided a framework for evaluating these inclusive education activities across all three countries: process, screening and identification, training, instructional approaches, and unintended consequences. Across these five themes, researchers evaluated what worked well/poorly, identifying emerging practices, challenges, and considerations for future activities. Researchers also closely examined the collaborative efforts and relationships implementing partners had with key stakeholders, including USAID country offices, national and subnational government officials, school-level educators, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other donor-funded activities. The objective of the MCSIE Final Evaluation Report is to provide a critical understanding of the multifaceted nature of inclusive

¹ The authors recognize that the global community is shifting away from the term “stakeholders” due to its roots in colonialism and agree with using alternative terminology. However, to stay consistent with reports produced earlier in the study and, thus, decrease any confusion among readers, the term “stakeholder” will continue to be used in this final report.

education and provide recommendations to USAID, implementing partners, and government stakeholders to enhance disability inclusion efforts within education systems.

Scope of MCSIE

MCSIE was conducted by a group of local and international experts with experience in research and evaluation in disability, inclusive education, and systems change. This effort was led by Inclusive Development Partners (IDP) with support from Purdue University under the Long-Term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (LASER PULSE), the University of Massachusetts Boston, and USAID's Center for Education (EDU). Local partners included the Cambodian Disabled People's Organization (CDPO) in Cambodia, the Invest in Knowledge Initiative (IKI) in Malawi, and the Kathmandu University (KU) Disability Research Center in Nepal. MCSIE operated from August 2019 to May 2024. The activities evaluated included All Children Reading Cambodia (ACR-Cambodia), Reading for All Malawi (REFAM Malawi), and Reading for All Nepal (R4A Nepal).

MCSIE used a process-evaluation design, and comparative and country-level reports were authored as a result of the study. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach and involved a thorough analysis of primary and secondary data. More than 2,700 primary data sources, composed of key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) responses, training pre-post surveys and observations, classroom observations, teacher surveys, and household surveys, were collected and analyzed as part of MCSIE across all three countries. Furthermore, more than 800 secondary sources of information, including presentations, activity reports and materials, country-level and international legislative documents, other donor-funded reports, and academic literature, were reviewed as part of the evaluation. Data analysis techniques included using evaluative rubrics, deductive coding, rapid analysis, and statistical analysis of quantitative data.

Limitations



The MCSIE evaluation has some important limitations to note. First, MCSIE does not provide a pure baseline-endline comparison of all three countries' activities, given that the MCSIE evaluation commenced after activities had already been initiated. Second, each activity was unique, and thus, evaluation of one activity vis-à-vis the other is impossible. Third, the MCSIE study itself, as well as some of the activities that were evaluated, were undertaken during the acute stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, researchers were unable to visit activity sites for in-person data collection in 2020 or 2021. Furthermore, each activity had to adapt and adjust implementation from its original plans. Thus, COVID-19 directly impacted activity implementation and the results of this evaluation.


Key Findings

Exhibit 1 highlights summarized key findings identified under each thematic area of inquiry. Complete descriptions of findings are available in the full report.

Exhibit 1. MCSIE Key Findings by Evaluation Question.

Thematic Area	Key Finding
<p data-bbox="201 318 321 342">Process</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="443 318 1959 412">✓ Solicitation and activity design: Solicitation type impacts activity design even when aligning with prevailing national context and practices. Flexible and adaptive designs that meet the evolving landscape within a country are key to the progressive realization of inclusive education. <li data-bbox="443 414 1959 508">✓ Conceptualization of disability and inclusive education: It is important to clearly outline a theory of change and clearly define terms, such as disability and inclusive education, to ensure stakeholders have a shared conceptual understanding of these concepts and can identify adequate resources. <li data-bbox="443 509 1959 604">✓ Staff and partner technical capacity: Identifying ways to leverage existing staff or partners' technical knowledge and capacity to support implementation is important. When possible, leverage external expertise and the lived experiences of persons with disabilities to fill gaps and strengthen partnerships. <li data-bbox="443 605 1959 699">✓ Government collaboration: Utilizing a top-down and bottom-up approach to work with both national and subnational stakeholders (e.g., provincial or municipal authorities) to garner buy-in is needed to support a more systematic approach to implementing inclusive education initiatives. <li data-bbox="443 701 1959 795">✓ OPD partnership: OPDs are essential partners for inclusive education activities. Collaboration with OPDs should be initiated at the conceptualization phase and last through activity close-out with considerations for accessibility and operational support.
<p data-bbox="201 857 415 919">Screening and Identification</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="443 857 1959 1016">✓ Terminology: While a person with a disability may experience functional difficulties, a person with functional disabilities may not have a disability. Tools that examine functional difficulty provide specific information about an individual's ability to function in a particular environment. Measuring functional difficulty gives us information that may be useful in understanding who might have a disability but does not in itself result in identifying an individual as having a disability. <li data-bbox="443 1018 1959 1112">✓ Social model of disability: A focus on functional limitations, aligned with the social model of disability, created significant awareness-raising approaches among school and local government personnel regarding the presence of struggling learners in school. <li data-bbox="443 1114 1959 1208">✓ Disability screening tools: Tools are limited and require significant time and budget. Teachers require in-depth training to implement screening within educational settings and may not be suitable implementors to conduct interventions. <li data-bbox="443 1209 1959 1287">✓ Mapping of disability supports and services: Mapping exercises and collaboration with OPDs and service providers were the most useful ways to develop contextualized plans for existing approaches. <li data-bbox="443 1289 1959 1352">✓ Lived experience with disability: OPDs are valuable partners in connecting screening to referral systems in the country.

Thematic Area	Key Finding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use of disability data in education systems: Screening data used in connection with the countries' Education Management and Information Systems (EMISs) was only utilized in one country, and the created subsystem has yet to be merged with the national EMIS.
<p>Training</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ General purpose of training: Practical and concrete classroom strategies are preferred over theoretical training on disability to ensure teacher confidence and the application of inclusive instructional approaches. ✓ Pedagogical approach to inclusive education: The best approach for supporting disability-inclusive education is to provide direct training on inclusive education based on the social model of disability, which embeds inclusive principles throughout and is supplemented by principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support all learners, not just learners with disabilities. ✓ Teacher training models: Direct, activity-supported training models that utilize OPDs as facilitators and allocate sufficient time (3–5 days for general inclusive education concepts) with applied practice result in more consistent training on content compared to indirect cascade models with limited to no oversight. ✓ Trainees: Train general education teachers alongside resource classroom/specialist teachers and provide opportunities for communities of practice among teachers. Train head teachers, administration, and local government to ensure institutional support and monitoring. ✓ Coaching/mentorship: Coaching and mentorship can be resource-intensive but are key components for future activities to consider. Tech-based follow-ups, such as through WhatsApp and online videos, show promise. ✓ Collaboration and engagement for sustainability: Collaborating with local OPDs helps ensure representation, content accuracy, and delivery appropriateness. Close collaboration with government and local stakeholders also helps ensure the continued use of training packages and practices beyond the life of the activity. ✓ Impact of COVID-19: The shift from in-person to virtual training increased training consistency and providing training materials to all participants in advance of training promotes inclusion and accessibility.
<p>Instruction</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pedagogical approach to inclusive education: Teachers trained in evidence-based literacy and/or inclusive education instruction used significantly more strategies to meet the needs of all learners in their classroom. ✓ Teacher preparedness and confidence: Trained teachers reported feeling more confident in their capacity to teach learners with disabilities in their classroom in the short term. ✓ Teacher perceptions of inclusive education: Activity impact was mixed on teacher perceptions about the capacity of learners with disabilities to learn to read in regular classrooms. More effort is needed to increase teacher support for inclusive education. ✓ Use of teaching and learning materials (TLMs): During implementation, teachers' access to and use of the TLMs from the activity increased, but further monitoring and evaluation are vital to assess their long-term impact on literacy instruction.

Thematic Area	Key Finding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Individualized education plan (IEP) development: IEP development can be resource-intensive and lack the individualization needed for learners, impacting sustainability after the activity closes. ✓ Early grade reading assessments (EGRAs): More efforts are needed in developing assessments for learners with disabilities and more recent learning across contexts should also be considered, given the evolving nature of disability-inclusive education and the development of assessments for learners with disabilities.
Unintended Consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Activity model matters: The three activities were defined as supporting “inclusive education,” but they were not comparable due to differences in their designs. Implementation of disability-specific stand-alone activities focused on or had more intensive efforts in segregated settings, unintentionally missing the opportunity to facilitate learning across both general education and segregated settings. Whereas the embedded disability-inclusion activity was designed to address all learners, it unintentionally lacked the depth necessary to support meaningful and lasting inclusion efforts. ✓ Opportunities to support deaf education efforts: Resources required to support interventions for signed languages or deaf education may be more significant than originally anticipated by implementers. As evidenced by the three activities, implementers should be prepared to assess the situation of sign language usage and resources within a country and respond to emerging opportunities to support deaf education within their programming.

Recommendations

Exhibit 2 provides summarized recommendations from MCSIE researchers based on the evaluation.

Exhibit 2. Recommendations by Stakeholder Group.

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
USAID/ Washington	<p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Embed inclusive education in all aspects of the solicitations, including activity design, require OPD engagement, clearly outline a theory of change, and clearly define terms such as “disability” and “inclusive education” to ensure stakeholders have a shared conceptual understanding. ✓ Require and adequately fund engagement with OPDs in future opportunities. Support and resources for partnerships (i.e., compliance documentation to meet USAID regulations) could be provided from USAID/Washington to mission offices.

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Embed disability inclusion in all education activities, including those focused on educating the general learner population and in pre-service and in-service education programming. <p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Carefully consider and outline the purpose of collecting data on disability under USAID education activities. ✓ Provide guidance to differentiate screening and prevalence tools. ✓ Consider the ethics of screening processes if there are not adequate services or referral mechanisms and encourage activities to support learners and families after the screening, regardless of the availability of a formal referral process. ✓ Require local OPD engagement in screening, identification, and referral activities in the future. <p><u>Teacher Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be mindful that training teachers and other advocates on how to coach for inclusion may have an important impact in supporting the progressive realization of disability-inclusive education. ✓ Future activities should include coaching and ongoing monitoring and support within activity design requirements. <p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider framing future solicitations to include teacher development and training that reflect UDL and accessibility rather than training that focuses on the deficits of learners with disabilities. ✓ Promote a Universal Design for Assessment (UDA) approach when developing assessments in general education settings to ensure that all learners are included. For learners with disabilities who cannot access the same assessment as their peers in general education settings (even assessments that are aligned with UDA), plan for activities to have adequate time and resources to develop alternate assessment tools. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conduct situational analyses of sign language usage and infrastructure accessibility prior to developing activity objectives or solicitations to ensure adequate funding and resources for implementing deaf education interventions.
<p>USAID Missions</p>	<p><u>Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider an extensive situational analysis before establishing a new activity in a country to support a more localized design and identify crucial implementation areas and potential challenges. ✓ Provide time, staffing support, and encouragement for USAID activities to network, engage with, and provide leadership for policy-level conversations. <p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure enough time and resources are allocated for future activities to understand local processes, screening tools, or prevalence of tools before commencing activity planning. ✓ Support national mapping exercises to establish referral pathways before undertaking screening and identification activities and update these exercises regularly. ✓ Consider collaborating with the health sector to support education programming in this area.

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
	<p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support implementing partners to develop and report on monitoring and evaluation indicators that go beyond TLM training and distribution to measure the inclusivity of environments and processes. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conduct situational analyses of sign language usage and infrastructure prior to developing activity objectives or solicitations To ensure adequate funding and resources for implementing deaf education interventions.
Governments	<p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure screening tools and procedures are validated, align with international norms, and have a strong track record of accurately identifying learners who may need further evaluation. ✓ Continue to link screening and identification to existing data collection processes for the EMIS and for service provision. ✓ Develop and use tools that allow for universal screening of all learners on a routine basis to the extent possible. ✓ Consider collaboration with the health sector at the local level to support education programming in this area. <p><u>Teacher Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Embed inclusive education training at the pre-service level to enable eventual baseline understanding of inclusive education and inclusive teaching practices among all teachers nationally. <p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement national strategies to increase understanding and support for inclusive education for teachers and other actors who can support inclusive education efforts. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support OPDs and other relevant actors to build national consistency for sign language usage to ensure sustainability.
Implementing Partners	<p><u>Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allocate budget and time to ensure meaningful partnerships with OPDs that address reasonable accommodations, fair compensation, organizational capacity, and representation. ✓ Train all staff on disability inclusion and inclusive education, leverage persons with lived disability experience, and prioritize those from in-country first. Then, utilize external experts as needed. <p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clarify within trainings that screenings are not an all-defining source of information for learners’ needs and reinforce the difference between and purpose of data collection on disability and screening and identification. ✓ Plan for sufficient time and resources (human and fiscal) to pilot and validate screening tools (as necessary) and develop and refine screening protocols. ✓ Encourage schools and teachers to move forward with inclusive practices consistent with the social model of disability and UDL, moving away from labels and focusing on inclusive pedagogy.

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
	<p><u>Teacher Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus on specific classroom practices that can enhance inclusion versus broad-based theory or specific disabilities. ✓ When embedding inclusive education principles throughout a training package, ensure that the link between inclusion and the subject matter being discussed is explicit, not implicit. ✓ Train both pre-service and in-service general education teachers alongside resource classroom/specialist teachers and provide opportunities for communities of practice. This can support a twin-track approach to the progressive realization of inclusive education. ✓ Train head teachers, administration, and local government to ensure institutional buy-in, support, and capacity for monitoring the implementation of inclusive education. ✓ Avoid disability simulations and collaborate with local OPDs to ensure representation, content accuracy, and delivery appropriateness. ✓ Work closely with government and local stakeholders to ensure the continued use of training packages. <p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Place explicit emphasis during training and coaching on the existence of “hidden” or undiagnosed disabilities and how inclusive teaching practices benefit all learners. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build in consistent periods and methods of reflection that allow the activity to explore what pivots might be necessary for activity implementation to best address local realities and, above all, do no harm.

Conclusion

The MCSIE Final Evaluation Report concludes that inclusive education and support for learners with disabilities are still emerging and evolving globally. Country-level structures, systems, and resources all impact the implementation of disability-inclusive education programming. Therefore, upcoming activities should demonstrate flexibility to align with the specific local needs and systems prevailing at the given moment. While the needs of learners with disabilities will vary by context, flexible and iterative programming, and educator training can enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and progressive realization of inclusive education efforts.

Areas for Future Evaluation

To build upon the successes and lessons learned, stakeholders should consider several key areas to guide future investment and implementation in disability-inclusive education programming:

- Examine how learners with disabilities acquire language and literacy skills, including assessment design to measure learning achievements in inclusive learning settings.
- Explore community-embedded approaches to support the inclusion of learners with disabilities, including considering and planning how to measure the impact of inclusive education efforts through monitoring and evaluation.
- Examine how screening and identification practices within education activities link to referral pathways or supports and the disaggregation of monitoring and evaluation data.
- Examine the role of OPDs within program designs to ensure meaningful engagement and representation within disability-inclusion opportunities.

This executive summary offers a concise overview of the MCSIE Final Evaluation Report. For more detailed analyses and insights, readers are encouraged to review the complete report and annexes.

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) partnered 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 an evaluation of three USAID inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. These inclusive education activities represented USAID's most concerted effort to date to build systems to ensure learners with disabilities have access to quality education. MCSIE sought to derive lessons learned about what works, for whom, and in what context to sustainably advance teaching and learning outcomes for children with disabilities in these specific countries. IDP used 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 provided a framework for the study: process, screening and identification, training, instruction, and unintended consequences.

USAID and its partners will use the MCSIE evaluation to inform adaptations to existing inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal and to inform plans for new inclusive education programming globally. Researchers collected data for this report in real-time, and findings were not indicative or predictive of ongoing tasks or final activity 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 the final evaluation findings based on information learned through All Children Reading Cambodia (ACR-Cambodia), Reading for All Malawi (REFAM Malawi), and Reading for All Nepal (R4A Nepal) and, more generally, through the evaluation process.

2.2 Evaluation Questions

For each of the study's five themes, USAID generated an evaluative question (EQ) to inform the MCSIE evaluation of individual country activities 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. **Screening and 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?

2.3 Background Information

2.3.1 Purpose of the MCSIE Final Evaluation Report

The purpose of the MCSIE Final Evaluation Report is to synthesize the findings from the evaluation activities and learn from three distinct contexts on what works to support learners with disabilities in early-grade learning activities. Each activity under the study generally aimed to improve early-grade reading for learners with disabilities in primary education settings, with interventions in screening and identification, teacher training, and instruction. However, the activities operated in different ways, had different timelines, had different resources, and approached the activity areas using different strategies and interventions. Due to these variances, this report does not offer a comparison between activities. Instead, the objective is to provide readers with opportunities to learn from the successes, challenges, and emerging practices from the three activities.

2.3.2 Background on Evaluation Activities

This section provides a general overview of the three activities evaluated using the five thematic questions in the MCSIE study. Each activity was conceptualized, designed, and implemented differently due to the variance in solicitation mechanisms and along with country context. However, all three activities sought to improve inclusion for learners with disabilities in primary education settings. Information regarding each activity’s programming and contracting information is available in Exhibit 3 below. Brief narrative descriptions for each activity and its objectives are also provided.

Exhibit 3. Evaluation Activities Overview.

Overview	ACR-Cambodia	REFAM Malawi	R4A Nepal
Solicitation Type	Request for Proposal (RFP)	Request for Task Order Proposals (RFTOP)	Notice for Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Agreement/ Contract Number	AID-OAA-I-14-00044/72044218F00002	AID-OAA-I-14-00058	72036718CA00002
Contract Type	Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF)	Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF)	Cooperative Agreement
Funding Ceiling	USD 13,976,303.00	USD 3,662,474.00	USD 5,500,000.00
Activity Dates	10/03/2018–01/31/2022	02/01/2019–08/31/2022	05/01/2018–09/30/2022

Overview	ACR-Cambodia	REFAM Malawi	R4A Nepal
Geographic Scope	Kampong Thom, Kampot, Kep	All 34 districts of Malawi	Banke, Bhaktapur, Dadeldhura, Dang, Dhankuta, Kaski, Kailali, Mustang, Parsa, Surkhet
Prime Implementing Partner	Research Triangle Institute (RTI)	Juarez & Associates (J&A)	Humanity and Inclusion (HI)
Activity Design	Inclusive education embedded in larger education activity	Disability-specific education activity	Disability-specific education activity

2.3.2.1 All Children Reading Cambodia (ACR-Cambodia)

In September 2016, Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International became the prime awardee of the ACR-Cambodia activity to improve the early-grade reading (EGR) of learners in preschool to Grade 2.² The activity commenced in 2017. ACR-Cambodia proposed to achieve its goals by developing, testing, and implementing a rigorous, practical, and scalable intervention in the Khmer language for this learner population in at least two provinces. Initially, the provinces included Kampong Thom and Kampot but expanded further over the life of the activity (MCSIE, however, only focuses on the original provinces). RTI worked with the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS), its implementing partners, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement this activity while also supporting the Ministry in developing plans and building its capacity to eventually scale up the EGR program nationally.

RTI partnered with several international sub-awardees with a long-term presence in Cambodia, including Room to Read, Save the Children, World Education, and World Vision, and initially partnered with local institutions, including Krousar Thmey (KT). Additionally, RTI collaborated with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In September 2017, RTI received additional funding from USAID under the All Children Learning (ACL) award to expand the integration of inclusive education principles into existing EGR programming.³ Although two funding streams supported this activity, all reports refer to the work generally as ACR-Cambodia.

As such, the activity featured broad messaging on inclusive education. Early tasks included a situational analysis on disability-inclusive education conducted in 2017,⁴ followed by incorporating inclusive education strategies into teachers' guides and Khmer-language teaching and learning materials (TLMs). ACR-Cambodia also adapted TLMs for braille and Cambodian Sign Language

² The initial target population was children Grades 1–3.

³ USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) contributed funding for these integration efforts. The official start date of these activities began under the ACR Asia award on September 30, 2016.

⁴ Hayes, A. M., & Bulat, J. (2017). *Disabilities Inclusive Education Systems and Policies Guide for Low- and Middle-Income Countries*. RTI Press.

(CSL), primarily for use in segregated special schools, and developed an adapted early-grade reading assessment (EGRA) for the same population of learners with hearing or vision disabilities. ACR-Cambodia also implemented a hearing and vision disability screening pilot in general education schools. Additionally, ACR-Cambodia, under the Bridge Program, supported a small number of learners who are deaf to receive CSL instruction from volunteer community members with the aim of helping these learners transition to formal schooling in the future.

2.3.2.2 Reading for All Malawi (REFAM Malawi)

In February 2019, Juarez & Associates (J&A) became the prime awardee of USAID’s REFAM Malawi activity. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education⁵ (MoE) Malawi, REFAM Malawi aimed to “provide a scalable intervention model that allows for the screening, identification, placement, instruction, and testing of learners with disabilities to help them better acquire reading skills.”⁶ In addition to collaborating with MoE Malawi, J&A worked closely with three organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), including the Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD), Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB), and Parents of Disabled Children Association in Malawi. REFAM Malawi’s initial end date was July 2021; however, due to external factors, including delays in obtaining local approvals and the COVID-19 pandemic, REFAM Malawi was extended through August 2022.

The activity supported Malawi’s National Reading Program initiatives and specifically focused on inclusive education and early literacy in Standards 1–4 to improve reading outcomes among learners with disabilities. Under the activity, REFAM Malawi targeted government-funded primary school Resource Centres⁷ throughout Malawi. To achieve the activity’s goals, the original task order required the following: early screening tool and supporting documentation revision or development, reading materials development, improved teaching practices, awareness raising, increased community support for learners with disabilities, and family engagement to support improvements in literacy. However, due to the delays encountered and COVID-19, USAID and REFAM Malawi pivoted the activity’s focus to policy-level engagement (national technical working group participation), systems strengthening, and the development of trainings and/or toolkits on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), individualized education plans (IEPs), screening and identification with support to the Education Management Information System (EMIS), coaching,

⁵ During the course of the evaluation, Malawi’s education ministry underwent a name change from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology to the Ministry of Education (MoE). Both names can be found throughout REFAM and MCSIE reports; for this report, the authors will refer to it as MoE Malawi.

