



Towards An Inclusive Kerala

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Focus Areas:

Inclusive Education

Livelihood Opportunities – Independent Living

EDUCATION

Index for Inclusion (UK / UNESCO)

Three Dimensions:

- Creating inclusive cultures
- Producing inclusive policies
- Evolving inclusive practices

How It Is Used in Practice

Schools form small "Index teams" (teachers, parents, sometimes students) who:

- Collect information about how the school currently works
- Use Index indicators to identify where exclusion occurs
- Set a small number of priorities
- Integrate priorities into school development plan and review annually

Index: Evidence & Relevance

Evidence:

UK evaluations show Index helps schools notice previously overlooked issues.
Widely translated and adapted by UNESCO and European Agency.

Relevance for Kerala:

- Fits with Kerala's school development plans and decentralized planning
- Structured way to move from Buds/special schools to neighborhood schools

Universal Design for Learning

Curriculum design that plans for learner diversity from the outset

Three Core Principles:

- Multiple means of representation
- Multiple means of action and expression
- Multiple means of engagement

UDL-Based Lesson Example

A UDL-based lesson in a primary class might:

- Use a story that is read aloud, shown in large print, and supported by pictures
- Allow children to respond orally, record on audio, draw sequences, or write
- Break tasks into smaller steps with visual schedules
- Use peer support and group work

UDL: Evidence & Outcomes

Countries that use UDL systematically (Finland, Canada report:

- Reduced need for individual, document-heavy accommodations
- Better engagement and learning outcomes for students with disabilities
- Teachers feel more competent in mixed-ability classrooms

UDL Relevance for Kerala

In Kerala, UDL can:

- Make classrooms friendlier for all
- Support inclusion of multiple forms of diversity (caste, language, disability, migrants)

Co-Teaching & Peer-Supported Learning

Ireland

Co-Teaching Formats:

- Team teaching
- Station teaching
- Alternative teaching

Peer Support Practices

- "Buddy" arrangements linking disabled and non-disabled students
- Peer tutoring in pairs or small groups
- Cooperative learning structures where tasks are interdependent

Benefits:

- Disabled children remain in common learning space
- General teachers gain confidence
- Peer support builds social cohesion and reduces stigma

Transforming Special/Buds Schools

Many Countries have moved away from building new special schools and have begun re-purposing existing special schools as support centres.

UN CRPD Committee's General Comment on Article 24 explicitly calls for a moratorium on new special schools and a planned transition to inclusive systems.

EMPLOYMENT

European Union

Supported Employment (EUSE Model)

Method for enabling persons with disabilities to work in regular jobs for regular pay in the open labour market, with tailored supports.

Five Core Stages

1. Client engagement – introduction to the service, informed choice, zero-rejection
2. Vocational profiling – detailed assessment of abilities, interests, support needs
3. Job finding – targeted employer engagement, job carving/customisation where needed
4. Employer engagement – negotiating tasks, hours, accommodations, addressing concerns
5. On and off the job support – job coaching, problem-solving, long-term follow-up

How It Works in Practice

An Employment Support Worker (job coach):

- Spends time understanding the person and their environment
- Approaches employers directly, often starting from small, realistic roles
- Provides intensive one-to-one support in the first weeks on the job
- Gradually reduces support as the worker becomes more independent

Evidence

European experience shows that this model:

- Produces better long-term employment outcomes than segregated sheltered workshops
- Works even for people labelled with "severe" or "profound" disabilities when properly resourced

Germany

Penalties for Non-Recruitment

- Employers with 20+ staff must ensure at least 5% are persons with disabilities
- Those who do not comply must pay a monthly compensatory levy per unfilled quota position
- The levy funds are reinvested into employment support measures

What Can Kerala Do?

This combination of quota, taxes and supported employment is a coherent system

Kerala can legislate to mandate private sector reservation.

Quota Enforcement

Germany, Austria, France, Italy

How Quotas Actually Work:

- **Germany:** 5% quota and cess for violation
- **Austria:** 4% quota and levy system
- **France and Italy:** Also operate quota-levy systems

Social Cooperatives

Italy

Italy has a long history of social cooperatives that employ persons with disabilities in inclusive, especially in catering, cleaning, packaging, e-commerce services.

These Cooperatives:

- Are worker- and/or user-owned
- Receive some state support and preferential procurement opportunities
- Provide both work and social support

Some Italian regions report that a significant share of disabled workers are employed through such cooperatives.

Social Co-operatives

Key Features:

- At least 30% of workers are from disadvantaged groups
- Workers are members with participatory governance
- Co-operatives compete in open markets but often receive preferential procurement
- Profits are reinvested, and members share in decision-making

Relevance for Kerala

Kerala already has strong cooperative and community-based structures (including Kudumbashree).

Kerala can adapt the Italian idea into its own cooperative economy by:

- Reserving procurement from disability-owned cooperatives
- Providing business development support
- Linking them to supported employment services