

Inclusive Education and Systems Transformation

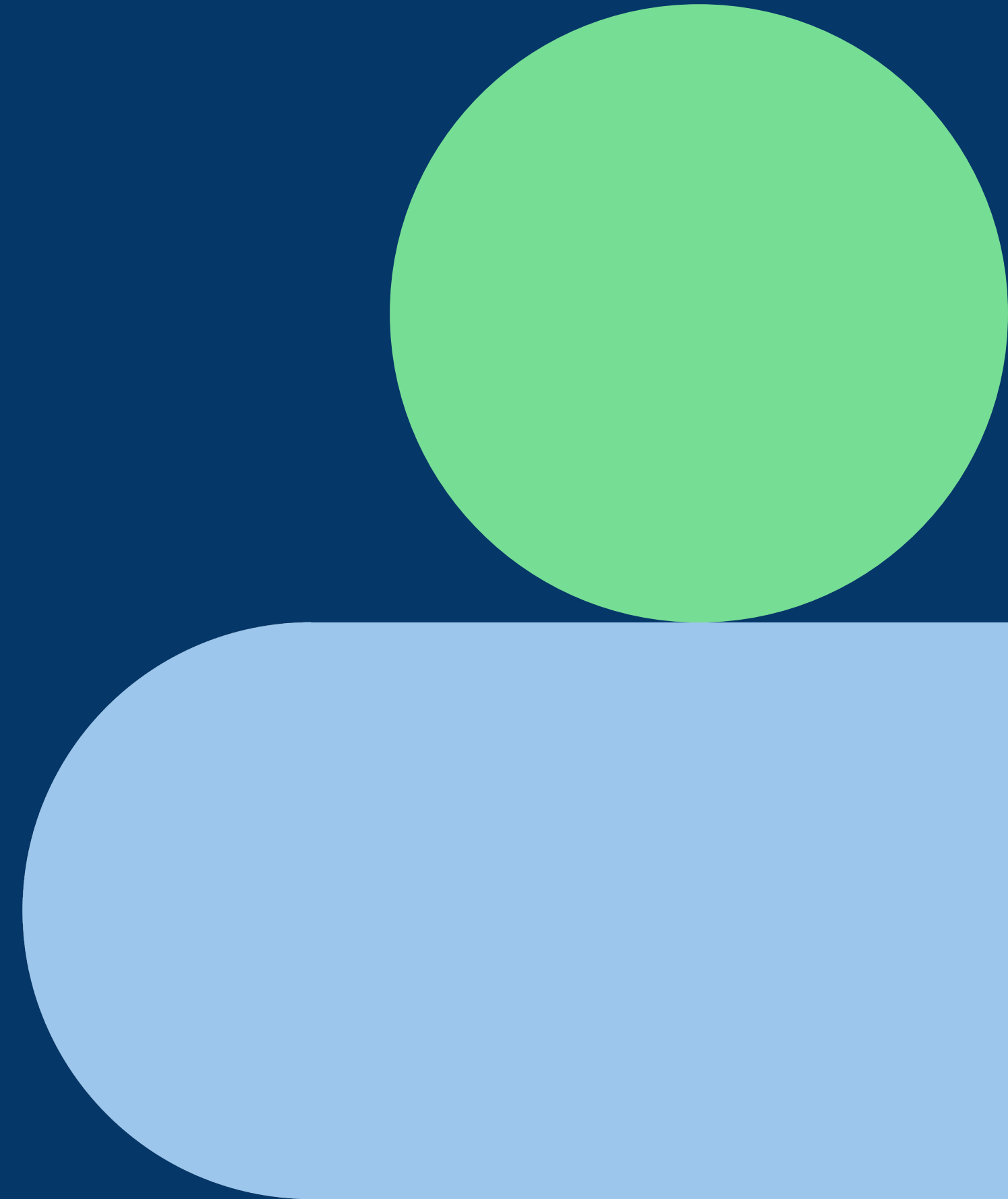
APRIL 2024



Department of
Organizational Leadership,
Policy, and Development
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to Discover[®]

Inclusive Education and Systems Transformation

- WHAT is the purpose?
- WHY focus on inclusion?
- HOW to effectively include in the education systems?