⁶ REFAM One Pager, 2019

⁷ Malawi uses an instructional approach for learners with disabilities, establishing that some learners with disabilities will continue to receive instruction in special settings, such as Resource Centres or specialized schools, as the system moves toward inclusive education (National Strategy on Inclusive Education 2017–2021).

and family engagement.⁸ REFAM Malawi also adapted EGRAs for learners with disabilities and, subsequently, provided deaf education training.

3.2.2.3 Reading for All Nepal (R4A Nepal)

In May 2018, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) became the prime awardee of USAID’s R4A Nepal activity aimed at using a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to address the educational needs of learners with disabilities in Grades 1–3 in 16 districts in Nepal.⁹ To achieve the goals of the activity, HI partnered with World Education, Inc. (WEI) and worked closely with the Government of Nepal’s Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST). Additionally, the R4A Nepal activity had two OPD resource organizations—the National Association for the Welfare for the Blind (NAWB) and National Federation of the Deaf Nepal (NFDN)—and 10 implementing partner organizations comprised of OPDs and local NGOs.¹⁰

R4A Nepal intended to strengthen the availability of data on learners with disabilities through screening learners for possible functional limitations or disabilities, strengthen the Government of Nepal’s institutional capacity at the federal and local levels to implement its constitutional and policy commitments to disability-inclusive education, and test three models of implementation, each receiving varying degrees of direct support (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. R4A Nepal Intervention Models



⁸ There was some family engagement between teachers and parents during COVID-19, but it was not linked to REFAM Malawi activities.

⁹ Reading for All Program Description, 2018

¹⁰ R4A’s 10 implementing partners: Disable Empowerment and Communications Center Nepal (DEC-Banke); Voices for Equal Opportunity (VEO); Disable Empowerment Centre (DEC-Surkhet); Independent Living Centre (CIL-Kaski); Forum for Human Rights and Disabled (FHRD); Holistic Disability Development Society of Nepal (HDDSN); District Disable Welfare Committee (DDWC); Human Rights, Social Awareness, and Development Centre (HRSADC); Social Organization District Coordination Committee (SODCC); and Paila Nepal.

- **Model A** schools were resource classrooms for learners with disabilities across activity districts. Resource classroom teachers received targeted training in the use of either braille, Nepali Sign Language (NSL), or strategies for supporting learners with intellectual disabilities (depending on the focus area of the resource classroom).
- **Model B** schools received the lightest support, which included a cascade approach to training for head teachers. Education focal persons also received training to take back to other municipal officers.
- **Model C** schools were in four focus municipalities within the districts of Banke and Surkhet. Headteachers and education focal persons received the same training as their colleagues in Model B. In addition, Grade 1–3 teachers received direct training on inclusive literacy instruction. This model also included plans for coaching support at schools through R4A Nepal’s social mobilizers.¹¹

It is important to note that R4A Nepal was designed and began implementation as Nepal was in the early stages of transitioning to a federalist government structure. The shift involved devolving authority and decision-making power from the national to the subnational levels of government. These changes impacted the activity’s ability to obtain approvals and establish formal partnerships with the Government of Nepal within the first year. Due to these delays and in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, R4A Nepal received a funded extension through December 2022, with an increase in the activity budget from USD 3.88 million to USD 5.5 million. The activity’s 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. As a result of the modification, R4A Nepal was implemented in 3,415 schools in 10 of the 16 National Early-Grade Reading Program focus districts.

2.4 Methodology and Limitations

2.4.1 Composition of the Evaluation Team

The MCSIE study was conducted by a group of experts with experience in research and evaluation in disability, inclusive education, and systems change and supported through Purdue University under LASER PULSE, the University of Massachusetts Boston, and USAID’s Center for Education (EDU). The MCSIE team was composed of a principal investigator, program managers, international and local technical leads, research and context experts, statisticians, and research assistants. Additionally, the MCSIE evaluation partnered with the Cambodian Disabled People’s Organization (CDPO) in Cambodia, the Invest in Knowledge Initiative (IKI) in Malawi, and the Kathmandu University (KU) Disability Research Center in Nepal to collect and analyze field-level data. A full list of the evaluation team members is available in Annex G.

¹¹ “Social mobilizer” was the title for OPD and NGO implementing partner staff.

2.4.2 Country-Level Reporting

2.4.2.1 Summary of Country-Level Reports

The MCSIE study originally comprised four phases: 1) inception, 2) initial data collection, 3) midline data collection, and 4) endline data collection.¹² At the start of the activity, researchers completed a country-level policy analysis and literature review for each country, resulting in a publicly available comparative policy analysis report and comparative literature review report. Additionally, IDP conducted initial inception visits to all countries in 2019 and produced a comparative inception report. Because MCSIE started after activity implementation commenced in all three countries, IDP was only able to collect data after the initial activity start-up and 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 halted all in-country data collection for the MCSIE team and slowed many of the activities' interventions. Throughout the life of the study, MCSIE researchers produced three types of country-level reports, including an interim report, areas of intervention mapping, and an endline report for each country. A list of publicly available reports and their purpose, is available in Annex A.

2.4.2.2 Data Sources

Primary and secondary data sources were used to evaluate all three activities reviewed under MCSIE. More than 2,700 primary data sources were collected, including key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) (n=949), classroom observations (n=443), training observations (n=29), training pre/post surveys (n=470), teacher surveys (n=434), household surveys (Cambodia and Nepal [n=243]), and implementing partner surveys (n=165). Over 800 secondary data sources were reviewed, including activity documentation and datasets, national policies and laws, and secondary source documentation comprised of presentations, activity and donor-funded reports, and academic literature. Exhibit 27 in Annex D provides an overview of the sample of primary data sources and Exhibit 28, also in Annex D, provides an overview of the sample of secondary data sources by country.

2.4.2.3 Analysis

This section provides a general overview of the methods used to analyze data for the country-level interim and endline reports. For the interim and endline reports, data analysis techniques included using evaluative rubrics, deductive coding, rapid analysis, and statistical analysis of classroom observations and survey data. For this final report, additional statistical analyses were conducted using interview data collected from teachers and school directors on the screening processes in all three activity sites. The same data analysis approach was used for the interim

¹² These phases were subject to change based on the COVID-19 pandemic and shifts in data collection plans and activity end dates.

and endline reports, whereby univariate and bivariate analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) to provide further insights on the activity's evaluation questions. Details on each analysis's techniques are listed in Annex D, Exhibit 29.

2.4.3 Limitations

This report has some important limitations. First, the snapshot provided from this evaluation does not offer a pure baseline-endline comparison for all three country sites, given that the MCSIE evaluation commenced after activities had already been initiated. While R4A Nepal did collect some baseline-endline data (and it is reported when available), not all data were collected in this manner across all sites. Second, the three activities evaluated were unique and distinct and were not created with a specific goal of comparability across the three country sites. Although this report summarizes the key elements of the three activities, evaluation of one activity vis-à-vis the other is impossible (e.g., training had different purposes and target populations in the different countries so cannot be directly compared across sites). Third, these activities (and the MCSIE evaluation of them) were undertaken during the acute stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, thus researchers were unable to visit activity sites for in-person data collection in 2020 or 2021. Instead, IDP worked closely with its local partners to support their in-country data collection efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic also meant that each activity site had to adapt and adjust implementation from its original plans. In some instances, this made it challenging for an activity's implementing partners to demonstrate impact or for MCSIE evaluators to observe the impact. For example, with schools closed for extended and unpredictable periods in 2020 and 2021, evaluators could not observe classroom-based instruction until early 2022. At that point, teachers and learners were only beginning to adapt to the new in-school realities. Such prolonged school closures also directly impacted activity implementation and results since teachers had less time to practice using the new teaching strategies and materials than originally anticipated.

Nonetheless, evaluators have triangulated data with other sources, such as interviews and surveys, to understand the activity's impact wherever possible. This report details further impacts of COVID-19, both negative and unanticipated positive consequences, in the relevant Evaluation Findings sub-sections below. Finally, to enable brevity and readability, this final report does not detail at length the original data upon which researchers made their conclusions for each site; more detailed descriptions of the data, including quotations and statistical tables, can be found in each country-specific endline report.

3. Evaluation Findings

3.1 Process



This section provides an overview of the administrative, operational, and design aspects of the three activities being evaluated and the impact on the processes undertaken to support implementation. The evaluation of processes focuses on – USAID's solicitation

processes for the activities, staffing, each activity's conceptualization of disability and approach to inclusion, and engagement with stakeholders, including government, civil society organizations (CSOs), OPDs, families/caregivers, and the community at large. This section also provides information on how performance was measured.

3.1.1 Solicitation and Design

The MCSIE study found that solicitation type influenced activity design and implementation. Each opportunity was solicited under a different mechanism, which directed the flexibility within intervention design and implementation. The MCSIE Comparative Policy Report and Comparative Literature Review revealed that the concept of inclusive education is emerging within each country and that country-level policies and practices are consistently working toward the progressive realization of inclusive education. In all three countries, USAID solicitations aligned with national priorities concerning early literacy development. Further, USAID conceptualized activities to align with how learners with disabilities were currently taught within each country. Aligning the activity designs with country-level priorities and approaches to the progressive realization of inclusive education allowed implementing partners to work with local subcontractors and partners and promoted close government engagement.

However, across all three activities, stakeholders reported that implementing inclusive education interventions was difficult with the limited technical expertise available in the country and within the timelines allowed. Such emergent areas of work, according to stakeholders, required extensive piloting and refinement. Stakeholders also indicated that country-level structures and systems for supporting learners with disabilities are still emerging and evolving. Thus, disability-inclusive education activities would benefit from a more flexibly designed model to meet the local needs and systems where they are now. For example, ACR-Cambodia staff shared that the inclusion of learners with disabilities in general education settings is a relatively new phenomenon in Cambodia, meaning few professionals in Cambodia have extensive experience in this field. ACR-Cambodia staff reported hiring challenges for inclusive education positions due to a limited pool of qualified candidates. When hiring difficulties were combined with challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the timeline for implementing inclusive education interventions, such as piloting screening tools and adapting assessments, was impacted. Another example can be found under R4A Nepal, which was a contract with a prescriptive solicitation. Implementing partners described that it was difficult to meet such an ambitious scope of work within the given timeline and budget. Interviews with USAID/Nepal indicated that, in hindsight, a less prescriptive solicitation would have allowed for the activity's interventions to better fit the available timeline and budget, and also better align with the evolving nature of inclusive education within Nepal.

While the solicitations used in each country aligned with country-level policies and practices, allowing for good collaboration, future solicitations should consider the evolving nature of inclusive education and the resources within a country. Solicitations that consider these factors, along with the growing awareness and support for inclusive education and the need for more flexible intervention designs and timelines, can meet the education system where it is while still progressing the inclusion of learners with disabilities within general education settings.

3.1.2 Conceptualization of Disability and Inclusive Education

The definition of disability and disability-inclusive education within a solicitation and within a country influenced how implementing partners designed and implemented interventions to support learners with disabilities. All three solicitations called for implementing partners to work with learners of all types of disabilities; however, they also emphasized specific support to learners with vision and hearing disabilities. While all three activities supported learners with different types of disabilities, each took a different approach to meeting the needs of learners and their activity objectives. ACR-Cambodia was tasked with integrating inclusive education for learners with “mild to moderate disabilities” into the larger USAID-funded early-grade reading activity, All Children Learning Cambodia. On the other hand, REFAM Malawi and R4A Nepal were disability-specific activities that were tasked with only supporting learners with disabilities. Under R4A Nepal, the implementing partner worked closely with the Government of Nepal to align interventions and the conceptualization of disability with the government’s prevailing approach. As a result, R4A Nepal generally focused on functional limitations, aligning with government terminology for learners with disabilities or other struggling learners.

Evaluation reports from all three countries highlighted both strengths and gaps in the approach of focusing on specific disabilities. A strength of this approach was that activity interventions could easily connect with Resource Centres or classrooms and schools in Malawi to provide learners in those schools with new opportunities for developing literacy. Reports also pointed out gaps in these approaches. In Cambodia, learners with hidden or invisible disabilities may have been overlooked by project activities. In Malawi, training activities were designed to promote access to learners with a wide variety of disabilities, but EGRA activities were only focused on adapted versions for a small population of learners (those who are blind or have low vision, who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have learning difficulties) in Resource Centres and not those who may be enrolled in general education settings.

3.1.3 Staff Capacity

In all three countries, implementing partners reported staff challenges related to the technical expertise needed within the activity, which is not surprising considering the emergent nature of inclusive education in these contexts. In all three countries, the activities utilized implementing partners’ home offices or external consultants to provide professional development to national staff at the start of their respective activities. Interviews with activity staff revealed that such training is beneficial. However, staff turnover in roles vital to supporting inclusive education efforts resulted in a loss of the training knowledge that could bolster any new staff member’s existing technical capacity. Exhibit 5 highlights strategies implemented by staff to mitigate challenges.

Exhibit 5. Implementing Partner Staffing Strategies to Mitigate Challenges.

Activity	ACR-Cambodia	REFAM Malawi	R4A Nepal
Staffing Issues Raised	Difficulty hiring national staff knowledgeable about inclusive education.	NA	Staff reported limited expertise in inclusive education.
Strategies to Meet Staff Issues	RTI home office staff supported national staff with training and other professional development.	REFAM Malawi national staff had expertise in special needs education. External experts provided specific workshops for teachers.	Leveraged staff's lived experience ¹³ of disability to help build technical capacity. Solicited the support of external technical experts to provide professional development for staff.

3.1.4 Government Collaboration

All three activities had a component of collaborating with external stakeholders, including national and subnational government departments, OPDs, NGOs, school-level personnel, parents/caregivers, donors, and other USAID-funded activities. The emerging nature of inclusive education within these three settings highlighted the impact that collaboration can have on the direction of education for learners with disabilities. Strong governmental collaboration was reported in all three countries. Such collaboration is essential for inclusive literacy activities to be scaled up or sustained after USAID funding is no longer available. Exhibit 6 highlights the collaboration efforts from each activity.

Exhibit 6. Approaches to Government Collaboration

Activity	Approaches
ACR Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded activity staff within MoEYS offices. • Built-in explicit check-in points with both national and subnational government officials, including a monthly meeting with the National Institute of Special Education (NISE), the Special Education Department (SED), and provincial-level officials. • Co-developed activity resources and training packages to ensure government endorsement and to support literacy reform.

¹³ Within the R4A Nepal activity, 25.3% of staff identified as having a disability, and 64.4% of staff reported having a close relationship with a person with a disability.

Activity	Approaches
REFAM Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated with the MoE’s Department of Inclusive Education¹⁴, particularly to coordinate and implement an Inclusive Education Technical Working Group with other external partners. Supported the draft of an Inclusive Education Policy. Advocated and promoted deaf education and Malawi Sign Language (MSL).
R4A Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborated with the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) Inclusive Education Training section for co-creation and design. Embedded activity staff within CEHRD offices to help support communication and engagement. Coordinated with subnational Local Education Units (LEUs) who oversee schools for implementation. Used a top-down and bottom-up approach to align with subnational decisions and national priorities.

3.1.5 Engagement of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

Partnering with OPDs in disability-inclusive, donor-funded programming is an emerging practice and was a distinctive aspect of two of the three activities evaluated. Under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), OPDs are defined as representational groups of persons with disabilities and/or relatives of persons with disabilities with expertise on disability who can support efforts to achieve the inclusion of persons with disabilities within all aspects of society.¹⁵ Collaborating with OPDs honors the disability rights principle—“nothing about us, without us.” Collaboration was required and served as the guiding principle for REFAM Malawi and was strongly encouraged in R4A Nepal. Exhibit 7 provides an overview of how activities engaged OPDs, and the lessons learned from these engagements.

¹⁴ The Malawi MoE’s Department of Inclusive Education was previously named the Department of Special Needs Education.

¹⁵ Disability Rights Fund (2023). *Frequently Asked Questions: What is an OPD?*

Exhibit 7. OPD Engagement

Activity	Approach	Lesson Learned
ACR-Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACR-Cambodia engaged several different CSOs,¹⁶ but this engagement did not include OPDs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACR-Cambodia missed the vital contribution of OPDs and their expertise in activity implementation.
REFAM Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPD engagement began early in the activity due to the requirements for collaboration but was not formalized with contracts. OPDs provided essential knowledge specifically related to accessible literacy and sign language. OPDs participated in strategy sessions, supported the development of materials, and helped facilitate trainings. OPDs reported that they strengthened their technical capacity. OPDs reported that working with REFAM Malawi supported them in securing additional work within the inclusive education sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to logistical challenges and advance planning for contracts, some OPD time and effort on the activity was uncompensated. Implementing partners must be transparent with contracting and budgeting decisions.
R4A Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the start, R4A Nepal strived to engage OPDs as full partners in designing, implementing, and refining the activity, including collaborating with them to design materials, implement tasks, and deliver training. OPDs supported R4A Nepal in understanding resources and opportunities in the local context. OPDs gained capacity in inclusive education by working on the activity and reported their stature with the government increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPD engagement was a “win-win” for R4A Nepal and Nepali OPDs but could have been enhanced with more timely requests and accessibility in communication and at meeting venues. Transparency on operational requirements and decisions can improve partnerships.

¹⁶ The ACR-Cambodia solicitation did not task the activity with collaborating with OPDs but with broader CSOs.

REFAM Malawi's activity staff described positive relationships with the three OPD partners and their impact on implementation. OPD partners reported they found value in their collaboration with the activity but were largely dissatisfied due to the lack of formal contracting and provision of resources. OPD partners indicated that they had inconsistent and varying levels of engagement with the activity depending on the task and that having a contract with a dedicated budget to do activities would have supported more consistent engagement. Activity staff shared that they did not have a mechanism to contract the OPDs because of the associated cost and out of consideration for the sensitivity of relationships among OPDs in the country.

In their own words: REFAM Malawi

"When we went for a training in Karonga again, I found a lady who is deaf. She was the one who [was] facilitating everything. I didn't think this one was deaf until I saw the husband interpreting everything. Whatever we ask, the husband has interpreted. We thought those people were failures, and I tell you, they are not failures. They can perform as we perform. That is what surprised me."

R4A Nepal leveraged the strong OPD network within the country. Contracted OPD partners provided tremendous value to the activity with local knowledge of existing resources, community context, and lived experience with disability. In two geographic implementing areas where OPD partners were not available, R4A Nepal partnered with local NGOs, who reported in KIIs that they prioritized collaboration with local persons with disabilities and OPDs to ensure their inclusion and helped build capacity for them and their own organizations. Both OPD resource and implementing partners, as well as NGO partners, indicated that participating in R4A Nepal raised their organizations' stature in the community, and they have received recognition from their local governments as technical advisors on disability and inclusive education, which has led to stronger relationships.

Both REFAM Malawi's and R4A Nepal's OPD partners provided researchers with feedback on areas for future consideration in USAID-funded programming. OPD representatives from both countries shared that providing accessibility and more timely consultation can help strengthen partnerships in future activities. In Malawi, KIIs revealed examples to support accessibility, including holding meetings and trainings in accessible venues, providing materials early and in multiple formats, and providing interpreting services to OPD representatives. Nepal OPD partners also raised these examples and indicated that holding meetings virtually and with more lead time could support accessibility. Additionally, OPD partners in both countries touched on the importance of being included during the design phase of activities and having partners use their knowledge and expertise to contextualize training materials and TLMs. Furthermore, training on budgeting, administrative reporting, and human resource management would help ensure that the OPDs' financial and human capital are adequate to cover and align with the scope of work.

3.1.6 Key Takeaways: Process

The implementing activity's design, start-up, and operations provided important moments for learning, which can be considered in future activities beyond these three countries. The key takeaways about process are:

- ✓ **Solicitation and activity design:** The type of solicitation impacts activity design. Even when aligning with prevailing national context and practices, solicitations should allow implementing partners to develop flexible and adaptive designs that meet the evolving landscape and progressive realization of disability inclusion within the country.
- ✓ **Conceptualization of disability and inclusive education:** How the solicitation or implementing partner conceptualizes disability and inclusive education informs the activity design and allocation of time and resources. It is important to clearly outline a theory of change and clearly define terms, such as disability and inclusive education, to ensure stakeholders have a shared understanding of these concepts.
- ✓ **Staff and partner technical capacity:** Identifying ways to leverage existing staff or partners' technical knowledge and capacity to support implementation is important. Limited in-country technical expertise resulted in implementation delays. When possible, implementing partner home office support, external consultants, and persons with lived experience with disability were utilized to fill gaps, and in doing so, capacity and even partnerships were strengthened.
- ✓ **Government collaboration:** Government collaboration was key to activity success. Utilizing a top-down and bottom-up approach to work with both national and subnational stakeholders to garner buy-in is needed and supports a more systematic approach to implementing inclusive education initiatives.
- ✓ **OPD partnership:** OPDs are essential partners for inclusive education activities. Collaboration with OPDs should be initiated at the conceptualization phase and last through activity close-out. Activities should plan for formal contracting mechanisms that allow for OPDs to be paid for their contributions, ensure accessibility in all areas of partnership and implementation, and plan for additional time and support to strengthen operational capacity.

3.2 Screening and Identification



This section provides an overview of how the three MCSIE activities planned and implemented screening activities and, to the extent possible, linked them with broader assessment and identification services within the country. Screening is only a small component of the inclusive education process, but an important one. If learners are experiencing difficulties, it could be helpful to identify if a disability is present that may be contributing to those difficulties. Such identification can only be accomplished through an assessment conducted by trained professionals in relevant fields and, ideally, through consulting multi-disciplinary teams.

