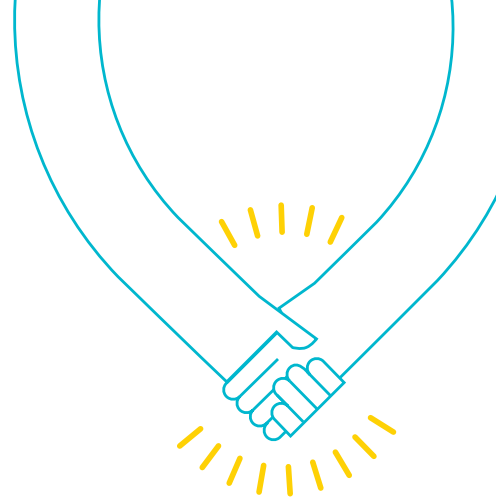




PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN INTEGRITY CLUBS IN NEPAL

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Integrity Action and partners are establishing Integrity Clubs for 14 -18 year old students in selected schools in Nepal. Students in Integrity Clubs learn about integrity and practice community monitoring using Integrity Action's mobile app DevelopmentCheck, which helps them identify problems in public services – including their own school – and fix them.

Integrity Action believes that these clubs need to be more inclusive. We therefore embarked on a project aimed at understanding the barriers to inclusion and at boosting the **meaningful participation** of students with disabilities (SWD) in Integrity Clubs.

Meaningful participation: SWD are in a position to participate in ALL Integrity Club activities, including monitoring activities inside and outside school.

Benefits:

- ~ SWD take an active role in identifying and solving problems with public services in their communities.
- ~ Accessibility concerns, particularly in schools, are identified and addressed so that more boys and girls with disabilities can attend school.

KEY FINDINGS: BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

In the wider school environment:

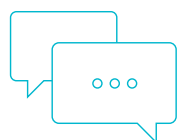
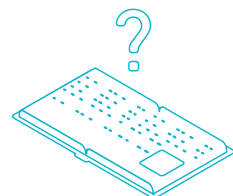


~ **Enrolment of SWD in mainstream schools is low.**

This is mainly due to parents' unwillingness to enrol their children, lack of infrastructure and means of transport to/from school, lack of inclusive curricula and teaching methods, and physically inaccessible schools. Among the SWD who do attend school, many drop out before reaching higher grades (where Integrity Clubs are established).

~ **NGOs', parents', teachers', students', and school administrators' understanding of disability is poor.**

The use of undignified terminology is widespread and teachers are not able to identify mild disabilities or impairments or to meaningfully include SWD in their classes.



~ **Engagement of parents of SWD is low.**

Many parents of SWD who live in residential schools only visit their child at school once a year and generally believe that their child's wellbeing and development is not their responsibility.

In Integrity Clubs:



- ~ The number of SWD in Integrity Clubs is low. SWD are not approached as often as their peers without disabilities to join Integrity Clubs. The number of boys with disabilities in Integrity Clubs is higher than the number of girls with disabilities.
- ~ Most activities and materials used in Integrity Clubs, including the DevelopmentCheck app, are not accessible to all members.

- ~ Integrity Club members with disabilities are less actively involved in monitoring activities:
 1. Integrity Club leaders and teachers keep SWD away from monitoring as they perceive this activity to be unsafe.
 2. Some SWD themselves think that they are less able to contribute to community monitoring than their peers.
 3. Some sites being monitored are not physically accessible.
- ~ Most Integrity Club members with disabilities are not keen to publicly share their views or take up leadership positions. **Their self-confidence remains low.**
- ~ Integrity Club members find it much **harder to include students with intellectual disabilities** in the club.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOOST MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION*

- 😊 Schools need to **collect data** on children with disabilities in the community, including the number of children in and out of school, disaggregated by disability type, gender and other demographic markers.
- 😊 **Mandatory training** and awareness raising activities should be provided to NGOs, parents, students, teachers and school administrators on the use of dignified language, identification of disabilities, and increasing the participation of SWD in school life.
- 😊 Integrity Clubs should carry out **outreach activities aimed at the parents** of children with disabilities to increase their engagement in their children's education. To attract disengaged parents, motivational activities such as the 'Excellence Awards for Parents' should be organised.
- 😊 Educational materials (including those used in Integrity Clubs and the Development Check app) should be provided in different accessible formats.
- 😊 SWD should be given leadership roles in Integrity Clubs as a way to boost their confidence. Other activities, such as motivational talks, should be organised to achieve the same aim.
- 😊 Better coordination is needed among parents, schools, Integrity Clubs, local governments and Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) to mobilise resources (transport, disability aids, training, materials etc.) to make schools and activities more accessible to SWD. Support from local DPOs is crucial.
- 😊 Accessibility concerns for schools and other public services should be a mandatory aspect of community monitoring for all Integrity Clubs.
- 😊 Integrity Clubs should also be established in specialist schools, e.g. schools for the blind.
- 😊 More needs to be done to increase the participation of students with intellectual disabilities in schools and Integrity Clubs.

*Integrity Action is now working on implementing these recommendations in all our Integrity Clubs

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