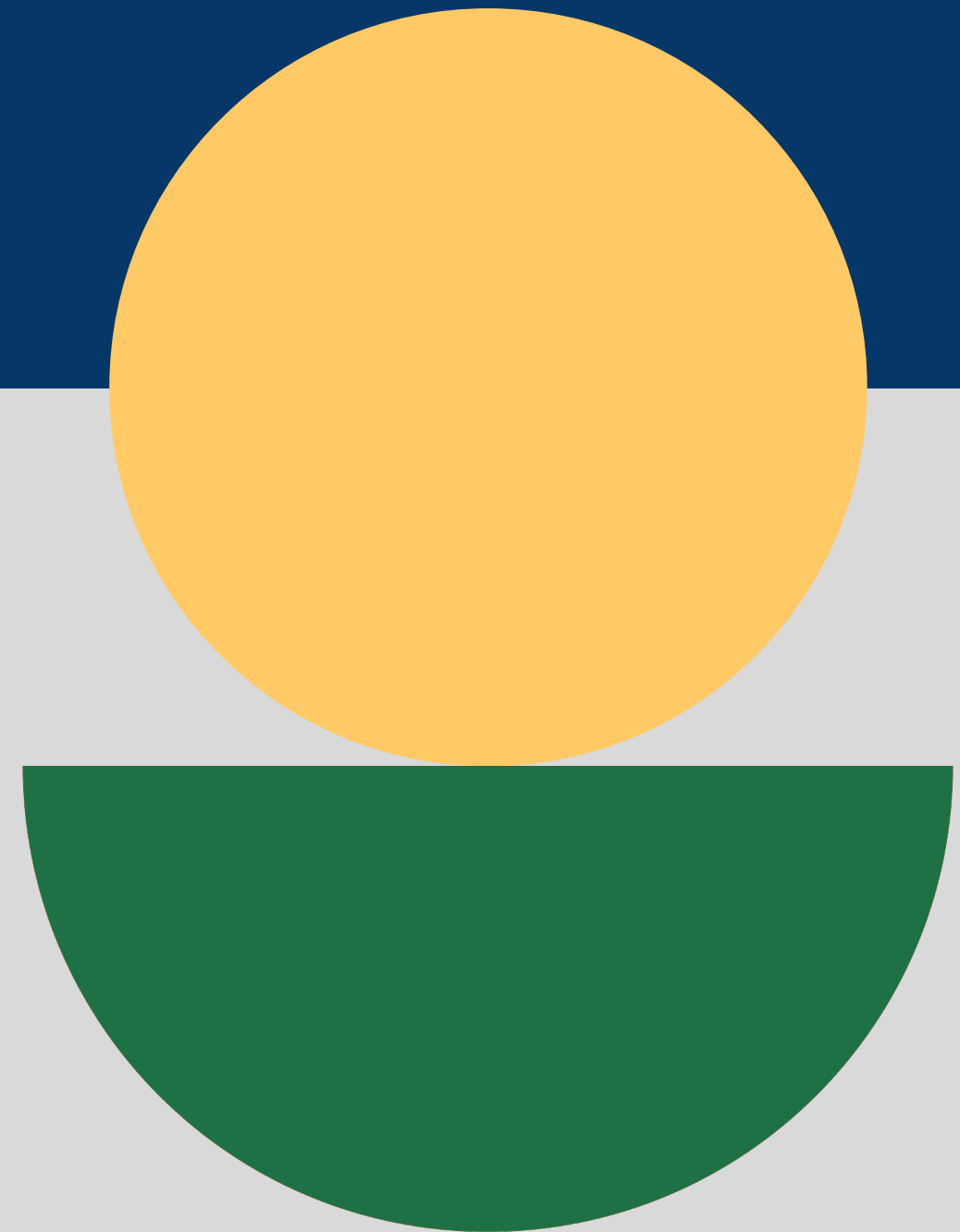
What is Inclusive Education?