Screening, however, is a less formal activity that can be undertaken in schools. Because those who conduct trainings on screening are often untrained in specialty areas related to disability, it is imperative that the screening tools used by teachers or other personnel are sound and will not

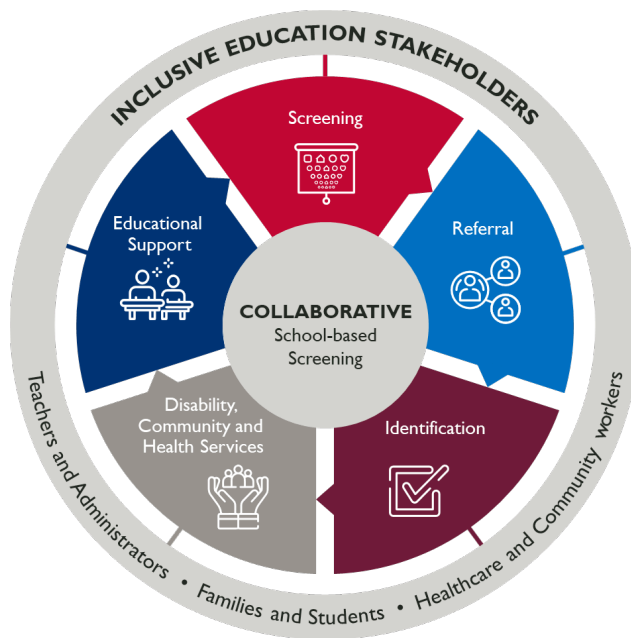
lead to invalid findings that may stigmatize learners or create a missed opportunity for them to connect with needed services. Screening and identification are not meant to be tools to promote greater exclusion of learners than already exists but to provide information on the student's learning needs so that they may be better served in inclusive environments. The exhibit below demonstrates how screening fits into a broader cycle of information gathering about and support for learners.

When conducting screening and identification within educational programs, it is crucial to recognize that using a screening tool is just an initial step of a comprehensive systems approach. This approach ensures that children with disabilities receive the essential supports and services they need for effective learning. A collaborative effort is required, involving families, students, educators, administrators, and healthcare and community workers.

The accompanying graphic illustrates that screening is often the first step in the process and flags learners in school for referral to medical practitioners for formal identification of disability. The type of medical practitioner involved can vary by location, often including community-based healthcare providers, local hospitals, or specialists in larger urban centers. Once a diagnosis is made, learners should receive appropriate medical or rehabilitative interventions (if needed) and services tailored to their needs. These interventions could range from treatment for infections and corrective surgeries to the provision of assistive technologies and therapies that improve functional abilities.

School-based screening must also account for the educational supports necessary for these students to fully participate and learn within their educational programs. This includes activities such as ensuring physical access, making learning materials accessible, providing assistive devices, and adopting inclusive teaching strategies. As children are annually enrolled in the school system, this screening process must be repeated and continuously monitored to guarantee that all children with disabilities can access and benefit from education.

Exhibit 8. School-Based Screening System



Source: This graphic was produced for the MCSIE evaluation through the USAID Data and Evidence for Education Programs (DEEP) activity, 2022.

3.2.1 Summary of Activity Approach

ACR-Cambodia mapped disability services screening to create a local referral directory and consulted with local NGOs prior to screening tool selection. Ultimately, ACR-Cambodia experimented with two approaches to screening: 1) using vision and screening tools adapted from use in other countries and 2) utilizing an informal teacher checklist. The vision screening used a chart, while the hearing screening tools relied on learners' ability to hear sounds. Teachers conducted the screenings with varying degrees of success. ACR-Cambodia used the screening data collected by teachers for the monitoring and evaluation of activity interventions. Through its work, the activity determined that screening practices were largely ineffective in flagging learners. Overall, ACR-Cambodia identified learners with disabilities at a much lower rate than anticipated. Screening activities struggled because of multiple barriers, including using an unreliable hearing screening tool and teachers' lack of fidelity in implementing teacher-led screening. ACR-Cambodia ultimately decided to estimate that 10% of learners had a disability in the classroom.

REFAM Malawi conducted a mapping of disability service providers at the beginning of the activity. After the mapping exercise, the activity provided screening training using two tools: 1) an existing and simple screening form developed by Save the Children and used by the Government of Malawi and 2) a more complex screening form created by the local rehabilitation organization, Sandi Thandiza, which primarily focused on occupational therapy outcomes. The objective of REFAM Malawi's training was to orient educators to available tools and resources and their role in observing learners. It also aimed to encourage them to connect learners with additional resources via referral. REFAM Malawi did not conduct any direct screening activities or collect data. The activity also did not report how the information from the screening training was used to conduct screening in Malawi. As a result, little is known about the impact of the training on changes in teachers' practice, the number of learners screened due to training, or the validity and accuracy of screenings when implemented in schools. It is unclear how the activity's interventions linked or supported screening at the school level beyond the training.

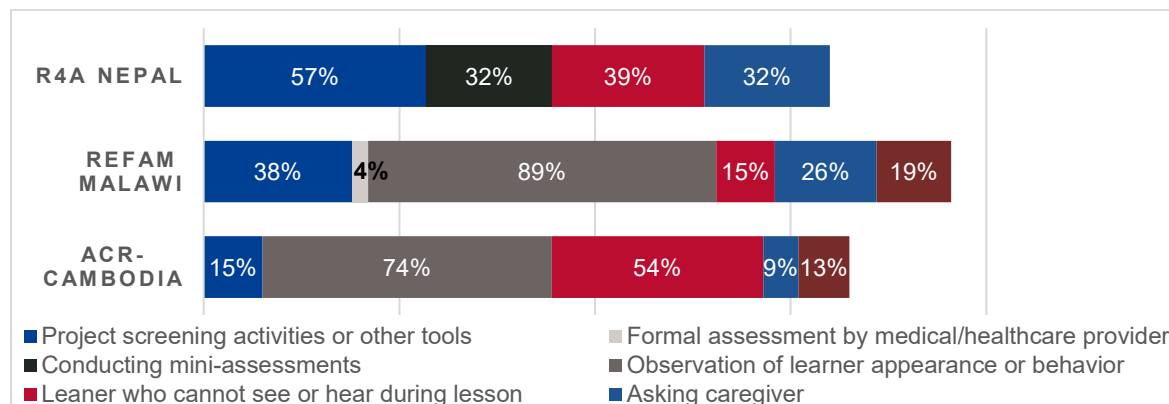
R4A Nepal's OPD partners mapped disability services before implementation. R4A Nepal used the Washington Group (WG) Child Functioning Module (CFM) that used questions for parents and learners to identify if functional limitations were present that would trigger further evaluation. While R4A Nepal's screening activities raised awareness and changed behavior among school and government personnel and facilitated needed support to learners, technical verification of the tool required two iterations of testing and results to determine the tool's validity in the domains of vision and mobility. Data from R4A Nepal's screening activities was entered into the EMIS for government tracking. It was determined that adopting a screening tool based on the social model of disability can lead to positive changes in awareness and understanding. However, activities need to allow substantial time and budget to pilot and validate screening tools, including those for vision and hearing. Furthermore, activities should encourage collaboration with the health sector at the donor and government levels to ensure that the screening system is improved—from screening through diagnosis.

3.2.2 Screening Instruments and Their Use

As noted in the summary above, each activity used its own set of tools for screenings, with varying results. The teachers in ACR-Cambodia continued to depend on alternative methods to identify learners with disabilities in their classrooms. They relied heavily on observable traits rather than formal screening tools. Ultimately, the activity used a screening checklist to sensitize teachers about disability and to provide them with information about where to go if they had concerns, linking them to referral resources compiled by ACR-Cambodia. REFAM Malawi held a screening training to introduce educators to the overall goal of screening and two existing tools but did not conduct direct screening activities. However, teacher interview data with REFAM Malawi teachers revealed that, similarly to ACR-Cambodia teachers, they most commonly relied on learner observation to tell which learners may have difficulties or disabilities instead of screening with tools.

R4A Nepal adapted the WG CFM, which was developed and validated by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to determine disability prevalence. UNICEF originally developed the WG CFM for caregivers to complete, and R4A adapted it for teachers to complete. During government consultations, the WG CFM was simplified for ease of implementation and to be used for screening. Due to a lack of qualified professionals to further assess learners in the areas where the activity was engaged, only three domains—hearing, seeing, and mobility—were included in the screening technical verification. After two rounds of testing, results indicated that the domains for mobility and vision functional limitations were considered valid for the purpose of screening but not hearing. Less than half of the teachers interviewed at the endline (43%, N=28) reported being involved in R4A Nepal’s screening for learners with disabilities in their classrooms.

Exhibit 9. Teachers’ Self-Reported Use of Screening Methods by Activity¹⁷



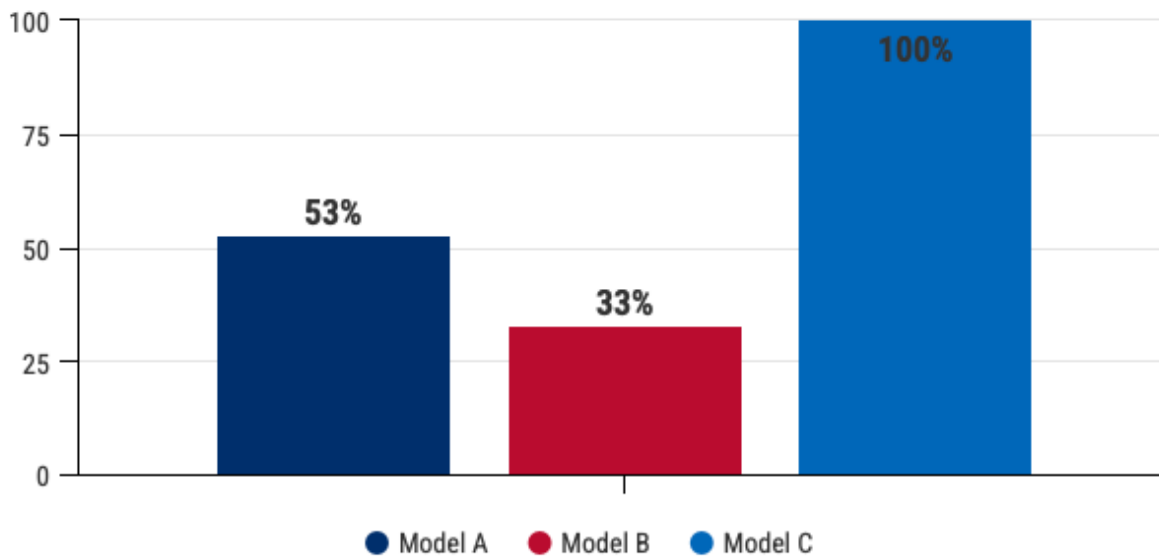
Sources: MCSIE Teacher Interview Data: Cambodia (2021), Malawi (2021), Nepal (2022)¹⁸

¹⁷ Teachers could mention more than one method of disability identification in their response.

¹⁸ *Note:* Observation of learner appearance or behavior represented general teacher observations and impressions of a learner’s disability status, while the data collection code ‘learner who cannot see or hear’ reflects a more detailed description of teachers specifying a learner’s visual and auditory functioning.

In R4A Nepal, the use of a screening tool aligned with a functional/social model of disability had a positive impact on teacher perception. Approximately half of the teachers interviewed at the endline in Model A (resource) and one-third in Model B (core intervention) classrooms reported that the screening process changed their perspective on learners who struggle to learn (N=8, 53%, and N=11, 33%, respectively). All the teachers interviewed in Model C (core-plus intervention) classrooms reported that the screening process changed their perspective on learners who struggle to learn (N=17, 100%). The impact of the R4A Nepal screening process on teachers’ perspectives of learners who struggle to learn was the strongest for teachers who received intensive support. These findings are summarized in Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10. Proportion of R4A Nepal Teachers Whose Perspective Changed from the Screening Process, by School Model



Source: MCSIE Nepal Endline Teacher Interview 2022 Data

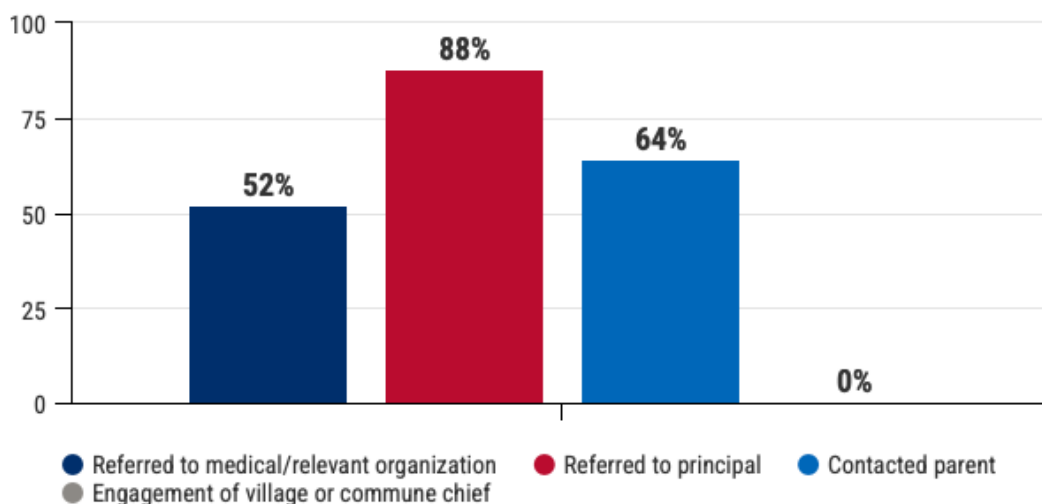
Teachers reported that the screening process changed their knowledge about disabilities (58%), behavior toward learners with disabilities (53%), and teaching methods (53%). For example, one Model B female teacher stated, “We use a more inclusive approach, student-centric education.” When teachers who participated in R4A Nepal activities were asked what worked well in the screening process, only 29% (n=8) said the WG CFM questionnaire made screening easy. While R4A Nepal’s adaptation of the CFM tool was simplified for ease of implementation, it appears that teachers did not find the tool easy to implement, and further adaptations or training may be beneficial.

3.2.3 Mapping, Referrals, and Diagnosis

Before engaging in screening design, ACR-Cambodia conducted a “mapping” exercise to gain insights and consultations on tools and practices already in place in Cambodia, including

identifying secondary assessment centers, such as clinics and NGOs that provide assessment services. Schools could then use this list of referral services during their screening process. Specifically, out of the 57 teachers who participated in ACR-Cambodia’s screening activities in their classroom, 25 (44%) reported that learners were referred for further assessment or medical support as a result of the screening. Exhibit 11 summarizes how screening data was communicated to health professionals, parents/caregivers, or school principals by teachers engaged in screening.

Exhibit 11. ACR-Cambodia Screening Data Sharing Methods



Source: MCSIE ACR-Cambodia General Education Intervention Teacher Interview 2021 Data

REFAM Malawi also mapped service providers at the beginning of its implementation, although not specifically for screening and assessment purposes. Nonetheless, the mapping activity enabled REFAM Malawi to identify two tools already in practice (as described above). REFAM Malawi provided screening training in multiple districts, so its advice on the next steps after screening was generalized, instructing participants to follow up with clinics as needed.

Finally, R4A Nepal worked with partner OPDs to identify resources for teachers and learners who were screened and suspected of needing further assessment. Out of the 28 teachers who participated in R4A Nepal’s screening, during endline interviews, 79% (n=22) reported that learners were referred for further assessment or medical support because of the screening. This is a notable increase in referrals compared to the 15% (n=3) of teachers at baseline who reported that referrals were made after screening. Beyond a general mapping, however, the activity reported that secondary assessment opportunities were largely lacking in the catchment areas of implementation. This created a challenging situation for both teachers and learners, as learners identified as needing further assessment did not have access to the necessary support services. . In addition, R4A Nepal piloted entering CFM data into an EMIS subsystem. While this exercise is preliminary and there is a possible risk in placing learner screening data in an EMIS system, the intent was to flag and track learners from referral to diagnosis and services.

3.2.4 Awareness and Sensitization

A clear-cut result of screening and assessment activities did not emerge from the study. For example, ACR-Cambodia tools were not sensitive enough to identify learners needing further assessment, so a common misperception was that teachers concluded that there were no learners with difficulties or disabilities in their schools. In Malawi, there was no follow-up in schools, so the awareness that was raised is relatively unknown, especially because the activity trained teachers using a tool that they were already likely using (the previously mentioned Save the Children/Government of Malawi tool). REFAM Malawi, however, reported that it engaged in policy advocacy to include language about screening in Malawi’s new inclusive education policy. In Nepal, the use of the CFM provided opportunities for teachers and head teachers to reflect on difficulties that learners were encountering in school and in their communities. R4A Nepal’s focus on the social model of disability led to significant awareness raising among school and local government personnel about the presence of struggling learners in schools.

3.2.5 Collaboration

Exhibit 12 below provides a summary overview of how each activity collaborated with partners. OPDs were largely uninvolved in screening efforts, but the reasons for their lack of involvement were different. However, R4A Nepal’s strategy was to involve both the government and OPDs to help bridge the gap between screening and referral. A common theme across activities was that partners were instrumental in “mapping” service availability and organizations that, in some ways, assisted learners with disabilities.

Exhibit 12. Partnerships and Purposes for Screening and Identification

Activity	ACR-Cambodia	REFAM Malawi	R4A Nepal
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District government • NGOs (not OPDs) • Service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandi Thandiza and (indirectly) Save the Children • District and national government • UNICEF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPDs • District government
Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify the availability of assessment and service providers ✓ Inform the development of screening tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Utilization of existing screening tools (Save the Children and Sandi Thandiza) ✓ Policy advocacy (national government and UNICEF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mapping referral pathways for further assessment, where they existed

3.2.6 Key Takeaways: Screening and Identification

Across activities, two main themes were evident. First, screening in education programming is a very emergent area of work and not a common practice in schools or communities in Nepal or Cambodia. Conversely, in Malawi, a screening tool already existed before REFAM Malawi, but there was a lack of data regarding its widespread use before or after the arrival of REFAM Malawi. Second, none of the activities themselves had in-house expertise on screening. To alleviate these gaps, activities utilized partnerships with varied success. ACR-Cambodia engaged with non-OPD organizations to gather ideas on screening, but the tools used did not provide useful information. In R4A Nepal, the CFM appeared useful, but not all domains could be validated because of a lack of further verification options in Nepal. REFAM Malawi trained educators on existing tools, one already familiar (not validated) and the other (validated) too complex for teacher usage.

Key takeaways were learned from screening efforts. These takeaways may inform future activities, including:

- ✓ **Terminology:** While a person with a disability may experience functional difficulties, a person with functional disabilities may not have a disability. Tools that examine functional difficulty provide specific information about an individual's ability to function in a particular environment. Measuring functional difficulty gives us information that may be useful in understanding who might have a disability but does not in itself result in identifying an individual as having a disability.
- ✓ **Social model of disability:** A focus on functional limitations, aligned with the social model of disability, created significant awareness-raising approaches among school and local government personnel about the presence of struggling learners in school.
- ✓ **Disability screening tools:** Tools are limited in this area and require more time and budget to pilot and implement them in schools. Additionally, teachers require more in-depth training than is commonly available in education activities. As a result, teachers may lack fidelity in implementing screening and may not be suitable implementors of screening activities.
- ✓ **Mapping of disability supports and services:** For USAID activities, mapping exercises and collaboration with OPDs and service providers were the most useful ways to develop contextualized plans for existing approaches.
- ✓ **Lived experience with disability:** OPDs provided guidance on service and assessment providers in only one country of the MCSIE study, but where they were engaged, they were valuable partners for connecting the screening to referral systems in the country.
- ✓ **Use of disability data in education systems:** The only evidence of screening data use took place in Nepal, where teachers, administrators, and government officials used data on functional difficulties in connection with a subsystem of the EMIS. This subsystem has yet to be merged with the EMIS in the country as of the writing of this report.

3.3 Teacher Training



This section discusses the most effective training models for providing teachers with the necessary resources and support to meet the needs of learners with disabilities.

3.3.1 Summary of Activity Approach

ACR-Cambodia's training on inclusive education was a limited, standalone topic, while inclusive teaching strategies in general were implicitly embedded in reading content. Only a minority of respondents in post-training surveys could name specific instructional strategies they learned to support inclusive education. The 90-minute session on inclusion originally required persons without disabilities to simulate the experience of being disabled, which is inconsistent with international best practice.

REFAM Malawi's training focused on teachers' roles and responsibilities in promoting inclusion, centering on the social model of disability rather than a deficit model focusing on learner limitations. Training on universal design supported teachers in thinking about ways to both make education accessible for all learners and individualize it as needed. According to KIIs with government officials and training participants, REFAM Malawi missed an opportunity to model inclusion in the general education setting by delivering its training almost exclusively to specialized Resource Centre teachers rather than all general educators at the primary levels.

R4A Nepal's resources and training for teachers on inclusive early-grade reading were strong in their theoretical foundation and description of the barriers that learners with disabilities face. However, more concrete, practical guidance for implementing inclusive classroom instruction strategies was needed. The R4A Nepal activity had the least explicit or implicit links to UDL within training content; however, this could be because the activity, unlike the other two, was designed before the publication of USAID's UDL guidelines.¹⁹

3.3.2 Training Approach

Each activity engaged with teacher training for various purposes and audiences (see Exhibit 13) and provided different levels of follow-up and support to meet the needs of learners with disabilities.

¹⁹ Hayes, Turnbull & Moran. (2018) USAID *Universal Design for Learning to Help All Children Read Toolkit*

Exhibit 13. Training Approach Implemented by Activity

	ACR-Cambodia	REFAM Malawi	R4A Nepal
Activity Scope	Early grade literacy program for learners with and without disabilities in upper preschool to Grade 2.	National Reading Program support for learners with disabilities enrolled in Resource Centres in Standards 1–4.	EGR program for learners with disabilities in Grades 1–3.
Inclusive Education Training Content	90-minute inclusive education session in a two-week general EGR training program.	UDL, screening and identification, coaching and monitoring, IEPs, family engagement, and deaf education.	Braille and NSL supporting learners with intellectual disability (Model A); inclusive literacy instruction (Models B & C).
Training Approach	In-service teacher training workshops and school-based literacy coaching. Activity-supported cascade model (master trainers were trained and then trained others)	A mix of virtual and in-person training due to COVID-19; instruction on “how to coach.”	Three models of in-service direct training, cascade training, coaching, and social mobilizer support; virtual training due to COVID-19.
Training Length	90-minutes.	Various topics were covered over approximately 8 days of training time.	Five days (40 hours) for master trainers and three days (18 hours) of teacher training, with four hours dedicated to EGR.
Trainees	Grade 1 & 2 teachers.	Specialist teachers (special needs education), itinerant teachers, head teachers, desk officers, OPDs, and other service providers.	Resource classroom teachers (Model A), head teachers, education focal points (Model B & C), and Grades 1–3 teachers (Model C).

