

Disability Inclusion Baseline Report

An assessment of disability inclusion in
school in Mutare and Makoni Districts of
Manicaland in Zimbabwe

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Background and introduction

The project aims at promoting access to inclusive, equal and quality educational rights and needs for in school children, out of school youths as well as children with disabilities. It also seeks to build capacity and critical awareness among rights holders about their rights and responsibilities towards education. This empowers them to organise and mobilise for individual and collective action towards claiming their rights to access inclusive, equal and quality education. Learning environments are currently assumed not inclusive and continue to discriminate against children with disability and the purpose of the assessment is to measure the level of inclusiveness of the school environment, the recreational area and home from which they come from.

Geographical Area

The survey was conducted in Manicaland Province, in fourteen schools namely Nyahondo Primary, Nyahondo Secondary, Hangaiwa Primary, Rusununguko Primary, Rusununguko Secondary, Mutiwegora Primary, Mutiwegora Secondary, Nyamusosa Primary, Nyamusosa Secondary, Dora High, Mutukwa Primary, Mandambiri Primary, Matika Primary and Kuhudzai Primary from Dora Wards 5 and 35 of Mutare Rural District; as well as Mayo Ward 35 of Makoni Rural District in Manicaland province, Zimbabwe. These are schools that are within the IM project areas of implementation to understand how children living with disabilities are included in these schools and if they are afforded similar learning opportunities as those of their equal counterparts.

Objectives of the Baseline

The objectives of the Baseline assessment are to:

1. Institution's capacity to accommodate teaching learner with disabilities
2. Inclusion of Children with disability in decision making processes
3. Inclusion of people with disabilities in Senior and Junior School Development Committees
4. Measure attitudes to inclusive education

Demographic Information

The Baseline assessment was well represented with total of 81 Participants (58 Makoni and 23 Mutare) which converts to 28.4% being from Mutare and 71.6% being from Makoni Districts as illustrated by Table 1 and Figure 1 below.

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Makoni	58
Mutare	23
Total	81

