Social inclusion interventions in low- and middle-income settings have a meaningful positive effect on people with disabilities

There is promising evidence that interventions can improve the social skills and relationships of people with disabilities in low- and middle-income country (LMIC) settings. However, there is a lack of evidence on what works to improve social inclusion and community participation for this group.

What is this review about?

There are approximately one billion people with disabilities. They are frequently excluded from social and political activities, which is a violation of their fundamental rights. A core reason for the exclusion is that people with disabilities often experience stigmatising attitudes and behaviours from others. Inaccessible environments and systems, and institutional barriers also contribute to discrimination against people with disabilities.

Social inclusion outcomes can be improved through interventions designed to develop skills for social inclusion (e.g. social and communication skill training), broad-based social inclusion (e.g. enhancing access and participation in sports and the arts) and improved relationships (e.g. social support and violence prevention).

What studies are included?

We identified a broad range of interventions that reported improvements in social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities in LMICs. Many of the studies had methodological limitations, which means that the confidence in the study findings was generally low.

We present the findings from 37 studies that evaluated the effectiveness of interventions on social inclusion outcomes for people with disabilities in LMICs. The studies were conducted between 2000 and 2022. Studies were conducted in 16 countries, with 12 in India and six in China.

What are the main findings of this review?

The findings of the review suggest that social inclusion interventions have a substantial and positive effect on the social behaviour, social skills, and broad-based social inclusion of persons with disabilities.
A moderate effect was reported from interventions designed to improve relationships between people with disabilities and their families and communities.

**What do the findings of the review mean?**

This review highlights promising evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to improve the social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Evidence on interventions for people with disabilities has, however, been primarily focused on interventions at the individual level, such as enhancing social skills and relationships.

There is a gap in evidence on community-level interventions that address societal barriers to inclusion, such as stigma reduction, and system-level interventions that improve legislation, infrastructure and institutions.

**How up-to-date is this review?**

The review authors searched for studies up to March 2022.

**What is the Campbell Collaboration?**

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**About this summary**


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