3.3.3 Training Outcomes

Evaluation findings related to training outcomes demonstrated mixed results from teacher training.

On post-training surveys and KIIs, ACR-Cambodia training participants could only name a few specific instructional strategies they learned to support inclusive education. General education teachers—who listed specific inclusive strategies most frequently—listed preferential seating for learners with disabilities (27%), use of letter picture cards (10%), sign language (10%), and

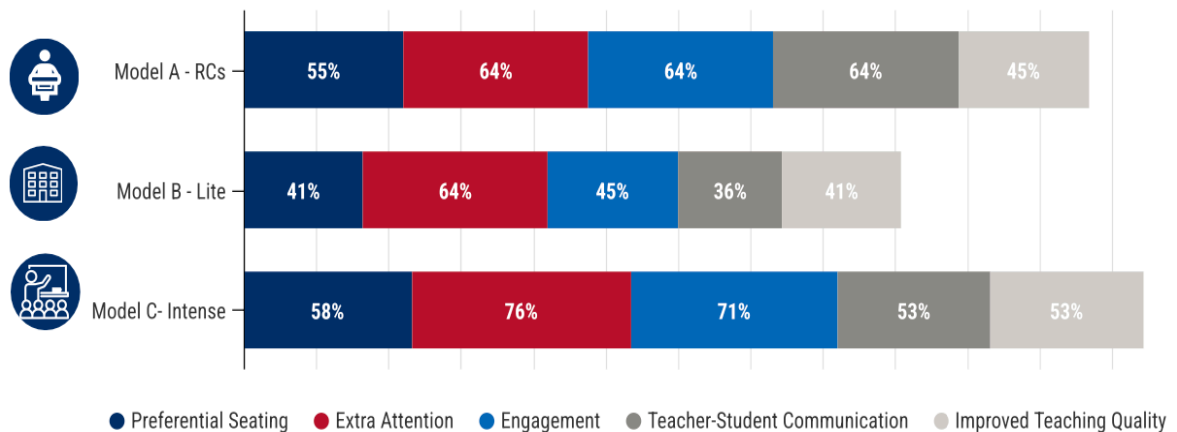
making written text visible (7%). Training respondents did not widely mention the strategies that ACR-Cambodia promoted in its package, such as explaining content slowly and clearly or facing learners when speaking, as inclusive approaches. Although teacher respondents were much more adept at describing general literacy strategies they learned through training (including participatory methodologies, “I do/we do/you do,” and the use of diverse TLMs), it was uncommon for them to explain how these general literacy approaches were supports for learners with and without disabilities.

Although REFAM Malawi lacked concrete data that MCSIE could use to determine outcomes, MCSIE data demonstrated that REFAM Malawi had an impact on teacher confidence. Post-training surveys revealed that teachers felt more confident teaching learners with disabilities after completing training, and that this confidence remained well after the REFAM Malawi trainings (five months post-training). This confidence may be attributed to how REFAM Malawi demystified inclusive education, by providing simple points of entry through the UDL framework and reinforcing that inclusive education strategies are applicable to all learners in a classroom. In addition to teachers self-reporting on their confidence, following trainings, classroom observations that formed a part of REFAM Malawi endline data collection found that 59% of specialist teachers were utilizing UDL approaches.²⁰

In R4A Nepal, head teachers reported observing positive changes in inclusive instruction as a result of R4A Nepal. As the figures below show, head teachers in Model C schools observed the most changes overall. However, in the category of teacher-learner communication, head teachers reported seeing this change the most in resource classrooms (Model A). The numbers in Exhibit 14 below show improvement through head teachers’ self-reporting of the changes they implemented for more inclusive instruction. The reported changes in inclusive instruction in Model C schools, which received more intense and direct support from R4A Nepal, are notable and encouraging. This is especially noteworthy given the shorter-than-planned duration of school-based implementation due to COVID-19. However, the changes reported in Model B schools indicate that a shift toward more inclusive instruction has begun in general education settings, even without extensive activity inputs beyond training head teachers. The largest shift was in the category of extra attention (from teachers to those learners who show signs of struggling with the material). Additionally, nearly all (94%) Model C head teachers in R4A Nepal reported observing changes in student learning outcomes due to the activity’s training. In comparison, 78% of those from Model A schools and 69% from Model B schools reported that they saw changes.

²⁰ REFAM FY22 Final Report

Exhibit 14. Inclusive Instructional Changes Reported by Head Teachers in Nepal



3.3.4 Inclusive Education Pedagogy

ACR-Cambodia’s training delivery adhered to evidence-based adult learning principles²¹ and was consistent with UDL practices.²² A detailed review of the training content shows that it embedded inclusive teaching practices implicitly, such as referencing inclusive teacher tips throughout sessions, modeling learner-centered instructional practices consistent with UDL throughout lesson practice and role play, and using TLMs that convey information through large print, color-coding, and vivid imagery. While principles of inclusion consistent with UDL were subtly embedded into the reading package itself, the ACR-Cambodia training did not connect these teaching strategies to implementing inclusive education. Teachers also did not make the link between inclusive education and the likely presence of learners with unidentified disabilities in their own classrooms. Teachers often expressed support for inclusion in theory but claimed it did not currently apply to them as their classes had no learners with disabilities.

REFAM Malawi’s approach to grounding their teacher training series in UDL focused on inclusion for all learners, not just on support for the specific needs of learners with disabilities. The REFAM Malawi teacher training series emphasized reducing environmental and attitudinal barriers while strengthening inclusive practices that could meet the needs of multiple diverse learners at once. REFAM Malawi further strengthened the training approach by providing disability-specific support

²¹ Examples include applied and experiential learning, connecting learning to personal experience, and providing information through multiple formats and methods (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson. (2015). *The Adult Learner*).

²² UDL strategies help to support all learners, including struggling learners, as described in the *Universal Design for Learning to Help All Children Read* toolkit (Hayes, Turnbull, & Moran, 2018) and resources such as those provided by CAST (2018).

content, particularly for learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, that teachers could pair with the more universal inclusive strategies meant to increase commitment to inclusive practice. While REFAM Malawi did not train teachers in the general education setting, instead training primarily specialist teachers, its approach to training aligned with recommended practices worldwide and USAID's commitment to UDL. The trainings focused on the role and responsibility of specialist teachers in promoting inclusion, centering on removing barriers to learning and not on learner limitations. The activity provided further training on IEPs and screening and identification as key support measures to promote and ensure inclusive education. REFAM Malawi developed specialized deaf education trainings, prioritizing sign-language-first instruction for learners who are deaf and partnering with key stakeholders to promote the advancement of deaf education and MSL through trainings.

R4A Nepal worked with OPDs and the government (CEHRD) to develop in-service training packages for resource classroom teachers who had previously been excluded from the professional development opportunities offered to and required for general education teachers. Members of OPDs led the training workshops on NSL and braille for resource classroom teachers, ensuring representation, accuracy of content, and appropriateness of delivery of content. R4A Nepal's training materials aligned with international definitions of disability and access to inclusive education, but there was no clear and continuous link between inclusive pedagogy and literacy concepts. Training materials covered a wide range of evidence-based literacy and inclusive education domains within three or five days. Training materials for literacy instruction in R4A Nepal did not have a clear or direct connection with core concepts of inclusive education strategies, including UDL. These trainings primarily focused on inclusive policy awareness, reading strategies, and inclusive education innovations, such as the general purpose of IEPs. Despite the wide-ranging topics covered during the training and in materials, a review of the resource materials provided to participants and interviews with them indicated that the content was more theoretical than specific and practical. In interviews with the evaluation team, trainees indicated they were eager for more targeted guidance about implementing inclusive techniques in the classroom. Some also noted that trainers were typically from "management or bureaucratic backgrounds" and expressed that trainers with backgrounds in classroom teaching would be more effective.

In their own words: R4A Nepal

"I have found that teacher trainings are conducted by trainers from management or fields other than the teaching-learning field. I think the whole process would be far more effective if trainers were professionals who are intensively involved in teaching-learning [on a] daily basis. This would ensure effective communication."

Local education officer, male

3.3.5 Teacher Training Models

All three activities designed training that was specifically targeted for in-service professionals (teachers and education focal people).

A key learning from the MSCIE evaluation was that the independent cascade approach employed by R4A Nepal (Model B) seemed to be less effective than the other training models (such as those

offered in Models A and C of this activity or the training models of the other two activities). In ACR-Cambodia and REFAM-Malawi, all participants were trained directly by the implementing partners. In contrast, R4A Nepal employed a cascade (or training-of-trainer) model for Model B trainings, and only head teachers were trained by activity staff directly with the expectation that head teachers would pass their learning down to all other teachers at the school. ACR-Cambodia also employed a cascade model, but the activity directly supported all cascade levels. For example, Model B participants in MCSIE interviews expressed a sense that the training content was not consistently delivered from head teachers to other teachers or that the quality was not good. During KILs, 44% of general teachers interviewed said they did not receive any information from their head teacher about teaching learners with disabilities (generally or about reading instruction). Of those who recalled receiving information from their head teacher, only half (50%) mentioned teaching strategies, and only 17% said they received information about using materials.

In their own words: R4A Nepal

LEU officials noted a preference for direct training for schools and the need for training to be routinely delivered for new teachers and as a refresher for previously trained teachers.

“I think, it would be better if R4A included teachers who are involved in teaching and dealing with students at lower grades, especially female teachers, instead of head teachers, since they are the ones who are really involved with the students.”

LEU official, gender undisclosed

Moreover, during classroom observations, MCSIE researchers found that training content had been inconsistently transferred from school administrators who had received direct training from the activity to the early-grade teachers in the school who had not participated. The cascade model as a modality for capacity building may have also been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with fewer opportunities for head teachers to pass on learning to colleagues due to school closures and the shift to virtual learning. Below, we detail further implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on training models.

3.3.6 Teacher Training Models during COVID-19

All three activities were affected to a varying degree by COVID-19 and resulting public health restrictions, with each needing to pivot what had been originally conceived as exclusively in-person trainings in each country to virtual or blended trainings at the height of the pandemic. This had both positive and negative impacts on activities. For example, the REFAM Malawi trainings pivoted to a blended model due to COVID-19, developing training approaches so that materials could be shared in advance and activities could be completed either virtually or face-to-face. Training materials were developed so that a consistent format with clear instructions and expectations was set for each topic regardless of its delivery modality. This reportedly helped with

Good practice in accessibility

REFAM Malawi disseminated training and workshop materials to participants in advance of sessions to support accessibility within their blended training model. This is a good practice for accessibility and can be replicated in future activities.

participant engagement and understanding.²³ Finally, REFAM Malawi supported follow-on conversations through WhatsApp, which was not in the original activity design, demonstrating an innovative and inclusive way to keep participants engaged long after trainings had been completed (see more on this in the Coaching and Mentoring sub-section below). Therefore, an unintended positive impact of COVID-19 was that REFAM Malawi began to model how different modalities for instruction can be used in a UDL approach. Although the activity only intended to use face-to-face PowerPoint training delivery, accessible approaches emerged when the activity pivoted in response to COVID-19. The change in training modalities also allowed REFAM Malawi to have a wider geographic reach (allowing participants from all 34 of Malawi's districts), enabling improved access to traditionally "hard-to-reach" teachers, according to interviews with implementing partner staff.

A more negative impact of COVID-19 on training delivery can be seen in the R4A Nepal activity, where the shift to virtual training shortened sessions and required R4A Nepal 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. In addition, technical limitations, including internet connectivity, the electronic device used (usually a mobile phone), and unfamiliarity with online meetings, impacted training participants' engagement. These were in addition to the inevitable distractions and interruptions from surrounding activities when participating in virtual training from home. In-person training workshops became more feasible as Nepal's COVID-19 situation improved, enabling R4A Nepal to reintegrate content and applications they had previously removed for the virtual sessions.

3.3.7 Coaching and Mentorship

Academic literature establishes evidence that coaching practices support teacher behavior changes and EGR outcomes in the classroom.²⁴ However, effective coaching and mentoring require knowledgeable personnel and resources to achieve the desired outcomes. In Cambodia, NGO staff led coaching and mentoring to support teachers' application of training content in the classroom. Despite their remit to extend professional development into the classroom, literacy coaches described struggling to support teachers with providing inclusive education and lacking clarity on their role in this area. Literacy coaches received the same amount of training on inclusive education as the teachers they coached; MCSIE Cambodia FGDs indicated that this limited the literacy coaches' ability to provide expert coaching to teachers on inclusion issues beyond the training they both received (see textbox for quote).

²³ REFAM Final Report

²⁴ Piper et al., 2018. Identifying the essential ingredients to literacy and numeracy improvement: Teacher professional development, and coaching, student textbooks, and structured teacher's guides. *World Development*, 106, 324-336.

Despite limited explicit training on inclusive education, some Cambodian literacy coaches were skillful in linking the literacy package to inclusive education. For example, when asked if training on inclusive education was sufficient in the activity design, two literacy coaches (out of 17) provided insightful feedback on ACR-Cambodia’s implicit support for inclusion by describing how the training and materials promoted inclusion through specific activities and teaching strategies (see textbox). The coaching and mentoring model used by ACR-Cambodia was resource-intensive and involved dedicated NGO-employed coaches visiting schools regularly, a practice that was determined to not be scalable by the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) in the future.

In their own words: ARC-Cambodia

“The inclusive education training we’ve received is so short-term. I, myself, do not practice it every day, so it seems like we’ve learned it, but will soon forget it because we do not use it.”

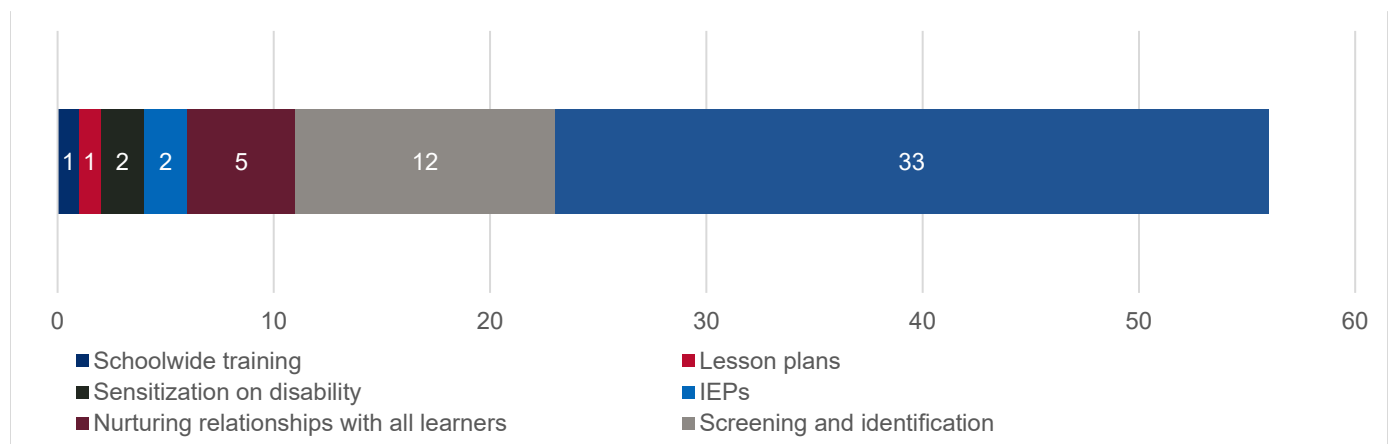
Literacy coach, gender unknown

“All in all, the implementation of the reading package doesn’t demonstrate inclusive education [per se], but all the activities in the observation form and in the instructional guides are supporting an inclusive classroom.”

Literacy coach, gender unknown

REFAM Malawi engaged with coaching and mentorship in two unique ways: 1) teaching its workshop participants how to coach others in the general education sector about inclusive practices and 2) offering coaching support to the trained participants via WhatsApp. In the first instance, REFAM Malawi trained itinerant teachers, specialist teachers, heads of schools, and Department of Inclusive Education desk officers on ways to coach other teachers on inclusive education, which had the potential for inclusive outcomes. The main aim of the coaching training was to create a cadre of knowledgeable advocates who could work with teachers in one-on-one or small group settings to promote inclusion and share ideas on how to implement it. Among the 55 teachers MCSIE surveyed after training, 46 identified as specialist teachers in Resource Centres. Teachers were asked open-ended questions on the type of coaching they provide to other teachers in their schools. Responses were qualitatively analyzed into themes and are presented in Exhibit 15.

Exhibit 15. REFAM Malawi Coaching Responsibilities (by number of teachers).



Source: MCSIE Teacher Survey (REFAM Malawi)

In contrast to Cambodia’s resource-intensive model of offering direct support to training participants after the conclusion of the training, REFAM Malawi used a less costly approach to follow-on activities through a 10-week WhatsApp group that reinforced ideas presented in trainings. WhatsApp coaching provided a low-cost, locally relevant approach to following up on training and providing ongoing coaching. No data is available on response rates or qualitative engagement in WhatsApp groups. However, according to MCSIE data obtained through interviews and survey responses, many specialist teachers have already begun coaching in their schools (see textbox).

In their own words: REFAM Malawi

“[I] provide guidance and counseling on how [general education teachers] can stay with those learners [during] the time they are in the mainstream class. [I] provide [general education teachers] with skills that can help them handle learners with disabilities.”

REFAM specialist teacher, female

In Nepal, Model A trainees who received NSL instruction were provided with an NFDN-developed NSL app with activity support, which allowed for ongoing practice and skills-building beyond the training. The activity final report prepared by WEI indicated that R4A Nepal also engaged with coaching in various ways, including a seven-day training on mentoring and coaching for Model C social mobilizers, regular mentoring from social mobilizers, and reading motivators and on-site support through the technical team to the social mobilizer and the schools. Additionally, they created Facebook messenger groups to provide technical support from a distance. The seven-day training on mentoring and coaching for Model C social mobilizers and subsequent follow-up covered the basic principles and importance of mentoring and coaching, UDL principles, mentoring strategies, reading skills development, instructional strategies for learners with learning difficulties, IEP and local materials development, and effective use of teaching-learning materials. Social mobilizers then supported the trained early-grade and resource classroom teachers to help teachers practice the skills learned during training and conducted regular classroom observations, where they used a checklist and provided instant feedback and support to the teachers to improve instruction. The impact of this approach to coaching is unknown, as teachers rarely mentioned the coaching they received during interviews. However, WEI’s reports and trainings highlight the considerable resources and knowledge required to implement coaching practices.

3.3.8 Collaboration and Sustainability

Each activity collaborated and engaged with the government and OPDs, helping to ensure the relevance and accuracy of training content and enabling inclusive pedagogy to be sustained in teacher trainings implemented after their conclusion.

ACR-Cambodia closely collaborated with government stakeholders on content development. REFAM Malawi partnered with key stakeholders to promote the advancement of deaf education and MSL through trainings. R4A Nepal collaborated closely with Nepal’s CEHRD Integrated Education and Training (IET) and worked closely with two national OPD partners to develop their training packages. In addition, OPD partners provided input into special trainings provided by the

activity, adding invaluable contextual knowledge and insight of the lived experiences of people with disabilities into some trainings.

Through collaboration, two of the three activities also managed to embed future trainings at the pre-service level. For example, the trainings developed and delivered by R4A Nepal for in-service general education and resource classroom teachers have now been formally adopted into Nepal's teacher professional development (TPD) system, so the impacts of R4A Nepal will also be felt at pre-service level as well. Similarly, ACR-Cambodia's teacher training component was designed as an in-person, in-service training for practicing teachers; one success of this activity was that it was able to bring its reading package to a pre-service format with three modules that focused on Khmer literacy instruction and assessment. Yet, while existing embedded inclusive strategies will likely be featured in the pre-service curriculum given their presence within the in-service materials (e.g., inclusion tips), there was not a concerted effort to expand or further embed inclusion principles in the pre-service training beyond what had been done in the in-service training package.

3.3.9 Key Takeaways: Teacher Training

In terms of teacher training, all three activities provided insights that can be considered in future activities. The key takeaways regarding teacher training are:

- ✓ **General purpose of training:** Practical and concrete classroom strategies are preferred over theoretical training on disability to ensure teacher confidence and the application of inclusive instructional approaches.
- ✓ **Pedagogical approach to inclusive education:** The best approach for supporting disability-inclusive education is to provide direct training on inclusive education, based on the social model of disability, that embeds inclusive principles throughout and is supplemented by principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support all learners, not just learners with disabilities (a twin-track approach).
- ✓ **Teacher training models:** Direct, activity-supported training models that allocate a sufficient amount of time (three to five days minimum for general inclusive education concepts, plus additional time for special topic trainings, such as sign language, IEPs, screening, etc.) for inclusive education content delivery and applied practice are recommended. Indirect cascade models for inclusive education trainings should be avoided, as without direct activity oversight the dissemination of training content was inconsistent.
- ✓ **Collaboration with OPDs:** Include OPD partners as training facilitators throughout all activity training on inclusion, as they can provide invaluable contextual knowledge and insight into the lived experiences of people with disabilities, which can bridge the gap between theory and practice in the classroom.
- ✓ **Trainees:** Train general education teachers alongside resource classroom/specialist teachers and provide opportunities for resource classroom/specialist teachers to share their insights and expertise for supporting learners with disabilities through school-based sharing meetings, as well as, more broadly, through online or SMS-based communities of

practice. Train head teachers, administration, and local government to ensure institutional support and monitoring.

- ✓ **Coaching/mentorship:** Coaching and mentorship can be resource-intensive but are key components for future activities to consider. Tech-based follow-ups, such as through WhatsApp and online videos, show promise.
- ✓ **Collaboration and engagement for sustainability:** All three activities reinforced the impact that awareness-raising and sensitization can have on perceptions of disability. However, implementing partners should avoid disability simulations in all areas of implementation. As evident by two of the activities, collaborating with local OPDs helps ensure representation, content accuracy, and delivery appropriateness. Close collaboration with government and local stakeholders also helps ensure the continued use of training packages and practices beyond the life of the activity.
- ✓ **Impact of COVID-19:** The shift from in-person to virtual training increased training consistency and providing training materials to all participants in advance of training promotes inclusion and accessibility. The practice of disseminating materials before an event promotes inclusion and improves accessibility for participants with disabilities or those who may have other access barriers.