Table 1: Baseline Survey Participants

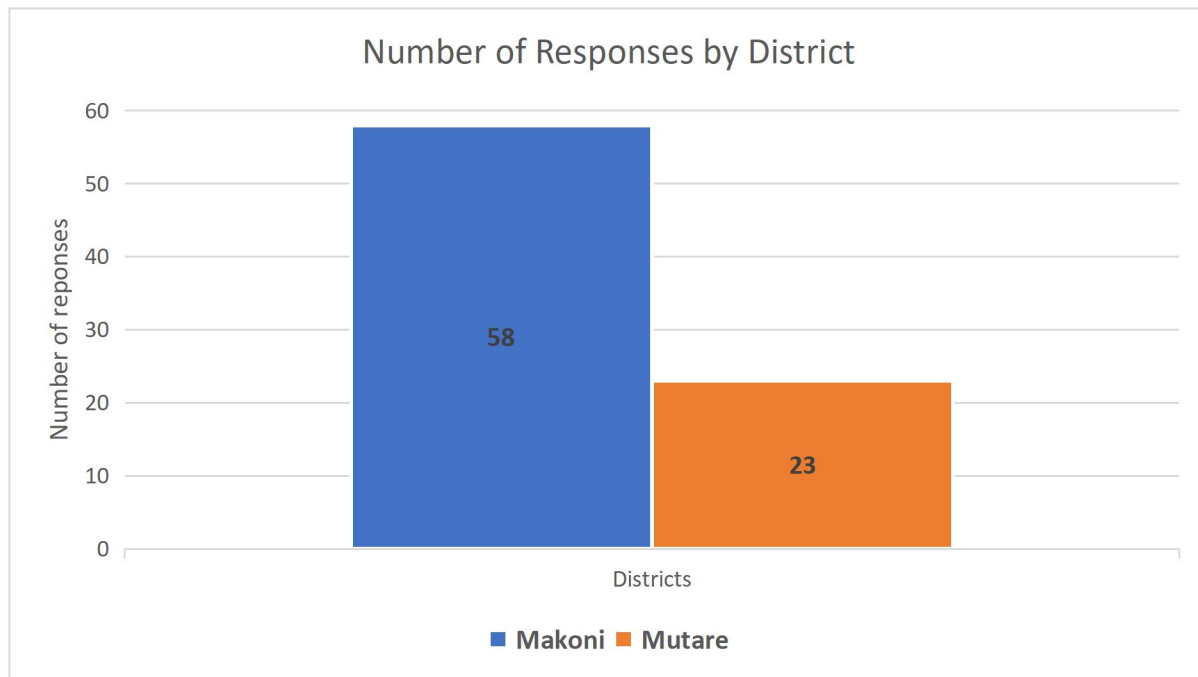


Figure 1: Number of Responses by District

Each school was expected to have at least a parent, community volunteer, School Staff and a Community leader representing it. According to the survey results, all the schools were well represented enough to cover the groups intended for by the survey design. The respondents for the survey were therefore a representation of from both community members, School Staff, Community volunteers and Community Leaders. These included 14 Parents or Guardian, 11 Teachers, 3 School Heads, 14 Village Health Workers, 14 Case Care Workers, 7 Village Heads and 18 School Development Committee representatives as seen in Figure 2 below.

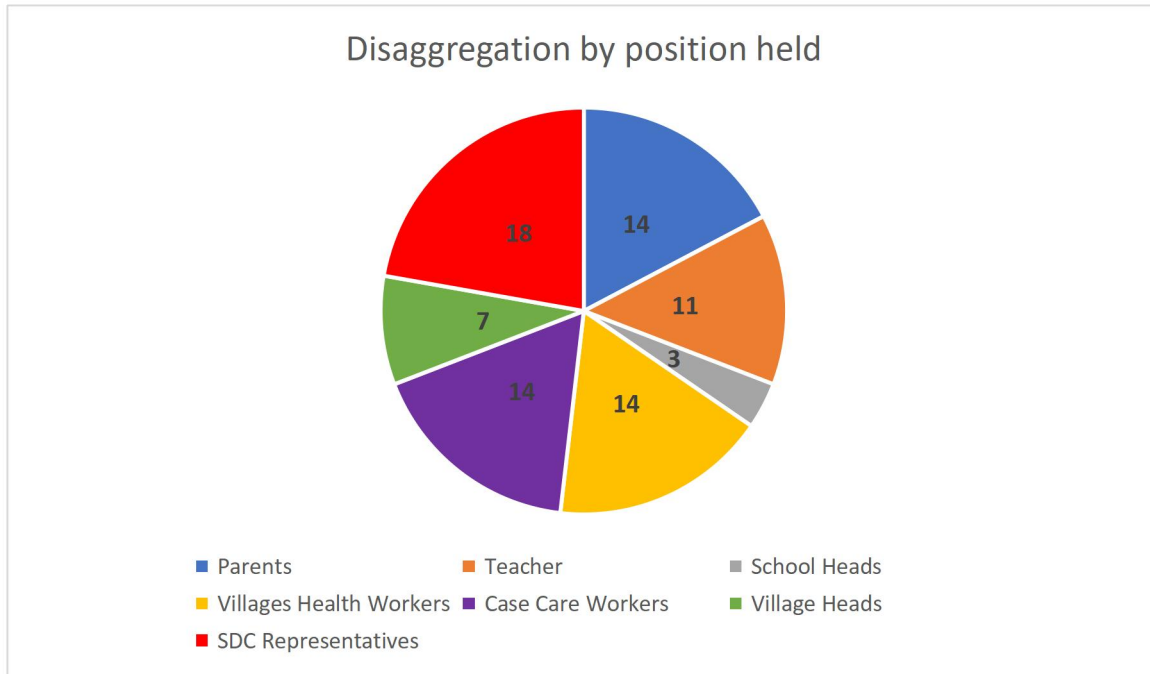


Figure 2: Disaggregation of respondents by position held

Key Findings

The teaching staff who participated in the interview reported that there is a total of 143 Children with disability (73 Male, 70 Female) in their schools that were interviewed. They reported that there are various types of impairments that are common in the schools which vary from Physical, Sensory (vision and hearing), mental (depression and schizophrenia) and intellectual with physical impairment being top on the list followed by sensory impairment.