“A continual process of identifying and removing barriers to students’ presence, participation, and achievement.”

(Ainscow, 2020)

Why Inclusive Education?

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 demands that school be a place where all children matter equally, participate fully, and develop the range of skills, knowledge, beliefs and practices they need to THRIVE.

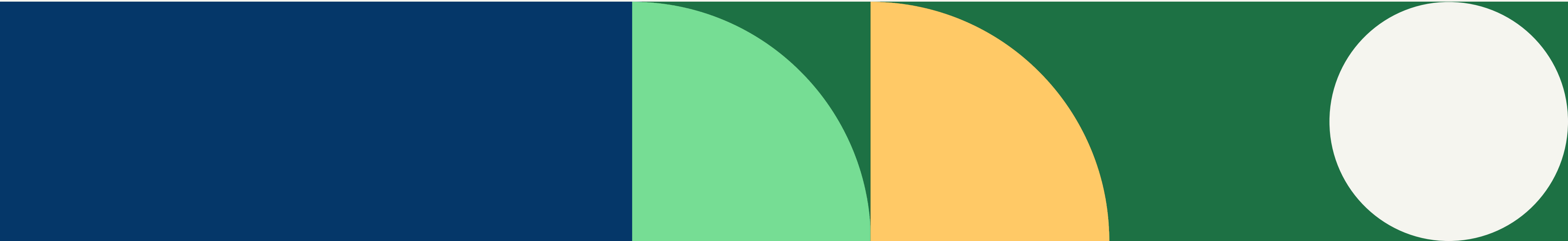


Why Inclusive Education NOW?

- Children with sensory, physical or intellectual disabilities are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than their peers.
- <1% of poor rural girls finish secondary school (in 20 countries)
- ▲ < 25% of countries recognize sign language as an official language
- <25% of countries designed learning materials in minority languages during COVID
- 25% of countries have laws supporting segregated education
- ▲ 68% of countries define inclusive education

Source: UNESCO GEM Report 2020.

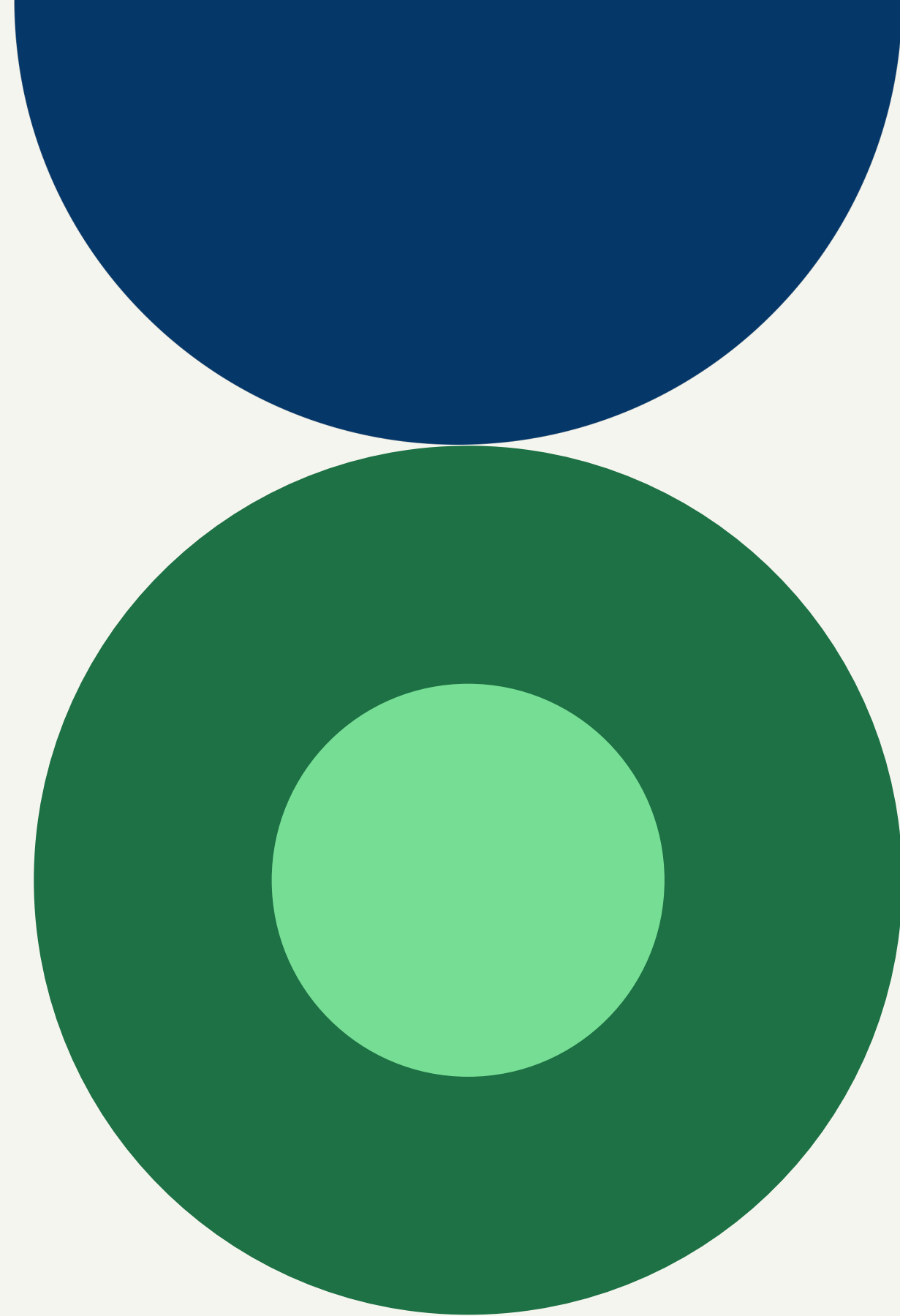
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HOW to get to truly inclusive education systems requires constant engagement with