3.4 Instructional Approaches



This section discusses what instruction models best improved classroom instruction and reading outcomes among learners with disabilities across all three countries.

3.4.1 Summary of Activity Impact

In ACR-Cambodia, despite the minimal focus on inclusion or UDL during teacher training, inclusive principles were embedded implicitly (and, in some cases, explicitly) throughout TLMs. Data collected from teachers and through lesson observations indicated that more work is needed to raise teacher awareness of the existence of “hidden” or undiagnosed disabilities in Cambodia. However, data collected during reading lessons also showed that ACR-Cambodia teachers have been given the tools needed to recognize and support struggling learners (even if teachers are not aware of disability) based on the principles of inclusion embedded in TLMs. While student learning outcomes data specifically for learners with disabilities is not available,^{25,26} ACR-Cambodia’s endline EGRA reported significant gains among learners in activity schools,

²⁵ Learning outcomes data was not disaggregated for disability status in general education settings due to challenges in identifying learners with disabilities. Instead, the activity presumed a 10% prevalence rate of learners with disabilities based on national statistics; Evans, P., Shah, S., Huebner, A., Sivasubramaniam, S., Vuthey, Ch., Sambath, K, Haurisa, L., & Borun, Y. (2014). A population-based study on the prevalence of impairment and disability among Cambodian children. *Disability, CBR and Inclusive Development (DCID)*, 25(2), 1-20. <http://dcidj.org/article/view/188>

²⁶ Evans et al., 2014.

suggesting the possibility that learners with disabilities who received the same inclusive instruction as their peers without disabilities were also able to improve their reading skills.

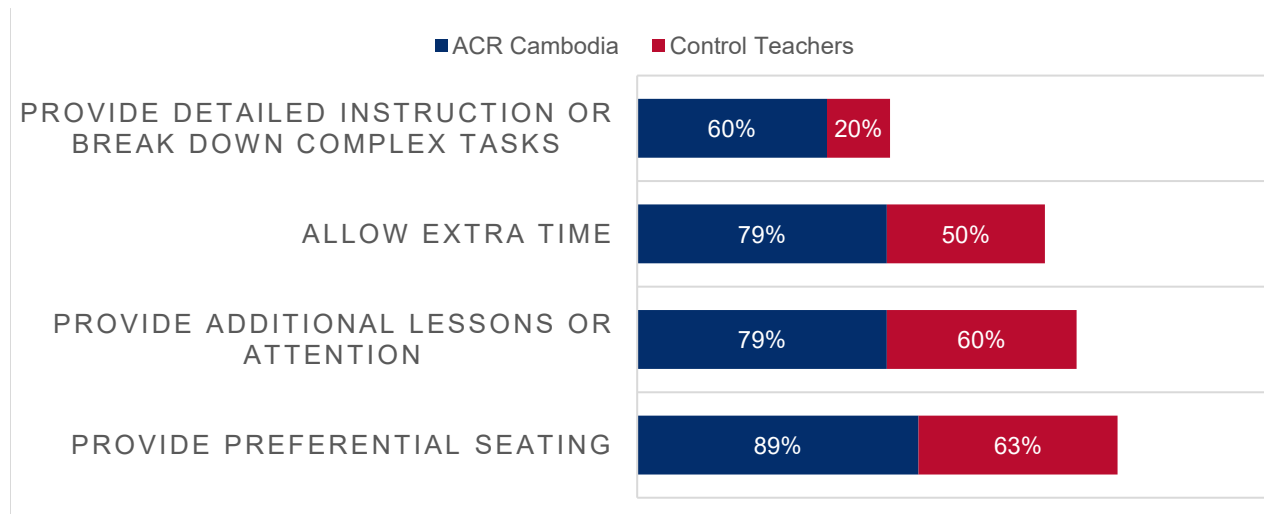
REFAM Malawi's UDL focus appeared to be an instructional model that could be implemented in Malawi's schools. REFAM Malawi endline data indicates that 59% of teachers were implementing UDL after the training. MCSIE observations found even more—69% of teachers were implementing UDL inclusive education strategies—but there was no activity data on whether teachers were using these strategies before training. A second area of impact for REFAM Malawi was in deaf education. Based on learning from the EGRA adapted for learners who are deaf, REFAM Malawi identified gaps in sign language standardization and usage and produced materials that could be utilized in Resource Centres where learners who are deaf receive their education. The activity in Malawi also contributed to increased opportunities for using sign language by developing videos and dictionaries. Despite increases in UDL usage and sign language development, a recurring theme in this activity was a lack of outcomes data. There is no definitive data on what works best for learners because REFAM Malawi's intervention was focused on systems change and not at the classroom level.

R4A Nepal's stakeholders supported the concept of including learners with disabilities in general education classrooms in theory, and as an ideal to strive toward. However, in practice, current limitations in infrastructure and teacher capacity have reinforced the perception that the resource classroom model, with largely segregated instruction, is currently the only realistic scenario in Nepal. Many viewed transitioning some learners with disabilities from resource classrooms to general education classrooms as a worthwhile goal. Yet, they doubted the existing capacity of schools and teachers to manage and support these learners appropriately. Classroom observations, surveys, and interviews showed that resource classroom teachers had the most growth in applying inclusive teaching practices, indicating that they are a strong resource for their learners and have the potential to support general education teachers as well. The limits of cascade training were evident in data from Model B schools, where teachers showed less capacity for inclusive instructional practices. Teachers in Model C schools, who received more direct support from R4A Nepal, showed gains in inclusive practice, but three months past the end of implementation in schools, the impact showed signs of fading. Lastly, R4A Nepal engaged the appropriate stakeholders and drew on past implementer experience in developing the adapted EGRA instruments; however, more research and testing are needed globally to understand how to modify assessment tools for learners with specific types of disabilities (blind and deaf) versus universally designing them to capture learning gains from a larger share of learners, both with and without disabilities.

3.4.2 Pedagogical Approach to Inclusive Education: Implementation of Training

Observation and survey data showed that ACR-Cambodia general education teachers use a variety of strategies to support struggling learners significantly more than their Control school counterparts. Self-reporting via the teacher survey also showed significant differences between ACR-Cambodia and Control teachers with regard to supporting struggling learners. Exhibit 16 provides a visual overview of the differences among ACR-Cambodia and Control teachers.

Exhibit 16. Self-Reported Teaching Strategies to Support Learners by ACR-Cambodia and Control Teachers, % per sample.

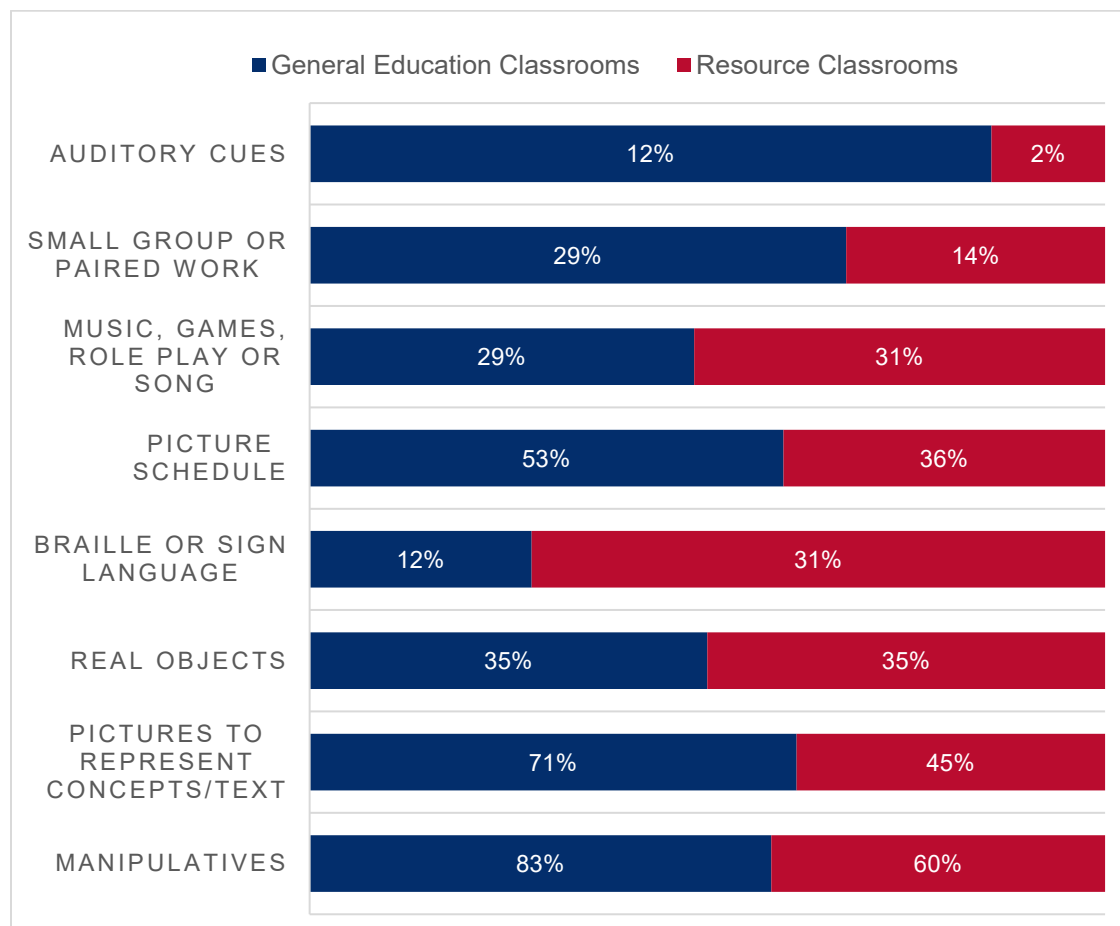


Source: MCSIE Cambodia Teacher Survey Data

Overall, ACR-Cambodia teachers used significantly more strategies to meet all learners’ needs in their classrooms compared to Control teachers. However, teachers self-reported providing support to struggling learners to a greater degree than they were observed doing so. Furthermore, ACR-Cambodia teachers were twice as likely as Control teachers to use multiple approaches versus a single approach in delivering lesson content, while Control teachers were significantly more likely to use whole-class teacher imitation as the primary instructional technique. While ACR-Cambodia teachers were not specifically trained on the UDL principle of “multiple means of engagement,” evaluators observed a diverse range in how teachers presented lesson material, including the use of pictures to illustrate concepts, creative representation methods like music/games/role play/songs, small group or pair work, and “I do/ we do/ you do”—methods that were also emphasized during training. Overall, ACR-Cambodia teachers demonstrated an ability to differentiate instructional approaches consistent with UDL approaches and favored simple, flexible strategies requiring minimal advance preparation or planning.

In REFAM Malawi, a majority of observed or surveyed teachers employed UDL strategies in the classroom. MCSIE classroom observations in Malawi (n=59) found that 59% of observed teachers were using UDL strategies. Evaluators observed general education classrooms (n=7) when a REFAM Malawi-trained teacher was absent or not present in a Resource Centre room (n=52); this allowed evaluators to assess the differences. However, it is important to note that the sample sizes are not weighted. Additional training from REFAM Malawi occurred after classroom observations and is not captured in the data below. Exhibit 17 provides a visual overview of differences among classrooms.

Exhibit 17. Inclusive Teaching Strategies Observed in REFAM Malawi Resource and General Education Classrooms, % per sample²⁷



Source: MCSIE REFAM Classroom Observation Analysis Report

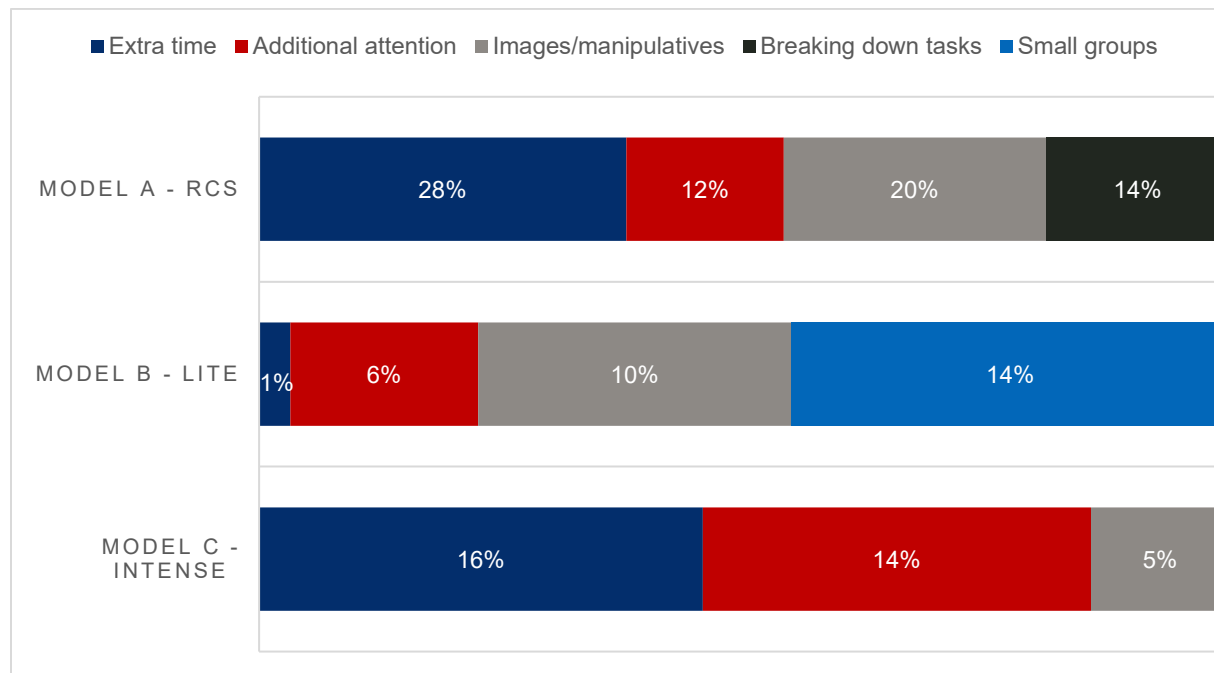
Data collected demonstrated that less than half of teachers in either setting (general education or Resource Centre classrooms) were using music, small group work, or auditory cues. Small sample sizes may also have impacted the findings, so results should be read with caution. The percentage of teachers reflects those from the small sample size and should not be read as generalizable for Malawi’s teachers as a whole.

R4A Nepal’s school-level data showed emerging inclusive practices. Analysis of classroom observations showed increased changes in teachers’ practice on some indicators and decreases in others. MCSIE researchers from KU conducted classroom observations in 2022 in all three implementation sites, in addition to control schools that did not receive the R4A Nepal intervention (n=265). Using a difference-in-difference approach to compare MCSIE evaluator data to R4A

²⁷ Significant difference at $p < .05$.

Nepal’s Fidelity of Implementation study data, researchers found that for most of intervention schools, the change of practices was over and above that of control schools.

Exhibit 18. Increase in R4A Nepal Observed Inclusive Teaching Strategies, % increase.



Source: MCSIE Nepal Endline Report

3.4.3 Teacher Preparedness and Confidence

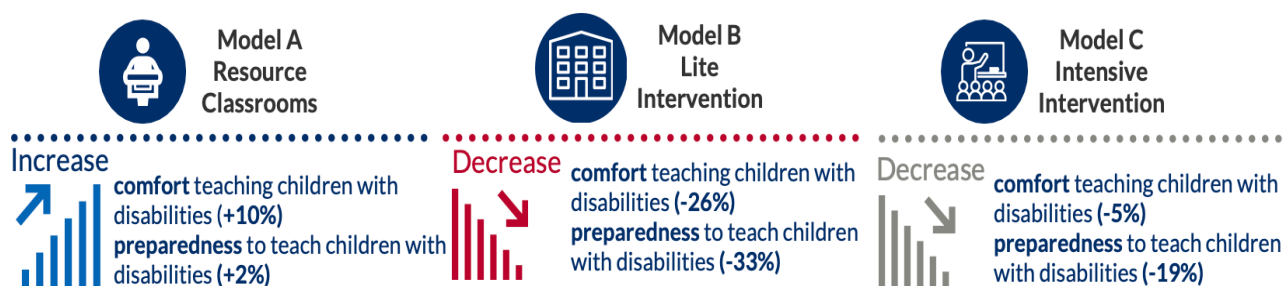
ACR-Cambodia teachers reported feeling more comfortable than Control teachers with teaching learners with disabilities or learning difficulties in their classrooms. When rating their comfort level with teaching learners with disabilities or struggling learners, 54% of ACR-Cambodia teachers reported they felt comfortable “to a great extent” compared to 20% of Control teachers. ACR-Cambodia teachers were also asked to what extent they felt the activity had prepared them to teach learners with disabilities or learning difficulties, and the vast majority (93%) reported feeling “to some extent” or “to a great extent” prepared. During classroom observations, MCSIE data collectors noted that ineffective teachers appeared to lack confidence, whereas effective teachers appeared to exhibit self-confidence.

In REFAM Malawi, one data point that is clear in this evaluation is teacher confidence. Post-training surveys conducted four months after training with 55 teachers (47 specialist teachers and eight inclusive education teachers) revealed that teachers felt more confident to teach learners with disabilities after completing the training. Furthermore, this confidence was sustained well after these trainings. Among teachers who reported they were prepared to a “limited extent” (15% of teachers) for teaching learners with disabilities before REFAM Malawi trainings, all perceived that they were prepared “to a great extent” after these trainings. Similarly, almost all teachers who

reported being prepared “to some extent” to teach learners with disabilities later perceived themselves as being prepared “to a great extent” after the trainings.

In R4A Nepal, teachers reported high levels of comfort and preparedness immediately following training. However, in endline surveys conducted at schools approximately three months after direct implementation ended, teachers in general education classes expressed decreased levels of comfort with, and preparedness for, teaching learners with disabilities. This was particularly the case with Model B teachers, who had received the “light” intervention and, therefore, less direct support. However, Model C teachers expressed the same sentiment. This finding could indicate that R4A Nepal’s impact was already fading.

Exhibit 19. R4A Nepal Teachers’ Comfort and Preparedness Overtime



Source: MCSIE Nepal Endline Report

3.4.4 Teacher Perceptions of Inclusive Education

The ACR-Cambodia activity had little impact on teachers’ perceptions about the capacity of learners with disabilities to learn to read, with ACR-Cambodia and Control teachers generally sharing similar beliefs. A survey asked teachers whether they believe learners with certain types of disabilities have the ability to learn to read in regular classrooms when provided with appropriate teacher instruction and support. Overall, most teachers agreed that learners with physical, hearing, and vision disabilities can learn in regular classrooms, while they disagreed that learners with intellectual, learning, and speech disabilities can do the same.²⁸ No statistically

²⁸ The respective proportions of ACR-Cambodia teachers and Control teachers who agree that children with disabilities have the ability to learn in regular classrooms are 93% and 87% for physical disabilities, 75% and 80% for hearing disabilities, and 54% and 70% for vision disabilities. The respective proportions of ACR-Cambodia teachers and Control teachers who disagree that children with disabilities have the ability to learn to read in regular classrooms are 81% and 77% for intellectual disability, 89% and 80% for learning disabilities, and 94% and 87% for speech disabilities.

significant differences were found between ACR-Cambodia and Control teachers when comparing beliefs across all six²⁹ disability types.

In REFAM Malawi, most specialist teachers supported inclusive education, but some inclusive education teachers' survey responses were not as supportive. MCSIE analyzed survey data from 55 teachers (n=47 specialist and n=8 inclusive education) to understand their perceptions about learners with disabilities participating in general education classrooms. Most specialist teachers either strongly (25%) or somewhat (38%) agreed with the statement that learners with disabilities should participate in general education classrooms. However, data from those who identified as inclusive education teachers in general education schools was less clear. Among the eight respondents, only three agreed that learners with disabilities should participate in general education learning. This suggests that although the REFAM Malawi activity effectively supported specialist teachers, barriers to inclusion still exist.

R4A Nepal's school-level data showed greater belief in the ability of learners with disabilities to learn in inclusive classroom settings. Analysis of baseline and endline teacher surveys showed an increase in teachers' positive perceptions. Specifically, significant increases were found in the percentage of Model B and Model C

teachers who believe that learners with intellectual disability can learn to read in general education classrooms when provided with an appropriate teacher, instruction, and support.³⁰ There were also increases in the percentage of Model A (resource classroom) teachers who believe that

In their own words: Teacher perspectives of inclusive education from all activities

"[Before participating in the activity], we thought that the students with disabilities could not come to school, but after we went through the course, we understand that the students with disabilities could get education equal to the students without disabilities, but he/she needs more encouragement from his/her surrounding...With inclusive education, we now can promote the students with disabilities to come to our school, unlike in the past where we would not dare to get him/her to our school at all."

ACR-Cambodia school director

"The first [thing needed to make schools more inclusive] is attitude of teachers, head teachers, [and] educational officials towards inclusive education that matters most: if each of us have a positive attitude, things can work."

REFAM Malawi head teacher

"The attitude of some teachers, they don't even want to accommodate these special needs learners as such. Some just say go to your specialist teacher as if that learner is for a specialist teacher."

REFAM Malawi specialist teacher

"Now intellectually disabled are intellectually disabled. That didn't work out...When you go into a class, for us it is rather impossible to think that you'll make them understand a lot of concepts."

R4A Nepal resource classroom teacher

²⁹ The six disability types that teachers were asked their perceptions about include physical, hearing, vision, intellectual, learning, and speech disabilities.

³⁰ The percentage of Model B and Model C teachers who believe that learners with intellectual disability can learn to read in general education classrooms increased from 26% at baseline to 41% at endline and from 35% to 43%, respectively.

learners with learning or speech and communication disabilities can learn to read in general education classrooms when provided with an appropriate teacher, instruction, and support.³¹

3.4.5 Use of TLMs and Inclusive Education

In ACR-Cambodia, MoYES officials were engaged in material development from the activity's inception, which KII participants credited as the reason materials were approved and ultimately used in classrooms. During interviews, government collaborators were generally quick to praise ACR-Cambodia's consultative approach to developing TLMs directly with relevant government counterparts. Interviews described a similar consultative process in producing CSL materials in collaboration with NISE, KT, SED, and persons with disabilities directly.

