

Itinerant teachers deliver Inclusive Education in Togo

UK/Togo – Handicap International

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Handicap International is using the Itinerant Teacher model in Togo, whereby teachers with disability-specific skills (e.g., teaching children with visual or hearing impairments) are assigned to primary schools in various villages and work alongside mainstream teachers.

“Itinerant Teachers help mainstream teachers to become truly inclusive so that children with a range of impairments do not miss out on education and have an equal chance to succeed in life.”

— Ms. Julia McGeown, Technical Advisor, Handicap International

FACTS & FIGURES

- There are 900 direct beneficiaries from the project.
- Five Itinerant Teachers in Dapaong and three in Kara have been trained, and each has been in charge of 15 students in 2015.
- Between 2011 and 2015, the number of children followed by Itinerant Teachers in Dapaong has grown from 56 to 149 per year.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

The challenges of Inclusive Education in Togo are similar to those in many developing nations, where access to mainstream education for marginalised groups such as children with disabilities is limited. There are no reliable statistics on education for disabled children in Togo, which demonstrates the dire need to raise awareness on this issue and to begin the process of developing inclusive and cost-effective methodologies.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Itinerant Teachers receive three weeks of initial training in sign language, Braille, and Inclusive Education, as well as training on intellectual disability, speech and occupational therapy techniques, and child development. They then work with specific students while simultaneously providing support to

mainstream teachers and suggesting how to develop new low-cost teaching materials or how better to use the regular materials that have been provided. The result is the ongoing training of mainstream teachers and support to children and their families, without having to expect all mainstream teachers to be specialists in all fields. Each Itinerant Teacher visits each student on his/her caseload on a weekly basis. Furthermore, community agents help to identify children with disabilities and refer them to appropriate schools. Because of this community involvement, the mechanism of Itinerant Teachers has been easily explained to the wider population.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The aim is for each Itinerant Teacher to support 20 children in 2016, and also to grow the number of Itinerant Teachers at both sites. Handicap International also plans to continue advocacy with the Ministry of Education through its regional office so that it can allow more mainstream teachers to become Itinerant Teachers, still paid under the Ministry's jurisdiction. The number of children who are able to benefit from an Itinerant Teacher is projected to increase as more teachers become trained and employed, especially given that the system is now mentioned in the country's new national Education Sector Plan.

Photo. YES

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