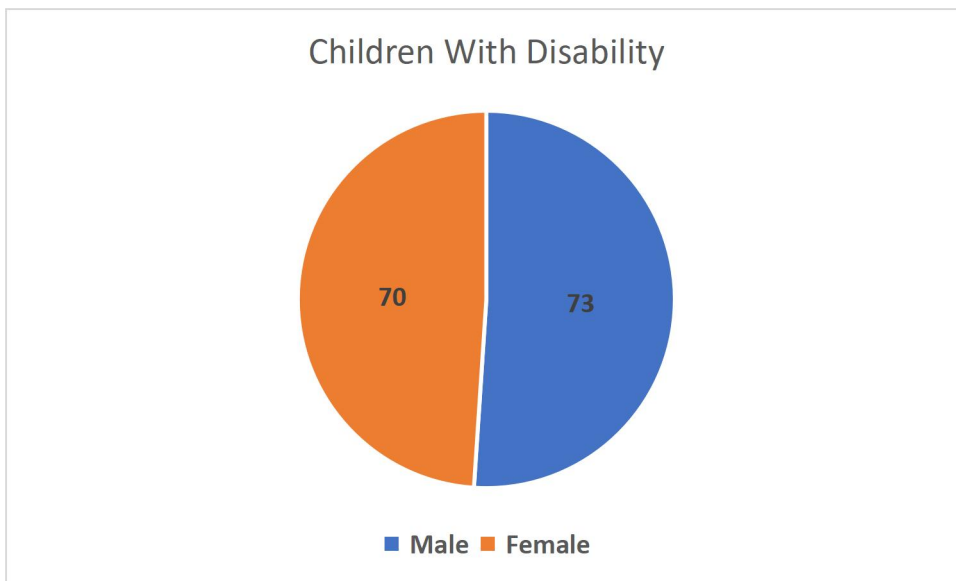


Figure 3: School going Children with Disability

The survey shows that 95% of the respondents said that the schools in their communities do not have facilities that cater for disability inclusion as there is only one school with Ramps, yet over 66% of them said that there were children with disability who are school going age but are currently not in school. This is owing to a number of reasons that include the failure by the schools to provide a disability friendly environment, lack assistive devices, long distance that the children have to travel to get to school which are not bearable considering the type of disability that the child has, fear of discrimination, insufficient funds for tuition fees at disability friendly schools and poverty among other reasons.

This is an unfortunate circumstance which may require more funding to address as only 6% respondents said their school had facilities to cater for disability while 94% opined that their schools had no facilities to cater for disability of the 54 that had said they had children with a disability in their community who are not in school. Only half of these respondents that said their schools had facilities to cater for disability however went on to say that the schools did not particularly have recreational facilities for children with disabilities.

The children with disability are also supposed to be afforded the opportunity to do chore both at home and at school so that they are included and not discriminated according to disability. The survey participants were therefore asked if children with disability are given chores and a total of 62 respondents which converts to 81% said they are given chores to do. This is a positive for the society as over half of the community does not discriminate but there is still room for improvement if more trainings are done on the acceptance of these children into the communities so that they can become productive member of society see Figure 4 below.