ACR-Cambodia KII participants stated they believe that inclusive materials help to improve attitudes about learners with disabilities and reduce discrimination among peers in inclusive classrooms. New materials have also been field-tested among learners in inclusive classrooms. When evaluators asked school directors how the activity-provided materials compared to the materials teachers had used before ACR-Cambodia, the vast majority (84%) reported the new materials were better than previously used. When comparing TLM use among ACR-Cambodia teachers and Control teachers from classroom observations, the analysis showed that ACR-Cambodia teachers used 50% more TLMs during literacy lessons, implying, at the very least, that increased availability of TLMs may lead to increased TLM use. In addition, while similar proportions of ACR-Cambodia and Control teachers described in KIIs that classroom materials were accessible to all learners (including those with learning difficulties or disabilities) "to some extent" (71% ACR-Cambodia versus 63% Control), a significantly greater proportion of ACR-Cambodia teachers found them accessible "to a great extent" (13% ACR-Cambodia versus 0% Control).

REFAM Malawi produced TLMs for learners, sign language materials, and family literacy toolkits to provide teachers with a model to support learners with disabilities, but it is unknown how these materials were deployed or used. In 2021, REFAM Malawi distributed alphabet cards, early reading sheets, and MSL alphabet sheets to training participants. These materials were intended to be distributed further to families and were sufficient to reach 4,778 readers. REFAM Malawi also included explicit step-by-step guides for teachers to explain to families how to use the TLMs as part of the family literacy toolkit. REFAM Malawi also addressed inclusive practices by providing a sign language chart and large-print and braille books.

In May 2022, REFAM Malawi held a handover event with the MoE where they provided the set of TLMs produced along with all training materials that reportedly "set up a model on the best adaptations required for learners with disabilities that the MoE might adapt going forward."³²

³¹ The percentage of Model A teachers who believe that learners with learning disabilities can learn to read in general education classrooms increased from 44% at baseline to 65% at endline and from 19% to 70% for speech and communication disabilities.

³² REFAM FY22 Final Report, 2022.

Government KIIIs frequently highlighted the importance of learning materials, and most of interviewees were pleased that REFAM Malawi made a concerted effort to provide materials to the MoE at the activity close. However, as with other areas of this evaluation, REFAM Malawi reported initial outputs (number of materials), but there was no follow-up data to see how materials were used, if they reached families, or how they impacted learners' literacy. Monitoring and evaluating TLMs is vital to assess their impact on future programming.

R4A Nepal teachers expressed appreciation for the TLMs provided by the activity and for the training they received on how to make TLMs with local materials. In some cases, there was a time lag between R4A Nepal's delivery of TLMs to Model A and C schools and the training provided to teachers on how to use them. However, by the end of the activity, teachers and local government officials saw the books, tablets with apps, and other supplementary TLMs as enhancements to teachers' practice.

3.4.6 IEP Development

Of the three country sites, two developed individualized education plans (IEPs). While REFAM Malawi trained teachers on IEPs (as mentioned in the teacher training section), IEPs were not materials produced under the activity. ACR-Cambodia developed IEPs for a small number of learners who are deaf or hard of hearing under the Bridge Program. The ACR-Cambodia Inclusion Team provided intensive support to 14 learners in the Bridge Program in one province, with the activity developing a version of an IEP called "learner profiles" to support learner success.³³ The learner profiles were completed with inputs from the families and the volunteers and included transition plans into formal schooling for the future. Volunteers provided inputs over the phone and to caregivers during socially distanced face-to-face meetings. Despite efforts to transition learners into general education classrooms in local community schools, learners ultimately transitioned to segregated deaf education schools after activity close due to a lack of supports available for learners in community schools.

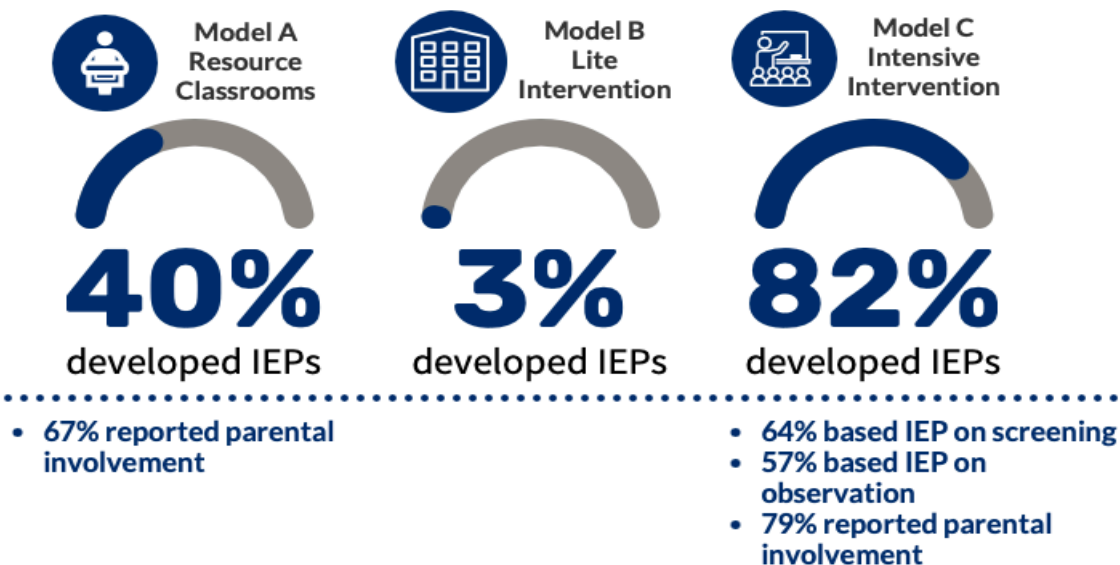
³³ During the COVID-19 school closures, the field team worked on building learner profiles for each learner who is deaf or hard of hearing who was supported by the activity in the Bridge Program; ACR-Cambodia FY 20 Annual Report

The R4A Nepal activity developed 799 IEPs for learners (54% male, 46% female) across all 10 districts, with most IEP development concentrated in the four focus municipalities of Banke and Surkhet (resource classrooms and Model C schools). The activity hosted a reflection meeting on the IEP process with participants (see textbox); however, the workshop did not include parents, an essential stakeholder in IEP planning. OPD partners expressed concerns over the sustainability of IEPs and felt that IEPs may be continued in some resource classrooms, but within general education classrooms, teachers will unlikely continue to develop IEPs due to their competing responsibilities. One OPD also shared that some teachers thought an IEP would provide them with additional resources for the learner, and because that is not the case, these teachers would likely not continue developing IEPs. Exhibit 20 highlights the use of IEPs by teachers, based on the intervention model of the activity.

Reflections from the field

A reflection meeting on the IEP process hosted by the activity revealed that participants preferred the name “individualized instructional plan” because the IEP template developed by R4A Nepal focused more on aspects of instruction versus an individualized education plan for a learner. Participants found the current template lacked specificity on the needs of learners and suggested a situation analysis of the learner be included in the template and updated quarterly. However, other participants felt the IEP template should be shortened. During endline interviews, OPD partners expressed the unlikelihood that IEPs would be sustained.

Exhibit 20. R4A Nepal Teachers Reported Use of IEP by Model



Source: MCSIE Nepal Endline Report

3.4.7 EGRAs and Assessment of Learning

ACR-Cambodia developed and field-tested adapted versions of the EGRA for use with learners who are blind or have low vision and learners who are deaf or hard of hearing but were unable to

continue testing and refining the instruments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These small pilot studies were primarily intended to lay the groundwork for potential future larger-scale adapted EGRAs. They were not intended to be used as an outcome measure for the ACR-Cambodia activity. Following the pilots, staff expressed the need for more research and testing related to the adapted EGRAs’ subtask presentation and content, ideally with larger samples of learners. However, due to the pandemic, no additional testing was possible. This, in conjunction with the absence of reliable screening data to identify and select a sample of learners with disabilities, meant that it was not possible to measure learning outcomes among this subpopulation.

REFAM Malawi’s main assessment efforts focused on developing modified EGRAs. At the start of the activity, USAID, the MoE, and REFAM Malawi observed a lack of usable data to understand the literacy gains of learners with disabilities. A central approach in addressing this dilemma was to develop EGRAs that could be used for learners who are blind or have low vision, learners who are deaf or hard of hearing, and learners with learning disabilities (who broadly fit into the Malawian disability category of “learning difficulties”).³⁴ In total, REFAM Malawi assessed 1,089 learners with these identified disabilities. For the endline assessment, REFAM Malawi developed an intake process and selected 299 learners in 28 schools. The assessment of learners covered several standard EGRA subtasks plus subtasks developed by the activity, which they concluded were more developmentally and linguistically appropriate for sign language users than the standard EGRA subtasks. Examples of an adapted subtask included listening comprehension, letter sound identification, non-word reading, familiar word reading, oral passage reading (simple), and reading comprehension (simple). Examples of modified subtasks include compensatory skills: braille reading mechanics (blind), receptive and expressive vocabulary (deaf or hard of hearing), fingerspelling and demonstration (deaf or hard of hearing), and a picture story (deaf or hard of hearing).³⁵

REFAM EGRA adaptation guide for learners with disabilities

REFAM Malawi produced an [EGRA adaptation guide](#) intended to serve as a resource for other EGR activities. The guide chronicled the steps REFAM Malawi took to adapt EGRAs and the general principles they recommend for adapting the EGRA for learners with disabilities in other locations. While the field of inclusive assessment continues to evolve, such documentation of contextualized efforts provides a valuable contribution to the community of practice. Future activities should ensure local contextualization along with current emerging and best practices for assessing learners with disabilities when developing or adapting assessment tools.

R4A Nepal used an inclusive approach to develop, pretest, and conduct EGRAs for learners with vision, hearing, and intellectual disabilities. While documented standards still need to be created

³⁴ In Malawi, learning disabilities or difficulties encompass those that relate to cognitive or intellectual development and may include unspecified learning difficulties, attentional disabilities, Autism and Autism spectrum disorders, down syndrome, etc. REFAM Solicitation, 2018 and [“A Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Malawi”](#), UNICEF, 2020.

³⁵ REFAM FY22 Q3 Report

for when and how to add accommodations³⁶ or modifications to the EGRA for these populations, R4A Nepal nevertheless drew from implementer experiences in other countries in determining changes to the instruments. While full validity testing of draft instruments was not conducted, field tests of the instrument ahead of full data collection provided essential insights that allowed the R4A Nepal team to refine the tool and administration protocols further.

Good practice in inclusion: R4A Nepal

R4A Nepal ensured robust inclusion and representation from the disability community in country and from educators and other experts, who all contributed to informing and contextualizing the work for adapting EGRAs in Nepal.

Linking learning outcome measurements with screening and identification hindered R4A Nepal's assessment of its impact on literacy. Various delays and challenges related to screening during the activity meant that R4A Nepal needed to revise its plans for learning outcome measurements significantly. Revisions included assessing only learners from resource classrooms rather than learners with disabilities in general education classrooms, which prevented the ability to compare intervention models. This is because the original EGRA sample design depended on having a list of identified learners with disabilities in general education classrooms. Unfortunately, the process of referral and formal disability assessment was not finished in time to draw a sample. Without a control group to compare with the resource classroom EGRA data, it was not possible to attribute the reading gains among resource classroom learners to the activity. Without EGRA data to directly measure learning outcomes, R4A Nepal turned to other adjacent data sources, including fidelity of implementation assessments.

3.4.8 Key Takeaways: Instructional Approaches

In terms of instructional approaches, including the development of TLMs and EGRAs for learners with disabilities, lessons and practices emerged that can be considered in future activities. The key takeaways about instructional approaches are:

- ✓ **Pedagogical approach to inclusive education:** Teachers trained in evidence-based literacy and/or inclusive education instruction used significantly more strategies to meet the needs of all learners in their classroom.
- ✓ **Teacher preparedness and confidence:** Trained teachers reported feeling more confident in their capacity to teach learners with disabilities in their classroom in the short term, but the longevity of their feelings of preparedness waned in Nepal, which may be due to the reported lack of practical classroom strategies presented in training.

³⁶ Accommodations support the learner to access the assessment content without changing the content and could include things like extending the overall time allowed to reduce pressure (provided that the fluency measure is retained), increasing font size, or showing fewer items on a page to reduce sensory overwhelm. Modifications result in changed content, such as a shorter story passage with simpler vocabulary.

- ✓ **Teacher perceptions of inclusive education:** Activity impact was mixed on teacher perceptions about the capacity learners with disabilities have to learn to read in regular classrooms. More effort is needed to increase teacher support for inclusive education.
- ✓ **Use of TLMs:** Teachers' access to and use of the TLMs produced and distributed by the activity increased, but further monitoring and evaluation are vital to assess the long-term impact on literacy instruction.
- ✓ **IEP development:** IEP development can be resource-intensive and lack the individualization needed for learners, impacting sustainability after the activity closes.
- ✓ **EGRAs:** More efforts are needed in the development of assessments for learners with disabilities. The experience and adaptation guides created can serve as resources to others on general principles for developing assessments in future activities. Furthermore, more recent learning across contexts should also be considered, given the evolving nature of disability-inclusive education and the development of assessments for learners with disabilities.

3.5 Unintended Consequences



Each activity implemented its program primarily as it was designed, except for the task-specific pivots that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These pivots have been discussed in previous sections and demonstrated ways that online and other app-based opportunities could be used in future activities. This section will provide an overview of two unexpected consequences that emerged within activity programming—one by design and one by necessity.

3.5.1 Impact of Activity Model on Design and Conceptualization of Inclusive Education

The three-country sample demonstrated two different approaches to activity design, both with the broad title of “inclusive education.” REFAM Malawi and R4A Nepal were standalone activity designs that focused specifically on the inclusion of learners with disabilities in schools. ARC-Cambodia was designed to embed inclusive education into a larger general education program. Each model presents strengths and limitations for programming. USAID designed each activity for the reasons outlined in the introduction to this report, but an unintended consequence was the impact that activity models (standalone or embedded) had on the design and conceptualization of inclusive education.

In the case of these activities, the solicitations described which types of disability implementers would work with. As with any activity, the implementers' designs were also influenced by the activity budget and resources, the positionality of partners within the broader ecosystem of education in countries, and the need to work within the systems already in place. However, the overall unintended consequence was that disability-specific standalone activities focused efforts or more intensive efforts in segregated settings and missed the opportunity to facilitate learning across both general education and segregated settings, while the embedded disability inclusion activity may have lacked the depth necessary to support meaningful and lasting inclusion efforts.

Drawing directly from activity findings, Exhibit 21 presents an overview of the opportunities and limitations of the different models used. Understanding these models’ strengths and limitations provides additional learning for USAID in future programming design.

Exhibit 21. Disability-Specific Standalone and Embedded Activity Model Opportunities and Limitations.

Type of Activity	Opportunities	Limitations
Disability-Specific Standalone (REFAM Malawi and R4A Nepal)	The intensive focus on disability-inclusive education allowed trainings to focus specifically on evidence-based strategies to improve learning opportunities for learners with disabilities.	The education of learners with disabilities was primarily undertaken in segregated settings like resource rooms, and engagement was primarily with resource room teachers, leaving inclusive education in general education schools generally unchanged. (REFAM Malawi) Resource classroom teachers received training on general education curriculum for the first time and additional training specific to inclusive reading instruction compared to general education teachers. The two groups were not trained together or given opportunities to learn from one another’s experiences. (R4A Nepal)
Embedded (ACR-Cambodia)	Engagement with ongoing programming allowed stakeholders to make connections between broad-based learning goals for all learners and ways to incorporate learners with disabilities into those goals.	Inclusive education approaches embedded into existing literacy activities may lack the necessary time and depth of disability-specific inclusion approaches needed to support teachers in practical implementation.

3.5.2 Implementing Deaf Education Activities Required More Resources than Planned

A second unintended consequence of activities was the time and economic investment necessary to develop deaf education systems. In all three countries, activity leadership identified gaps and needs in deaf education that could be addressed through programming. However, these aspects were not initially planned to the extent they were eventually implemented, so the planned initiatives would have benefited from additional resources. An unintended consequence of the work done by the activities was the positive contributions to deaf education in three countries. Exhibit 22 below provides information on the specific tasks undertaken in this area.

Exhibit 22. Contributions to Deaf Education by Activity.

Activity	Contribution
ACR-Cambodia	<p>ACR-Cambodia’s Bridge Program supported 14 learners who are deaf to receive CSL instruction from community members and developed TLMs for the Bridge Program’s participants to support their learning. This program developed through an identified need within the activity’s catchment area that was unanticipated.</p> <p>In addition, the activity added limited sign language training to their teacher training activities. Afterward, 10% of teachers reported they may use sign language.</p>
REFAM Malawi	<p>As part of developing an adapted EGRA, the activity noted a wide range in how learners used MSL. The activity shifted focus and engaged MANAD in collaborative work to create sign language videos, dictionaries, and charts for schools.</p> <p>In addition, REFAM Malawi developed deaf education trainings and advocated for sign-language-first activities in schools. Sign language usage was mainly used by Resource Centre teachers.</p>
R4A Nepal	<p>R4A Nepal provided training in Model A classrooms on the use of standard NSL signs. All teachers who participated in the activity were also provided an app to help them practice using signs. However, the R4A OPD partner NFDN stated that the amount of training provided to teachers was not sufficient to truly support learners using NSL, and additional resources, including time, would be necessary to support deaf education.</p>

3.5.3 Key Takeaways: Unintended Consequences

The unintended consequences of the three activities revealed insights for donors and implementers to consider in future activities. The key takeaways about unintended consequences are:

- ✓ **Activity model matters:** The activity model selected (disability-specific or embedded) for inclusive education programming, along with country context, will shape how implementers define disability inclusion, design interventions, and allocate resources. While this is expected, comparison between models to determine emerging or best practices is difficult and consideration should be given to the opportunities and limitations of both models for future programming.
- ✓ **Opportunities to support deaf education efforts:** The resources required to support interventions for signed languages or deaf education may be more significant than originally anticipated by implementers. While none of the activities had enough inputs to create fluency in the use of signed languages by teachers, they contributed to overall awareness. As evidenced by the three activities, implementers should be prepared to assess the situation of sign language usage and resources within a country and respond

to emerging opportunities to support deaf education within their programming with sufficient resources.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

MCSIE sought to derive lessons learned about what works, for whom, and in what context to sustainably advance teaching and learning outcomes for children with disabilities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal and to inform plans for new inclusive education programming globally. Inclusive education and support for learners with disabilities are still emerging and evolving worldwide. This report was not comparative in nature due to the variances across design, implementation, and context within each activity. However, the report aimed to highlight the importance of adapting to local contexts and the need for robust collaboration with local partners and stakeholders. The below paragraphs summarize the key takeaways from each area of inquiry and are followed by Exhibit 23, which provides recommendations by stakeholder group.

- ✓ **Process:** From the start to finish of an activity, it is critical to ensure that the design aligns with the prevailing national context and that stakeholders develop a shared definition of disability and inclusive education. Leveraging staff and partner technical capacity will support implementation efforts and can help identify resources needed to fill gaps. Furthermore, collaboration with both national and subnational levels of government and partnerships with OPDs will support the buy-in and sustainability of activity efforts.
- ✓ **Screening and Identification:** Work related to screening, identification, and data on disability must be conducted with the highest ethical considerations to do no harm and should be grounded in the social model of disability. Given the nuanced and emerging work in this area, stakeholders should establish shared terminology with the understanding that data will not always be comparable. Mapping disability supports and services and leveraging the lived experiences of persons with disabilities can help inform and support activity efforts, including data collection and management.
- ✓ **Teacher Training:** A training plan design that leverages principles of UDL to support all learners, coupled with specific inclusive pedagogy to support learners with disabilities, is the best approach to support the implementation of a twin-track approach to disability-inclusive education efforts. Direct training models that do not rely on cascading methods and that provide practical and concrete classroom strategies should be provided to both special education and general education teachers. Training should be followed up with adequately resourced coaching and mentoring supports to help ongoing capacity building and sustainability. Lastly, collaborating with and using OPDs as facilitators for training efforts ensured a positive impact on the perception of disability.
- ✓ **Instructional Approaches:** Training in evidence-based literacy and/or inclusive education instruction significantly increased the number of strategies teachers used to support all learners in their classroom and increased their access to and use of TLMs. In

the short term, teachers reported increased confidence in supporting learners with disabilities but had mixed perceptions of these learners’ ability to read in general education classrooms. Activities explored the use of IEPs to support learners with disabilities; however, IEPs’ resource-intensive nature made it unlikely that these efforts would be sustained. To support sustainability, general education teachers and specialist teachers should receive training together and closely collaborate to implement inclusive education and support learners with disabilities. Lastly, given the evolving nature of disability-inclusive education and recent learning across contexts, more efforts are needed to support developing assessments for learners with disabilities.

- ✓ **Unintended Consequences:** The activity model selected (disability-specific or embedded in larger activities) and the country context both impact design and implementation. The opportunities and limitations of both models should be considered for future programming to ensure they align with country-level goals. Additionally, future activities that will support interventions for sign language or deaf education may require significant resources. Assessing the situation of sign language usage and resources within a country can help implementers better respond to emerging opportunities to support deaf education within their programming.

Exhibit 23. Recommendations by Stakeholder Group.

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
<p>USAID/ Washington</p>	<p><u>Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Solicitations should embed inclusive education in all aspects of activity design, require OPD engagement, clearly outline a theory of change, and clearly define terms such as “disability” and “inclusive education” to ensure stakeholders have a shared conceptual understanding. ✓ Require and adequately fund engagement with OPDs in future opportunities. Supports and resources for partnerships (i.e., compliance documentation to meet USAID regulations) could be provided from USAID/Washington to mission offices. ✓ Embed disability inclusion in all education activities, including those focused on educating the general learner population and in pre-service and in-service education programming. <p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Carefully consider and outline the purpose of collecting data on disability under USAID education activities. ✓ Provide guidance to differentiate screening and prevalence tools. ✓ Consider the ethics of screening processes if there are not adequate services or referral mechanisms and encourage activities to provide support to learners and families after screening, regardless of the availability of a formal referral process. ✓ Require local OPD engagement in screening, identification, and referral activities in the future.

