Overview of the Innovation
The project aimed to improve the skills of pre-service and in-service teachers to practice inclusive education in the classroom. The intervention targeted (i) Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) and their training of pre-service teachers and (ii) 40 primary and lower secondary schools promoting appropriate teaching methods and relevant educational tools for inclusive learning with in-service teachers.

The project also planned and implemented a strategy which brought together parents, teachers, children and health workers to make the schools and classrooms more inclusive for children with disabilities.

It was implemented in the four districts of Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Karongi and Rutsiro and reached 56 TTC tutors and an additional 80 teachers. 1,462 students with disabilities were reached.

Total project budget was GBP 621,411.

Grant Recipient:
The pilot was managed by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Rwanda (ADRA Rwanda) in collaboration with Handicap International, an International NGO.

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What makes it innovative?
This project promoted a new way of working in Rwanda by identifying and building partnerships across the home, school and community to make educational experiences of learners as inclusive as possible and aiming to reduce dependency on NGO involvement.

Relevance to education priorities:
Main theme: inclusive education
Sub theme: skills development
Special needs education is a cross-cutting priority for the education system (ESSP 2010-15)

Project learning (output/activity to outcomes level)
• Engagement with parents and wider communities at grassroots level was important to make sure children with disabilities entered school, with further support provided by these communities being necessary for the continuing education of the children.
• Although activities were planned to happen at community level and despite ADRA’s good management of activities on the ground, difficulties presenting and discussing the project at higher conceptual levels, and providing a vision of how to gradually increase Ministry ownership over time and embed interventions within GoR systems, have seriously limited the potential for long-term impact of the innovation.
• The teacher training component was implemented through TTCs, under the overall supervision of the College of Education. 16 tutors were trained, who trained 40 peer tutors, who in turn trained 80 teachers from 40 schools. This required a high level of pedagogical expertise and appropriate training materials that can be used by the trainees. It will be important that the GoR has the technical capacity to sustain the fundamental educational demands of teacher training in the future.
Project outcomes and reflection on monitoring and evaluation

The evaluation has a variety of different foci. It is built mainly on a single questionnaire administered at baseline and end-line. The respondents to the questionnaire are head teachers and teachers, with interviews of TTC tutors and SEOs, and Focus Group Discussions with parents and students. In addition data on enrolment, retention and participation of SEN children were collected but the data sources are unknown.

The multi-stakeholder, participatory approach led to a significant increase in enrolment for children with disabilities with 1,223 children enrolled across the 40 schools (473 at baseline). 68.75% of in-service teachers stated that they had used some inclusive principles in the classroom while the 16 TTC tutors stated that they had learnt inclusive methods with 90% confident to train pre-service teachers (there are no baseline data).

The evaluation is weak with no clear focus, no validity, and no proven reliability of the instruments. The evaluation reporting is poor and lacking transparency. The evidence is therefore not a good basis for decision making.
**Conditions for success**

There was very little written about the processes of innovation encountered by this project making it difficult to assess the conditions for success. There are suggestions that engagement of multiple stakeholders – parents, learners, education officers, TTC tutors, teachers and head teachers – is a key issue to ensure ‘buy-in’ and effective delivery of the innovation. The government would need to develop the capacity to take over the connector role with stakeholders, currently played by ADRA, to achieve the intended reduced dependency on NGOs in the inclusive education sub-sector.

**Scale up and sustainability considerations**

How to sustain the intervention is not clear from the scale-up and sustainability plan provided by ADRA. The project merely highlights a large number of stakeholders that will need to be involved when scaling up and transferring the project to the government.

It is also not clear whether the project implementers captured any learning from the pilot project that could support scale up and sustaining the intervention. Moreover, no indication is provided how the project is advocating/influencing scale up and institutionalisation issues with MINEDUC/REB.

Institutionalising the work of this project appears to focus on the TTCs and integrating inclusive education content in the TTC programmes. However it remains unclear how this is going to happen or how TTC staff will support in-service teachers. There is also no reference to the new cross-cutting area of ‘inclusive education’ in the new curriculum and how MINEDUC/REB could be supported to implement the new curriculum.

The project makes a major case for strengthening the role of the Special Needs Education Coordinators (SNECO), who reported to DEOs during the pilot, but fails to explain how these have been involved and supported in the pilot project. Moreover, the SNECO position was created for the specific purposes of the pilot project and is not a formal government position - and to our knowledge there are no plans of the government to create such a position.
Although reporting on the intervention is not strong, the component that could qualify for scale up is the field-based implementation component of the project, which is stronger than the reports suggest. In particular the community engagement element of the project has potential to be scaled up in adapted forms, led by the GoR.

**Cost considerations**
No economic analysis has been undertaken by the project.

Although the project makes some generic statements about (i) inclusive education will need to be integrated into the existing curriculum, and; (ii) special needs education needs to be integrated in teacher training institutes, no specific project analysis has been made to support this.

**Immediate Next Steps**

- As the work with communities is seen as the strongest component, and this is resulting in higher enrolment in schools of children with disabilities as well as the continued active engagement of these communities to support the school experience of the children with disabilities, there is a need for further discussions with MINEDUC and REB on how to sustain these field-based activities, with a key role for decentralised level GoR staff.
- ADRA to share the findings of the project with REB, College of Education (CoE) and development partners and make a case for continuing teacher training on inclusive education and making it an integral to the TTC programme in all TTCs in Rwanda.
- Budget is required for this, preferably from government but otherwise through external funding.

This programme was piloted with support from the Innovation for Education Fund, a partnership between the Governments of Rwanda and the United Kingdom. The fund was managed by Cambridge Education, a member of the Mott MacDonald Group.