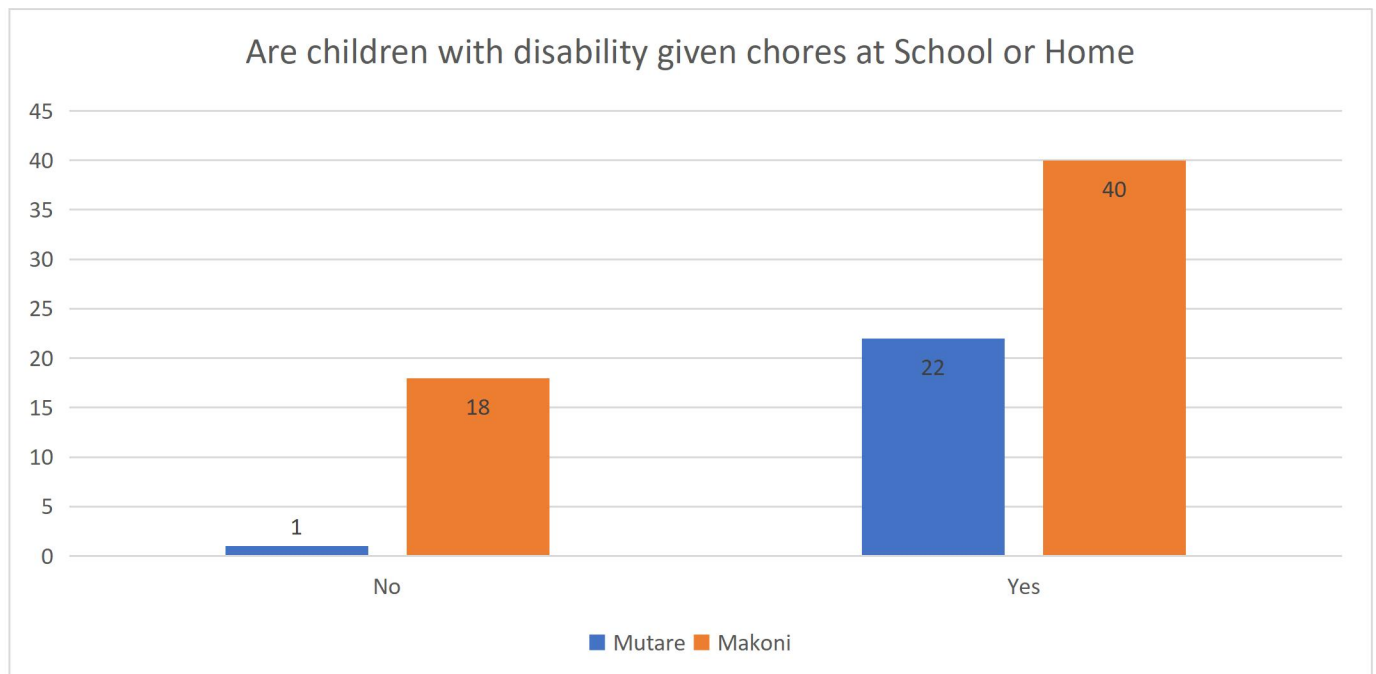


Figure 4: Are children with disability given chores at School or Home?

The most common chores that are being assigned to the children with disabilities are Cleaning, Washing, watering, fetching water, fetching firewood and herding cattle. Those that reported not assigning any chores mentioned that they did not assign the duties because the child would either be incapacitated because of the type of disability or that it poses a danger to themselves and the society. There were also some who did not have a reason for not assigning the chores which might translate to discrimination.

Matika Primary School in Makoni District is the only school that was reported by a teacher to have recreational facilities that are disability friendly. This school particularly has got swings and tyres that are used during play by children which can also accommodate the children with disability. Only 15% of the respondents said that children with disabilities participate in decision making of development issue within their schools. This is therefore the reason why disability inclusion is not fully implemented in the education sector. There is 77.7% of the respondent said there are no recreational facilities for children with disabilities because the children with disability are not represented in the developmental decision. These children need to be fairly represented within ranks of decision making so that their opinions are heard. More resources need to be allocated towards provision of inclusive education.

The respondents reiterated that stigma, cultural and religious discrimination, inadequate facilities, school dropout, early marriages, unwanted pregnancies, lack of tuition fees, lack of support from peers and family members, poverty, Isolation, neglect, lack of socialisation, lack of food and lack of medical attention are some of the challenges that children with disability face. The respondents however proposed that these children need support with assistive devices, IGA start-up kits that can sustain them economical beyond receiving aid, improved facilities in schools, like construction of ramps, grab rails wider toilet facilities, improved recreational facilities, support from the community, government involvement in support of their projects, awareness raising in schools and communities, regular check-ups, scholastic material, vocational training and psycho-social support. These initiatives will assure that the children realise their full potential and are able to exercise every right.

Lessons learnt and way forward

- Physical and Sensory impairments are the most common types of disabilities in Mutare and Makoni.
- Children with disabilities are able to fulfil similar tasks as their equal counterparts.
- Sizable number of children with disabilities who are of school going age are not going to school
- Lack of appropriate infrastructure limits the accessibility of schools for children with disability.
- Majority of school in Mutare and Makoni do not have recreational facilities.
- Children with disability need to be included in decision making process of developmental nature.
- More resources need to be allocated towards disability inclusion.
- Children with disabilities should be afforded every opportunity to realise full potential and are able to exercise every right.