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
	<p><u>Teacher Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be mindful that training teachers and other advocates on how to coach for inclusion may have an important impact in supporting the progressive realization of disability-inclusive education. ✓ Future activities should include coaching and ongoing monitoring and support within activity design requirements. <p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider framing future solicitations to include teacher development and training that reflect UDL and accessibility rather than training that focuses on the deficits of learners with disabilities. ✓ Promote a Universal Design for Assessment (UDA) approach when developing assessments in general education settings to ensure that all learners are included. For learners with disabilities who cannot access the same assessment as their peers in general education settings (even assessments that are aligned with UDA), plan for activities to have adequate time and resources to develop alternate assessment tools. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conduct situational analyses of sign language usage and infrastructure accessibility prior to developing activity objectives or solicitations to ensure adequate funding and resources for the implementation of deaf education interventions.
<p>USAID Missions</p>	<p><u>Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider an extensive situational analysis before establishing a new activity in a country to support a more localized design and identify crucial implementation areas and potential challenges. ✓ Provide time, staffing support, and encouragement for USAID activities to network, engage with, and provide leadership for policy-level conversations. <p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure enough time and resources are allocated for future activities to understand local processes, screening tools, or prevalence of tools before commencing activity planning. ✓ Support national mapping exercises to establish referral pathways before undertaking screening and identification activities and update these exercises regularly. ✓ Consider collaborating with the health sector to support education programming in this area. <p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support implementing partners to develop and report on monitoring and evaluation indicators that go beyond TLM training and distribution to measure the inclusivity of environments and processes. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conduct situational analyses of sign language usage and infrastructure prior to developing activity objectives or solicitations to ensure adequate funding and resources for implementing deaf education interventions.

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
Governments	<p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure screening tools and procedures are validated, align with international norms, and have a strong track record of accurately identifying learners who may need further evaluation. ✓ Continue to link screening and identification to existing data collection processes for the EMIS and for service provision. ✓ Develop and use tools that allow for universal screening of all learners on a routine basis to the extent possible. ✓ Consider collaboration with the health sector at the local level to support education programming in this area. <p><u>Teacher Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Embed inclusive education training at the pre-service level to enable eventual baseline understanding of inclusive education and inclusive teaching practices among all teachers nationally. <p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement national strategies to increase understanding and support for inclusive education for teachers and other actors who can support inclusive education efforts. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support OPDs and other relevant actors to build national consistency for sign language usage to ensure sustainability.
Implementing Partners	<p><u>Process</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allocate budget and time to ensure meaningful partnerships with OPDs that address reasonable accommodations, fair compensation, organizational capacity, and representation. ✓ Train all staff on disability inclusion and inclusive education, leverage persons with lived disability experience, and prioritize those from in-country first. Then, utilize external experts as needed. <p><u>Screening and Identification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clarify within trainings that screenings are not an all-defining source of information for learners’ needs and reinforce the difference between and purpose of data collection on disability and screening and identification. ✓ Plan for sufficient time and resources (human and fiscal) to pilot and validate screening tools (as necessary) and develop and refine screening protocols. ✓ Encourage schools and teachers to move forward with inclusive practices consistent with the social model of disability and UDL, moving away from labels and focusing on inclusive pedagogy. <p><u>Teacher Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus on specific classroom practices that can enhance inclusion versus broad-based theory or specific disabilities. ✓ When embedding inclusive education principles throughout a training package, ensure that the link between inclusion and the subject matter being discussed is explicit, not implicit. ✓ Train both pre-service and in-service general education teachers alongside resource classroom/specialist teachers and provide opportunities for

Stakeholder Group	Recommendations
	<p>communities of practice. This can support a twin-track approach to the progressive realization of inclusive education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Train head teachers, administration, and local government to ensure institutional buy-in, support, and capacity for monitoring the implementation of inclusive education. ✓ Avoid disability simulations and collaborate with local OPDs to ensure representation, content accuracy, and delivery appropriateness. ✓ Work closely with government and local stakeholders to ensure continued use of training packages. <p><u>Instructional Approaches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Place explicit emphasis during training and coaching on the existence of “hidden” or undiagnosed disabilities and how inclusive teaching practices benefit all learners. <p><u>Areas for Further Consideration Based on Unintended Consequences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build in consistent periods and methods of reflection that allow the activity to explore what pivots might be necessary for an implementation to best address local realities and, above all, do no harm.

5. Areas for Future Evaluation

In this section, we identify 1) areas that USAID might evaluate further to guide investment and implementation of disability-inclusive education programming, and 2) areas that implementing partners might further evaluate in their work to inform their activity design and implementation.

MCSIE uncovered several key areas that USAID may consider evaluating in the future. There is a need to further explore assessment design in inclusive settings. Implementing partners need to understand if they should develop adapted EGRAs in tandem with improving UDA in mainstream EGRAs or if they should create alternative assessment approaches, which might best enable a learner with a disability to demonstrate learning and progress. Adapting EGRAs for learners with disabilities is a new but growing practice, and it will be important for USAID to consider international best practices and support the development and publication of evidence and lessons learned related to the assessment of learners in inclusive systems.

Similarly, implementing partners should use evidence on how learners with disabilities acquire language and learn to read. They should leverage relevant expertise from the inclusive education field of research to help them determine the appropriateness of taking a UDA approach in measuring learning outcomes to make assessments more inclusive.

A second important area for USAID to explore in future disability-inclusive education programming is appropriate measures to ensure community-embedded approaches to inclusion. Specifically, diverse literature demonstrates the importance of family-school partnerships to meet inclusive education outcomes for learners, including in many contexts in the Global South; however, there

was no deep or meaningful engagement of families in any of the MCSIE activities. Although implementing partners cited COVID-19 as a reason for limited family engagement, USAID might explore making family engagement in inclusive education activities mandatory to emphasize its importance for implementing partners.

Third, USAID and implementing partners might also further examine planning for monitoring and evaluation efforts within disability-inclusive education programming³⁷. The MCSIE evaluation revealed that implementers completed various activities, such as trainings on topics like screening and identification, IEPs, or developing TLMs, that would support the inclusion of learners with disabilities. However, they did not measure the impact of their efforts. Implementing partners should consider and plan how monitoring and evaluation efforts can support measurement of the use, implementation, impact, and cost-effectiveness of their efforts to inform current and future programming.

A fourth area for USAID and implementing partners to examine is the ethical issue raised in this report related to the screening and identification of learners with disabilities without appropriate referral pathways and/or with limited supports. For example, beyond sharing a referral resource, learners may need support with transportation, coordinating appointments, or funds to cover the cost of the service. The focus on the screening and identification of learners with disabilities without the provision of additional activities in place to ensure that screening ultimately leads to diagnosis and services is a question for further exploration. National and international donors, partners, and OPDs will need to continue to discuss this important topic and develop evidence-based practices and, ultimately, guidance on how implementers can address this challenge.

Finally, across the research questions, a key finding was that OPD engagement in activity implementation deeply improved activity delivery and outcomes and should be essential for inclusive education programming moving forward. Implementing partners, particularly those without the experience of meaningfully engaging with OPDs, must evaluate their activity design and implementation to ensure that OPDs are actively and meaningfully engaged, that knowledge arising from lived experience is appropriately valued and elevated, and that OPD partners are fairly compensated for the expertise they bring to implementing partners.

³⁷ Readers should refer to the forthcoming MCSIE Evaluation Guide on Disability-Inclusive Education for insights on how to plan for, integrate, and carry out disability-inclusive monitoring, evaluation and learning practices in education activities.

6. Annexes

Annex A: Timeline of Events and Approvals.

Exhibit 24 below provides key dates related to the MCSIE study and Exhibit 25 provides approval dates for MCSIE deliverables.

Exhibit 24. MCSIE Timeline of Key Events.

Date	Event
November 2019	Cambodia Inception Trip
November 2019	Nepal Inception Trip
December 2019	Malawi Inception Trip
December 2019–May 2021	Country-level and Comparative Policy Analysis
December 2019–May 2021	Country-level and Comparative Literature Review
January 2020–January 2021 ³⁸	Cambodia Interim Report Data Collection and Analysis
February 2020–July 2021	Nepal Interim Report Data Collection and Analysis
May 2020–April 2022	Malawi Interim Report Data Collection and Analysis
June 2022	Malawi Data Collection Trip
April 2022	Cambodia Data Collection Trip
April 2022	Nepal Data Collection Trip
April 2022–August 2022	Cambodia Areas of Intervention Mapping
April 2022–November 2022	Nepal Areas of Intervention Mapping
May 2022–December 2022	Malawi Areas of Intervention Mapping
January 2021–December 2022	Cambodia Endline Report Data Collection and Analysis
February 2023	Cambodia Endline Report Validation and Preliminary Dissemination Trip
August 2021–March 2023	Nepal Endline Report Data Collection and Analysis
March 2023	Nepal Endline Report Validation and Preliminary Dissemination Trip
May 2022–May 2023	Malawi Endline Report Data Collection and Analysis
June 2023	Malawi Endline Report Validation and Preliminary Dissemination Trip

³⁸ Note that length of time for interim-level reporting in all three countries was extended due to COVID-19 delays and restrictions impacting activity implementation and MCSIE data collection.

Exhibit 25. MCSIE Dates of Approved Deliverables.

Report Type	Purpose	Approved Dates
Inception Report	The purpose of the inception report was to establish the MCSIE study within the broader plan for research and evaluation tasks to be conducted on the selected activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. The report covered all three countries.	July 2020
Comparative Policy Analysis	The purpose of the policy review was to provide a legislative and systemic context for the countries in which MCSIE operates. The policy review helped identify how activity implementation derives from or is consistent with country-level policy objectives.	November 2020
Comparative Literature Review	The purpose of the literature review was to provide relevant background information on disability and inclusion efforts in the three countries of study. This review helped inform subsequent steps of MCSIE research.	May 2021
Interim Report	Interim reports sought to provide an initial overview and evaluation of the available evidence to date to answer each of the five evaluation questions as they pertained to the work of the activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACR-Cambodia: October 2021 • REFAM Malawi: June 2022 • R4A Nepal: June 2022
Areas of Intervention Mapping (AIM)	AIM reports sought to provide information on the various screening, teacher training, and instructional efforts undertaken broadly in the countries of study by other stakeholders, such as local NGOs, OPDs, and other donor-funded activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACR-Cambodia: January 2023 • REFAM Malawi: August 2023 • R4A Nepal: May 2023
Endline Report	Endline reports sought to provide a cumulative overview and reflection on the available evidence to answer each of the five evaluation questions as they pertain to the work of the activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACR-Cambodia: January 2023 • REFAM Malawi: February 2024 • R4A Nepal: December 2023

Report Type	Purpose	Approved Dates
MCSIE Evaluation Guide on Disability-Inclusive Education	The MCSIE Evaluation Guide on Disability-Inclusive Education seeks to provide implementing partners—particularly monitoring, evaluation, and learning specialists—with practical considerations on how to design activities inclusive of learners with disabilities and how to collect, use, and monitor data for the inclusion of learners with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Review
MCSIE Final Evaluation Report	This report aims to provide a comprehensive summary of findings from the MCSIE study across the five evaluation questions and provide recommendations for stakeholders and areas for future inquiry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Review

Annex B: MCSIE Project Description

About the Study

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) partnered 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 evaluate three USAID inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. These inclusive education activities represented USAID's most concerted effort to date to build systems to ensure learners with disabilities have access to quality education. MCSIE sought to derive lessons learned 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, researchers used 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 provided a framework for the study: process, screening and identification, training, instruction, and unintended consequences.

Proposed Study Implementation

The MCSIE evaluation originally proposed an overarching and phased approach to evaluation planning that included global and comparative research and reporting in tandem with country-specific case studies. The evaluation planned to include the following phases: 1) inception; 2) implementation (including initial data collection, midline data collection, and endline data collection, which would also include a household survey); and 3) global research and report writing. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers proposed an interim report as an alternative to an initial or midline report due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, which put a halt on all in-country data collection. Additionally, changes to the MCSIE scope of work included replacing stakeholder mapping with areas of intervention mapping in each country, removing the first cycle of household surveys in Cambodia and Nepal due to COVID-19, removing household surveys in Malawi based on government guidance, and revising the approach for the final report format. Furthermore, the MCSIE evaluation received two no-cost extensions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting the evaluation end date to May 31, 2024.

Objective of the Buy-In

The LASER PULSE Consortium seeks to partner with the USAID Economic Growth, Education, and Environment Bureau, Office of Education (E3/ED), and the U.S. Development Lab/Center for Development Research (LAB/CDR) to conduct a multi-country study on inclusive education for learners with disabilities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal. The study will investigate new USAID programming in these three countries to identify what works to sustainably advance teaching and learning outcomes for learners with disabilities in varying contexts and, ultimately, improve current and future programming through recommendations to current implementing partners at midline and broader recommendations for USAID at endline.

Annex C: Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic represented an unplanned challenge for education programming globally, and MCSIE's speedy, organized, and creative response to this crisis may be informative for future programming. The MCSIE evaluation and all three activities were undertaken during the acute stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, MCSIE researchers worked closely with USAID/Washington, USAID country offices, local partners (CDPO, IKI, and KU), and implementing partners to develop contingency plans for data collection that considered the health and safety of all persons involved. Contingency plans developed were flexible and dependent on country-specific COVID-19 protocols and allowed researchers to adapt to the evolving nature of the pandemic.

The MCSIE team researched contingency plans, including:

1. In situations where international travel was prohibited but country-level lockdowns were removed, MCSIE home office research team members conducted virtual enumerator training in coordination with local partners. Local partners implemented data collection in-country with home office research members supporting remotely.
2. In situations where international travel to countries resumed and home office researcher team members were comfortable traveling, the team implemented the initial plan to support local partners.
3. In situations where local travel was prohibited or meeting restrictions were in place, MCSIE researchers and local partners collaborated with implementing partners to align data collection methods. This resulted in holding virtual KIIs and FGDs, attending virtual trainings or watching recordings, and conducting phone-based survey data administration.
4. MCSIE adhered to all country-level and U.S. federal-level health and safety protocols related to travel and attending in-person meetings; this included COVID-19 health screening and testing, immunization, use of hand sanitizer and face masks, and remaining at least six feet (three meters) apart when possible.
5. The team continued ongoing collaboration with USAID/Washington and USAID country-level offices to seek approval for any changes in data collection, sample size, analysis, reporting, or travel.

As a result of COVID-19, the MCSIE researchers proposed an interim report as an alternative to an initial or midline report due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, which put a halt on all in-country data collection. Researchers were unable to visit activity sites for in-person data collection in 2020 or 2021. The initial data collection phase was originally projected to include KIIs, FGDs, the collection of household information via survey, teacher training and classroom observations, and a review of secondary data. Interim reports included a review of secondary source data from the implementing partner, a short implementing partner survey, and the KIIs/FGDs; however, household information was not collected and instead was included in endline reporting.

Additionally, COVID-19 meant that each activity site had to adapt and adjust implementation from its original plans. In some instances, this made it challenging for an activity's implementing partners to demonstrate impact or for MCSIE evaluators to observe impact. For example, with schools closed for extended and unpredictable time periods in 2020 and 2021, evaluators could not observe classroom-based instruction until early 2022. Prolonged school closures also directly impacted the activity implementation and results since teachers had less time to practice using the new teaching strategies and materials than originally anticipated. Nonetheless, evaluators have triangulated data with other sources, such as interviews and surveys, to understand the activity's impact wherever possible.

Annex D: Evaluation Methods and Limitations

The MCSIE study developed a theory of change that includes inputs at the policy, instructional, and community levels that may lead to desired outputs. The study aimed to examine how various processes impact the literacy of learners with disabilities on a national and international scale. The following theory of change informs all three countries' activities and guides the MCSIE study:

If we develop context-relevant, efficient, and effective systems to improve the quality of education for learners with disabilities through the use of:

- appropriate methods to identify learners with disabilities,
- training models that best support teachers to meet the needs of learners with disabilities,
- effective instructional models to improve classroom instruction and learning outcomes, and
- mitigation of negative unintended consequences

Then learners with disabilities will have access to high-quality inclusive education that achieves improved learning outcomes.

The MCSIE evaluation used a process-evaluation design to develop individual case studies of each country's inclusive education system 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 activity, 2) the identification of learners with disabilities, 3) teacher training models supporting learners with disabilities, 4) instructional models to improve reading outcomes, and 5) unintended consequences of the activity.

Methodology

The MCSIE study utilized seven different instruments to collect quantitative data and a number of key informant interview (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) scripts. KII and FGD instruments were tailored to stakeholder groups. Endline KII or FGD scripts were updated based on findings from initial data collection with stakeholders. To shed light on core themes and findings in each country, MCSIE researchers utilized primary and secondary data sources, resulting in an extensive review of activity documents and secondary documentation, in addition to collaboration with local partners to conduct KIIs, FGDs, surveys, and classroom and training observations. Data analysis was performed through qualitative deductive coding, the use of evaluative rubrics and checklists, and descriptive analyses. The methodological approach was subject to limitations, including a largely remote data collection process due to COVID-19 and a related limited ability to triangulate findings with in-person interviews and observations.

Enumerator Training

MCSIE's international research team conducted a remote series of enumerator trainings with local partners (Cambodia: CDPO; Malawi: IKI; and Nepal: KU) throughout the life of the study. Each enumerator training with local partners included an overview of MCSIE, a review of sample size and analysis techniques, and a review of ethical considerations, as well as familiarizing local enumerators with the data collection tools and procedures. Local partners provided feedback on the cultural appropriateness, terminology, and phrasing used in data collection tools, and tools were revised and translated into additional languages as appropriate. The enumerator training was adapted for each country to include an overview of the activity being evaluated, its specific objectives, the geographic scope, the target beneficiary group, and the sample MCSIE would use for the specific activity.

Additionally, the international research teams who conducted trainings emphasized the importance of conducting data collection in the participant's preferred language. This may include the local signed language or Khmer in Cambodia, Chichewa in Malawi, and Nepali in Nepal. All enumerator trainings were conducted in the agreed-upon language of the local partners (Cambodia: English and Khmer; Malawi and Nepal: English), and each local partner organization received individualized enumerator trainings. Lastly, due to COVID-19, for any in-person data collection, IDP required enumerators to complete COVID-19 health screenings before attendance, use hand sanitizer, remain at least six feet (three meters) apart, and comply with any government or activity protocols to help minimize the potential spread of the virus.

The first enumerator training covered KIs and FGDs of stakeholders, including all government officials, and activity partners, including OPDs. The training provided a how-to for conducting KIs and FGDs, time for interview skills practice, and a question-and-answer session between local partners and the MCSIE international researchers. The second and third enumerator trainings were provided in conjunction with local partners. The second enumerator training aimed to prepare data collectors to complete training observations and collect pre-post surveys with training participants. It provided an overview of data collection tools, ethical considerations, time for pre-post survey collection practice, and practice on training observation forms via virtual training scenarios. The third enumerator training aimed to prepare data collectors to complete classroom observations. The training provided an overview of data collection tools, ethical considerations, instructions on how to give feedback to the activity, and time to practice using the tool with scenarios and recordings. Due to COVID-19, the training also provided an overview of how to complete observation forms based on virtual or recorded sessions conducted due to health and safety restrictions in place. The last enumerator training conducted aimed to provide an overview of the household survey data collection. This training was only for Cambodia and Nepal, as household surveys were not approved as part of Malawi's evaluation design. The fourth training provided an overview of data collection tools, ethical considerations, and time to practice the administration and analysis of sample tools.

Sampling

Exhibit 26 provides an overview of the sampling techniques used to identify secondary data sources and primary data samples throughout the life of the activity.

Exhibit 26. MCSIE Data Source Sampling.

Data Source	Purpose	Type of Data	Sample Design
Secondary Data Source: Legislative Documents	To understand the situation of education of learners with disabilities in each country.	Documentation	All available country-level legislative documents, including policies, laws, regulations, and planning documents related to education, persons with disabilities, and related supports and services. Review of international legislative documents as relevant.
Secondary Data Source: Project Documentation	To understand design, implementation, monitoring, and impact of activities under the evaluation.	Documentation	All available project documentation, including solicitation documents, planning and reporting documents, and implementation documents and resources, including training materials and assessments, intervention-specific reports, and data files.
Secondary Data Source: Other Documentation	To review additional material that could shed light on the situation of learners with disabilities or the activities' relation to other education and disability programming within each country.	Documentation	Other documentation sourced through mapping of education and disability programming within each country and documentation recommended by the activity and the USAID country office.
Implementing Partner Survey	To assess the background and training of staff to investigate the level of expertise of implementing partners specifically related to inclusive education.	Quantitative	All activity staff who have >15% level of effort.

Data Source	Purpose	Type of Data	Sample Design
KIs and FGDs	<p>KIs and FGDs were purposive in nature and limited only to people with deep familiarity with the activity being evaluated. KIs and FGDs served two purposes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To understand the stakeholders' perceptions of disability, disability inclusion within the education system, and the activity. 2) To understand stakeholders' roles, engagement, and contributions to the activity. 	Qualitative	<p>KIs and FGDs were purposive in nature and limited only to people with deep familiarity with the activity being evaluated.</p> <p>Data collectors recruited diverse perspectives to the extent possible with available participants in particular categories while acknowledging the limitations of gender-unequal roles in various aspects of implementation.</p>
Classroom Observations	<p>To identify and evaluate the implementation of early-grade reading and inclusive instruction by teachers. Observations will account for classroom materials used, but assessment materials and the comprehensive portfolio of implementing partner materials will be reviewed as part of the secondary material review with implementing partners.</p>	Quantitative	Varied by activity intervention approach.
Training Observations	<p>To understand and evaluate the approach and content of instructional training for participants.</p>	Quantitative	2–3 instructional training events per country.