WHAT IS INCLUSION

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EDUCATION SYSTEMS?

The ecology of the formal education enterprise, including:

 **Policies**  **Procedures**  **Practices**  **Pedagogies**  **Norms, Mindsets and Values**

- Exist at multiple levels
- Interact with one another
- Exclusion manifests in all of these.

Education Systems Transformation “for” Inclusive Education

- Rebuild system around shared purpose
- Engage ecosystem, build coherence in local context
- Align components
- Incorporate “hard” & “soft” elements



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- Assumes systems not built for everyone
- Questions assumptions about who belongs
- Does not wait for system readiness: takes action toward inclusion.

Education Systems Transformation “through” Inclusive Education



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Inclusive practices as positive disruptors

ASSUMPTIONS

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- Present systems are not ready to be fully inclusive



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DISRUPTORS

- Any action that broadens opportunities for learners
- Any action that inserts inclusive practices into otherwise exclusionary spaces
- Any action that provides a model for systems transformation

Critical Questions and Opportunities for Disruption

1.WHO IS EDUCATION FOR?

2.HOW IS LEARNING STRUCTURED?

3.WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEARNERS?



Disruptive Opportunity #1

Who are schools for?

- Disabled Persons Organizations and allies lobby and influence the CRPD.
- Its General Comment 4 explicitly names inclusive education a “right”

Disruptive Opportunity #2

How is learning structured?

- Universal Design for Learning and accessibility policies have disrupted long-held understandings of what “teaching” and “learning” are in schools.

Disruptive Opportunity #3

Who is responsible for learners?

- Inclusive practices rely on families, multi-disciplinary teams, and classroom staff
- Screening/assessment practices identify support needs
- Teachers share power and responsibility for learning

But are these disruptors or just good practice?



Inclusionary actions in exclusionary systems are disruptive (in a positive way)



Because inclusive education is an “ongoing process” systems transformation is constant and iterative, rather than a one-time event

FINAL QUESTION

Can systems transformation allow for greater inclusion, or must inclusion be the impetus to transform systems?