



## inclusive education policy in brief

### what is the inclusive education policy about?

As part of its Education Reform UNRWA adopted an Agency-wide Inclusive Education Policy which applies to all schools in the five Fields where UNRWA operates. The Policy was developed in participation of all five Fields and various stakeholders to establish shared commitment and understanding of inclusive education, and an approach for the teaching and learning of all Palestine refugee children.

### our commitment

“The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is committed to providing quality inclusive education which respects the rights and appreciates the diversity of all children. UNRWA aims to remove barriers to access and create equal opportunity for learning and participation in order to enable all Palestine refugee children to realize their full potential regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, socio-economic status, health and psychosocial needs.”

- Inclusive education is recognized as fundamental to the achievement of the international commitment to Education for All.
- UNRWAs commitment to inclusive education is based on the Agency’s overall vision and mandate.

### our understanding

We acknowledge that all children have the fundamental right to education regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities and social circumstances. We recognize that education needs to be responsive to the needs of the children and schools need to be places that foster the learning, health and psychosocial wellbeing of their students. It is our joint responsibility to address barriers in attitudes and practices that may prevent children from accessing education or from equal opportunities for learning and participation in our UNRWA schools.

We acknowledge that schools with an inclusive orientation will improve the quality of education for all children while making sure children vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion such as children with disabilities and special educational needs are supported as best as possible.

Inclusive education requires a shift in thinking from a medical model that focuses on individual students ‘deficits’ assuming special services and staff, are required to deal with student’s difficulties, towards acknowledging that meeting students needs is a shared responsibility of all teachers and staff. We understand that moving towards greater inclusion is a gradual process of improving our education system, schools and classroom practices to become more child friendly and child centered.

## our principles

The following principles will guide teachers and staff towards a shared understanding of inclusive education:

- We believe in each child's potential for learning
- We acknowledge the right to education for all
- We recognize the continuous need to improve our education system, classroom and school practices to better meet the needs of our students
- We pay particular attention to children vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion
- We seek to address attitudinal and environmental barriers to access, learning and participation by promoting a social model of disability
- We seek to recognize individual needs and support our students
- We believe that inclusive education fosters inclusive communities

## our approach

We aim to ensure that quality child centred education in a safe and stimulating environment is provided in all schools and classrooms. Inclusiveness will be criteria for quality classroom practice in UNRWA schools.

We aim to strengthen school based support for those students who have additional learning, health and psychosocial needs: schools will form student support teams to give teachers a platform to discuss their students' needs with colleagues and to plan for support.

We acknowledge that a few children with special educational needs may need extensive support. We will work together with parents and communities to identify an educational option for each child, either in an UNRWA school or through alternatives, considering the child's best interest.

We consider disability, gender, protection and youth cross cutting issues to be considered in all our efforts towards inclusive education. We seek to recognize and address attitudes

and practices that may discriminate on the basis of gender or disability and do our best to support students with disabilities. Child protection needs to be part of our service delivery and we need to ensure that UNRWA schools are free from violence and discrimination providing an environment that promotes psychosocial wellbeing. Finally we aim to promote student participation and involve youth in decision making.

## our strategy

Inclusive education will be implemented through gradual progressive steps within the available resources. Awareness and capacity will be built and the inclusive approach will be embedded into all levels of the education system, from strategic planning to classroom practices, policies to regulations, post descriptions to teacher training materials.

## our school and our classroom

Teachers can do a lot to support inclusive practices in our schools and classrooms:

- Adopt inclusive language and attitudes, believe in each child's potential for learning, make all students feel valued and welcome, encourage equal learning opportunities for boys and girls, and avoid stigma and discrimination of any kind
- Promote child-friendly schools, care for the health and wellbeing of all students, manage behavior positively, ensure safe and healthy school environments free from bullying and discrimination, encourage participation of students, parents and communities
- Provide learning support, find different ways of teaching and learning, differentiate and enrich the learning content, task and materials, identify and refer students in need of additional support to the school's student support team, work together with parents, health care providers and community partners to support students

## more information

UNRWAs Inclusive Education Policy was endorsed in January 2013. The Policy is available at UNRWA schools and online in [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org). For more information please contact your Chief Field Education Programme or the education department at HQA.



united nations relief and works agency  
for palestine refugees in the near east

[www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

UNRWA provides assistance, protection and advocacy for some 5 million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory, pending a solution to their plight. The Agency's services encompass education, health care, social safety-net, camp infrastructure and improvement, community support, microfinance and emergency response, including in times of armed conflict. Through these services UNRWA strives to help Palestine refugees achieve a decent standard of living, long and healthy lives, knowledge and skills and full enjoyment of human rights. These goals are formulated according to the UN criteria for human development.