Data Source	Purpose	Type of Data	Sample Design
Pre-Post Training Surveys ³⁹	To understand and identify the change in attitudes, perceived knowledge, and pedagogy of teachers participating in activity training sessions.	Quantitative	N=92/country
Teacher Surveys ⁴⁰	To understand and identify the change in attitudes, perceived knowledge, and pedagogy of teachers participating in the activity.	Quantitative	Cambodia: n=88 (n=30 control group teachers) Nepal: n=100 (n=8 resource classroom teachers) Malawi: n=60 (Resource Centre teachers)
Household Surveys ⁴¹ (Cambodia and Nepal Only)	Identify parent/caregiver perceptions of supports and services available to learners as a result of implementing partner activities.	Quantitative	Cambodia: n=205 Nepal: n=38

Summary of Data Sources

Primary and secondary data sources were used to evaluate all three activities reviewed under MCSIE. More than 2,700 primary data sources were collected, including KIIs and FGDs (n=949), classroom observations (n=443), training observations (n=29), training pre-post surveys (n=470), teacher surveys (n=434), household surveys (Cambodia and Nepal [n=243]), and implementing

³⁹ A series of statistical power analyses were performed using G-Power 3.1; most research questions of the current survey study were answered using One-way ANOVA among three independent means. With an alpha = .05, a small effect size of 0.3, and a total n of 260, the statistical power is estimated to be 0.982. For the sub-population (n=92) analysis between the intervention model, urban/rural, and school as a second language, t-tests was used. The statistical power was estimated to be 0.838 with the specifications of alpha level = .05 and effect size = 0.5 (medium). These power estimations were more than adequate for the main objective of this study and should allow for expected attrition and our additional objectives of controlling for possible mediating/moderating factors/subgroup analysis, etc. Pre-post surveys took place over the course of one academic year.

⁴⁰ Samples reflect each country's representative population of resource classrooms or Resource Centres.

⁴¹ Household-level data collection and surveys were not approved by the Government of Malawi as part of the MCSIE study design. In lieu of household surveys in Malawi, data collectors conducted 12 FGDs (n=77) with parents and caregivers who had a child attending a Resource Centre being supported by the REFAM Malawi activity.

partners surveys (n=165). Over 800 secondary data sources were reviewed, including activity documentation and datasets, national policies and laws, and secondary source documentation, including presentations, activity and donor-funded reports, and academic literature. Exhibit 27 provides an overview of the sample for each primary source and Exhibit 28 provides the sample for the secondary data source by country.

Exhibit 27. Primary Data Sources.

Type	Cambodia Sample	Malawi Sample	Nepal Sample
KIIs or FGDs	304 (total)	293 (total)	352 (total)
Government (interim + endline reports)	32	22	25
OPDs	5	4	21
School directors/head teachers ⁴²	64	56	118
Classroom teachers ⁴³		54	156
Implementing partner staff	27	8	19
Training participant KII/FGD	36	72	63
Families	4 (Bridge Program)	77 (12 FGDs)	N/A
Literacy coaches	17	N/A	N/A
Surveys	421 (total)	377 (total)	514 (total)
Implementing partner	11	4	150 ⁴⁴
Training (pre-post)	91	318	61
Teacher survey	114	55	265
Household (Cambodia and Nepal)	205		38
Observations	152 (total)	66 (total)	254 (total)
Teacher training	8	7	14
Literacy lessons	144	59	240

⁴² Each country uses different titles for the personnel leading a school; in Cambodia, it is the responsibility of school directors, and in Malawi and Nepal, it is the responsibility of head teachers. For the purposes of this report, the titles are used together when talking about all three countries.

⁴³ Each country uses different titles for types of teachers; for the purposes of this report, classroom teacher is used to encompass the following types of teachers: teacher and special teachers (ARC-Cambodia), specialist or inclusive education teachers (REFAM Malawi), and general education and resource classroom teachers (R4A Nepal).

⁴⁴ The implementing partner staff survey included OPD and NGO partner staff for R4A Nepal (n=103).

Exhibit 28. Secondary Data Sources.

Type	Cambodia Sample	Malawi Sample	Nepal Sample
Legislative documents ⁴⁵	10	11	10
Activity materials	200	200	187
Equity and Inclusion Checklist material review	81	N/A	62
Other secondary source materials	N/A	40	N/A

Data Storage and Security

Data was collected in three different ways. The paragraphs below describe how each data type was collected and subsequently stored.

1. Interviews: Enumerators and researchers collected verbal responses on secure devices and platforms. Devices included password-protected tablets and computers and password-protected Zoom accounts. Researchers recorded interviews for later translation and transcription. Each interview utilized two interviewers to ensure the quality of data collection.
2. Observations: Observational data was collected by researchers by filling in data collection forms on password-protected project tablets using the KoboToolbox system.
3. Training Participant Surveys: Paper, virtual, or phone surveys were administered by research partners in the format appropriate for the training modality before and after training activities to allow for simultaneous data collection of participants present at meetings. MCSIE partners entered all training participant data into password-protected tablets using the KoboToolbox system.
4. Household Surveys: Surveys were conducted via the phone and face-to-face with parents and other community members. The data from the surveys was entered into the password-protected tablets and uploaded into the KoboToolbox system.

For all devices and backup drivers, the data researchers utilized unique usernames and passwords. All data was securely stored in a password-protected third-party site, and only approved research team members had access to data. Access to data was also limited to what was needed by the team members. The IDP MCSIE principal investigator and program manager managed access to data to ensure security. If a team member was no longer involved in the MCSIE study, access to data was revoked. All hard copy data files collected during country visits by international research team members or collected by local team members were transferred to secure files, including password-protected Microsoft Word or Excel Documents, or into

⁴⁵ Under the MCSIE study’s Comparative Policy Review, country-level legislative documents, including laws and policies, were reviewed to help provide context for the situation of education for learners with disabilities within each country.

KoboToolbox and uploaded to Dropbox. Data entered into Excel, CSV, or SPSS sheets was de-identified. All hard copies of data were destroyed by team members after being transferred and securely uploaded to Dropbox.

Data Quality Assessments

Data quality assessments (DQAs) are routine processes to check the quality of the study's data. MCSIE used USAID's DQA processes and requirements laid out in [USAID ADS 201](#) and [USAID's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting Monitoring Toolkit](#) to ensure that data collected for the performance indicators met USAID standards and requirements. DQAs were conducted to 1) ensure that all evaluation data used in the final analyses met USAID criteria and 2) to ensure that strengths and weaknesses in the data were identified and that the final data disseminated was of high quality. MCSIE worked toward end-to-end quality of data through 1) enumerator training, 2) enumerator manager training (to ensure data encoding occurred on site), and 3) research lead data entry checks (while in country) and statistical checks for outlier or unusual data (during home office analyses).

Data Analyses

Data was analyzed using a mixed-methods approach to triangulate findings across data sources. For the interim and endline reports, data analysis techniques included the use of evaluative rubrics, deductive coding, rapid analysis, and statistical analysis of classroom observations and survey data. In preparation for this final report, researchers conducted additional statistical analyses with interview data collected from teachers and school directors on the screening process in all three activity sites. Researchers employed the same data analysis approach used for the interim and endline reports, whereby univariate and bivariate analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) to provide further insights on the activity's evaluation questions.

Exclusion Criteria: Data was excluded from analysis for three reasons: 1) if the qualitative data recording was insufficient for organizing themes because data entry lacked enough context (e.g., one-word responses, responses did not seem to align with the question, etc.), 2) if quantitative data audits reveal data entry errors, specific cases were excluded from the analysis, and 3) for large sample instruments, such as teacher surveys, if adequate statistical power was not reached for inferential statistics, MCSIE conducted simpler forms of analysis.

Variables: Primary data source variables were dependent on the instrument. MCSIE focused its quantitative and qualitative analyses on the items that would best answer its research questions in its initial data analyses, focusing on gender as a mediating variable across all instruments. Codebooks for quantitative data variables will be publicly available on USAID's Development Data Library (DDL) upon approval. In addition to gender, KII and FGD variables included type of meeting, stakeholder role, region, and country.

Exhibit 29 provides an overview of the methods used to analyze data for the country-level interim and endline reports and the final evaluation report.

Exhibit 29. MCSIE Data Analysis Techniques.

Analysis Technique	Description	Applied To
Evaluative Rubrics	To provide a consistent set of evaluation criteria to help draw conclusions, MCSIE researchers used a series of evaluative rubrics ⁴⁶ to identify strengths and potential gaps in activities related to overall activity processes and screening, training, and EGRA activities. A detailed review was also conducted of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan using USAID standards guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary source: project documentation
Deductive Coding	To review activity documentation and materials, researchers developed a series of thematic deductive codes into a codebook related directly to the EQs for the study, and additional inductive codes were added when data presented outliers. The principal investigator oversaw the development of the qualitative research initial codebook as well as the inductive codes identified during preliminary analyses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary source: project documentation • Qualitative or open-ended responses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teacher survey ○ training observations ○ classroom observations
Rapid Analysis ⁴⁷	<p>To analyze KII and FGD data, researchers developed a Microsoft Excel template with thematic groupings, using deductive and inductive codes to complete rapid analysis. The principal investigator oversaw the development of the rapid analysis template.</p> <p>Verbal consent was obtained for all KIIs and FGDs and recorded with permission. KIIs and FGDs were held in various languages; for virtual KIIs or FGDs conducted in English by the MCSIE U.S.-based team members, recordings were uploaded into Otter AI Software for transcription. A quality check and transcript correction was completed prior to analysis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary source: project documentation • KIIs • FGDs

⁴⁶ King et al. (2013) Evaluative Rubrics: A Method for Surfacing Values and Improving the Credibility of Evaluation; Davidson (2005). Evaluation Methodology Basics: The Nuts and Bolts of Sound Evaluation, establish that checklists offer a process for making explicit judgments in an evaluation and are used to measure the quality, value, and/or importance of the activities.

⁴⁷ Rapid analysis is a method to review and analyze qualitative data in a shorter timeline than traditional qualitative coding methods.

Analysis Technique	Description	Applied To
	<p>For field-level KII and FGDs, local data collectors transcribed data into English. Using recordings and transcripts of the KIIs and FGDs, designated researchers then coded the data into the rapid analysis template thematic areas for use in reporting. A separate evaluator, who conducted the interviews or discussions, performed a quality check for all rapid analysis data and was de-identified for reporting.</p>	
<p>Descriptive Statistical Analyses</p>	<p>Researchers conducted descriptive statistical analyses to evaluate responses from implementing partner staff surveys across all three activities.</p> <p>For the interim and endline reports for each activity, researchers completed and conducted further analyses of coded KII and FGD data, as well as analyzed the teacher and household survey and classroom observation data. All quantitative data and qualitative coded data were cleaned prior to data import in preparation for analysis, removing cases with a considerable amount of missing data. Univariate and bivariate analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) software to answer the activity’s evaluation questions.</p> <p>In preparation for the final report, researchers conducted additional statistical analyses with interview data collected from teachers and school directors on the screening process in all three activity sites. Researchers employed the same data analysis approach used for the interim and endline reports, whereby univariate and bivariate analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) to provide further insights on the activity’s evaluation questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing partner survey • Pre-post training survey • Training observations • Classroom observations • Teacher survey

Limitations

The MCSIE evaluation does not offer a pure baseline-endline comparison for all three country sites, given that the MSCIE evaluation commenced after activities had already been initiated. While Nepal did collect some baseline-endline data (and it is reported when available), not all data were collected in this manner across all sites. Second, the three activities being evaluated were unique and distinct and were not created with a specific goal of comparability across the three country sites. Thus, evaluation of one activity vis-à-vis the other is impossible (e.g., training had different purposes and target populations in different countries so cannot be directly compared across sites). Activity-specific limitations, such as prolonged government approval

processes, lack of access to project documentation or data, and staff turnover are outlined in country-specific interim and endline reports. These reports are available on USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) website.

Lastly, a significant limitation of the MCSIE study was that all three activities and this evaluation were undertaken during the acute stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that researchers were unable to visit activity sites for in-person data collection in 2020 or 2021. Instead, researchers worked closely with their local partners to support their in-country data collection efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic also meant that each activity site had to adapt and adjust implementation from its original plans. In some instances, this made it challenging for an activity's implementing partners to demonstrate impact or for MCSIE evaluators to observe the impact. For example, with schools closed for extended and unpredictable periods in 2020 and 2021, evaluators could not observe classroom-based instruction until early 2022. At that point, teachers and learners were only beginning to adapt to the new in-school realities. Such prolonged school closures also directly impacted the activity implementation and results since teachers had less time to practice using the new teaching strategies and materials than originally anticipated. Nonetheless, evaluators have triangulated data with other sources, such as interviews and surveys, to understand the activity's impact wherever possible.

Annex E: Ethics and Approval Clearance

University of Massachusetts Boston

Ethical clearance for the study's design and data collection was submitted to the University of Massachusetts Boston as a partner research entity of the MCSIE activity. The following International Review Board (IRB) exemption letter was provided to researchers.



UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393
P: 617.287.5374
F: 617.287.5396
www.umb.edu/orsp

January 29, 2020

Valerie Karr, PhD
SGISD

RE: Your application dated 1/27/2020 regarding study number **2020017**: Multi-Country Evaluation on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) for learners with disabilities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal (Purdue University, Sub Agreement under USAID Prime Agreement No. AID-7200AA18CA00009; Agreement: F9002550402053)

Dear Dr. Valerie Karr:

I have reviewed your study listed above and have determined that this study qualifies as human research that is **exempt** under the following guideline(s): 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2) Educational tests/survey/interview procedures, or observation of public behavior and 45 CFR 46.104(d)(4) Secondary research for which consent is not required. Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission. If you decide to modify the project in such a way that it may no longer qualify for exemption, submit a modification request to the IRB for review prior to implementation of the modified research project.

Thank you for keeping the IRB informed of your activities.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wang, CIP, CIM
Senior IRB Administrator

ACR-Cambodia Ethics Exemption

The following signed support letter from USAID/Cambodia was submitted to the National Ethical Committee for Health Research. However, in March 2020, we received an email stating that MCSIE was IRB-exempt as no health, personal patient information, or bodily fluids were being collected in conjunction with the study. The email was provided to the MCSIE USAID/Washington activity manager as proof of exemption.

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for USAID's Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education for Learners with Disabilities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal

Your Excellency,

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is funding a Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal to research its programs' efforts to sustainably improve teaching and learning outcomes for children with disabilities. The evaluation will be implemented by Inclusive Development Partners (IDP), which is run and led by a professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston. USAID/Cambodia's All Children Reading-Cambodia program is of particular interest to the MCSIE.

While the MCSIE will address a set of common evaluation questions across Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal; it also will specifically evaluate the disability inclusion component of All Children Reading-Cambodia. At midline, the MCSIE will produce a country-specific report that details data collection findings in Cambodia, which USAID and its partners will use to strengthen the All Children Reading-Cambodia program. In addition, a Cambodia-specific endline report will detail lessons learned that the MoEYS and other key stakeholders can use to further advance teaching and learning outcomes for children with disabilities.

The MCSIE evaluation of All Children Reading-Cambodia has the financial and organizational support of the USAID/Cambodia Mission. The evaluation has received an international Institutional Review Board (IRB) exemption, and we would like to request an exemption from review by Cambodia's National Ethics Committee on Human Research (NECHR). If it is determined that an exemption from NECHR review is not warranted, we gratefully look forward to the Committee's review and consideration of the MCSIE application. This evaluation will be conducted with the full cooperation and active involvement of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

Should you need further information about this evaluation, please contact Sereisatya Ros at Tel: 017 666 727, Email: sros@usaid.gov.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



John Eyres
Director, Office of Public

Director, Office of Public Health and Education

REFAM Malawi Letter of Authority

Per the guidance of USAID/Malawi, a letter of authority was requested in lieu of IRB. The MoE provided the following letter to the MCSIE study.

Telegrams: MINED LILONGWE
Telephone: +265 1 789422/01788961
Fax: +265 1 788064/164

All correspondences should be addressed to
The Secretary for Education



In reply please quote No.....

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

REF.NO. MoE/SNE/1/26

28th May 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Permission is hereby granted to Development Partners interested in Inclusive Education to carry out a survey in schools where Inclusion is implemented.

The survey is solely for education purpose, so please support the bearer of this communication.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noel H Mwango'.

Noel H Mwango

For: **SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION**

R4A Nepal

An IRB application was submitted to KU for data collection in Nepal. The following letter from the Ethical Review Committee granted an exemption.

Kathmandu University
Office of the Registrar



Date: 23/09/2020

Dr. Niraj Poudyal,
Assistant Professor
School of Arts,
Kathmandu University,

RE: Your application regarding the project entitled, Multi-Country Evaluation on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) for learners with disabilities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal (Purdue University, Sub Agreement under USAID Prime Agreement No. AID-7200AA18CA00009; Agreement: F9002550402053)

Dear Dr. Poudyal,

Your application was reviewed and discussed in the meeting of *Ethical Review Committee (ERC)* Kathmandu University held on 17/ 08/2020. Based on your proposal and also the supporting document from Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the partner University, in the project, the committee decided that approval from ERC is not required.

This decision applies only to the activities described in the document submitted to ERC. If you decide to make any modification in the project in such a way that it may no longer qualify for exemption, please submit a modification request to the ERC for review prior to implementation of the modified research project.

Thank you for keeping the ERC informed of your activities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Subodh', is written over a circular blue stamp of Kathmandu University.

Prof. Dr. Subodh Sharma
Chairman
Ethical Review Committee (ERC),
Registrar
Kathmandu University

Annex F: Sources of Information

All Children Reading-Cambodia

Project Reporting and Other Documents

- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (n.d.) *USAID/Cambodia-All Children Learning (draft SOO)*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2020). *Quarterly progress report April–June 2018*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2020). *ACR-Cambodia annual progress report: October 2019 — September 2020*.
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- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2020). *COVID Updates from All Children Reading-Cambodia*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2020). *TLM Development for children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2020). *Draft: Learning outcomes in CSL based on pre-school syllabus and subjects*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2020). *Student Profile Checklist (Bridge Program)*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2020). *Individual Education Plan (IEP) Template*.
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- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2018). *USAID assistance to basic education All Children Reading (ABE ACR) indefinite delivery indefinitely quantity (IDIQ) contract*.

- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2018). *Solicitation, offer, and award AID-OAA-I-14-00044/72044218F00002*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2017). *Monitoring & evaluation plan and quality assurance/quality control plan*.
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- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2017). *Cambodia Teacher Professional Development Policy Options Brief*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2017). *Grade 1-3 Khmer language curriculum review report: Summary report of available assessment data, teacher survey, and curriculum materials review*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2017). *2017–2018 annual work plan All Children Reading-Cambodia*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia. (2017). *2017–2018 annual work plan addendum All Children Reading-Cambodia: Inclusive education programming for learners with disabilities*.
- All Children Learning-Cambodia. (2022). *ACL-Cambodia final report*.
- All Children Learning-Cambodia. (2021). *ACL-Cambodia annual progress report: October 2020 — September 2021*.
- All Children Learning. (2019). *Updated monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan and quality assurance/quality control plan*.

Training Materials

- All Children Reading-Cambodia (2019). *School Director Workshop (2019-2020)*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia (2020). *School Director Workshop (2020-2021)*.
- All Children Reading-Cambodia (2019). *Inclusive Illustrations PowerPoint*.
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REFAM (n.d.) DHH Baseline 2020 Classroom Observation Protocols
REFAM (n.d.) DHH Baseline 2020 Daily Summary Sheet – Learner Intake Criteria, Assessor
Checklist, and Learner Frustration
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REFAM (n.d.) DHH Baseline 2020 Pupil Frustration Observation Checklist
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and LD
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DHH
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REFAM (2019) Reading for All Malawi Parent Questionnaire
REFAM (2019) Reading for All Malawi RC Teacher Questionnaire
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R4A Nepal

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Annex G: List of Evaluation Team Members

IDP Team Members

Name	Role
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Andrea Shettle	Program Coordinator
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Hayley Niad	Cambodia Lead and Technical Expert
Emily Kochetkova	Nepal Lead and Technical Expert
Dr. Christopher Johnstone	Malawi Lead and Senior Researcher
Dr. Brent Elder	Senior Researcher and Cambodia Technical Expert
Dr. Heike Boeltzig-Brown	Senior Researcher (University of Massachusetts Boston)
Kanika Sophak Nguon	Local Cambodia Coordinator
Padam Pariyar	Local Nepal Coordinator
Jie Chen	Statistician
Catherine Frazier	Editor
Dr. Heather Aldersey	Technical Expert – Knowledge Management and Articles
Dr. Alisha Braun	Researcher
Dr. Matthew Schuelka	Researcher
Dr. Louise Bahry	Technical Expert
Ana Mickovska-Raleva	Technical Expert
Stephanie Peña	Research Assistant (University of Massachusetts Boston)
Prisca Tamiro	Research Assistant (University of Massachusetts Boston)
Allison Shefcyk	Research Assistant
Christa Preston	Research Assistant

LASER PULSE at Purdue University

Name	Role
Yuehwern Yih	Director
Betty Bugusu	Technical Director
Luelsegged Kasa	Program Manager
Pamela McClear	Program Manager

Cambodian Disabled People's Organization

Name	Role
Mak Monika	Executive Director of CDPO
Chhor Bonnaroath	Program Manager
Vong Monea	Finance and Admin Manager
Sroun Thona	Human Resources and Admin Coordinator
Mean Vibolratanak	Senior Project Officer

Name	Role
Khan Savry	Data collector
Chhoun Sreychom	Data collector
Khon Beta	Data collector
Rong Sreyphors	Data collector
Tit Chhoun	Data collector
Lang Hong	Data collector
Sao Chorn	Data collector
Vong Panha	Data collector
Ly Choumnith	Personal Assistant
Loun Soleab	Consultant

Invest In Knowledge

Name	Role
James Mkandawire	Malawi Lead and Sr. Researcher
Hazma Daud	Malawi Co-Lead and Sr. Researcher
Augustine Harawa	Data collector
Hastings Honde	Data collector
Debra C Kaipa	Data collector
Sydney Lungu	Data collector
Emmanuel Majawa	Data collector
Yohanne Mulima	Data collector
Anaphy White Phiri	Data collector

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Name	Role
Niraj Poudyal	Team Lead Nepal and Senior Researcher
Mahesh Banskota	Senior Researcher
Santosh Adhikari	Senior Researcher
Dipesh Khadka	Senior Researcher
Avinaya Banskota	Senior Researcher
Samir Sodari	Junior Researcher
Rubin Maharjan	Junior Researcher
Shambhawi Nepal	Junior Researcher
Makina Nyachhyon	Junior Researcher
Saurav Rajbhandari	Junior Researcher