

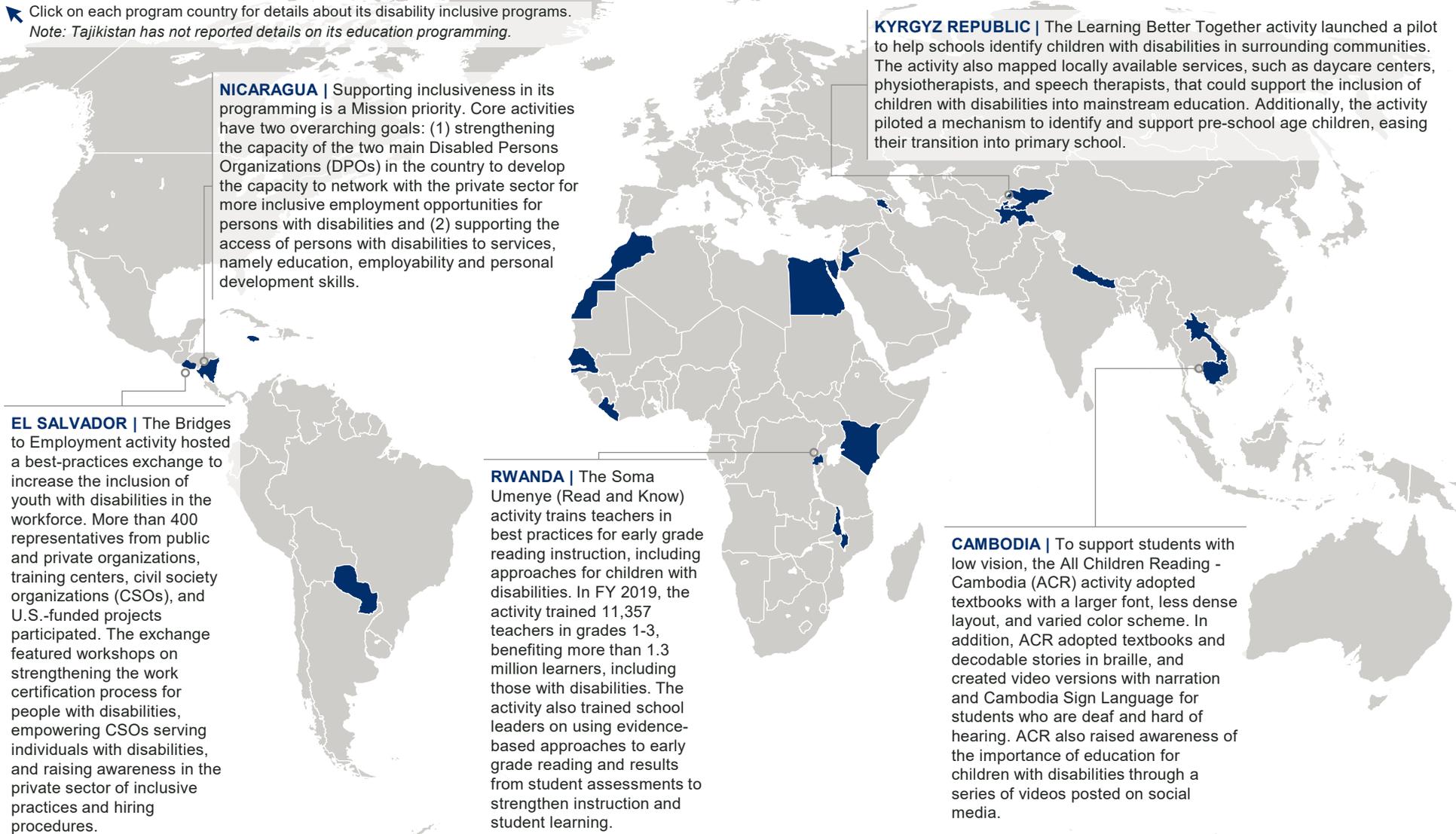


# DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

## 2019 Snapshot of USAID Activities in Education

The purpose of this brief is to summarize USAID education activities around the world that advance the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities. Education activities include those that support disability-inclusive education (including in crisis- and conflict-affected areas), disability-inclusive workforce development programming, and disability-inclusive higher education efforts. Content for this brief is pulled from Fiscal Year 2019 USAID mission reporting of Performance Plan and Report (PPR) indicators and narratives. For more information about USAID education sector reporting, including new supplemental indicators that complete the picture of reporting, please visit the Education Reporting Toolkit at [edu-links.org/indicators](https://edu-links.org/indicators). For more information about USAID's disability inclusive education programming, please visit [edu-links.org/topics/disability-inclusive-education](https://edu-links.org/topics/disability-inclusive-education).

Click on each program country for details about its disability inclusive programs.  
*Note: Tajikistan has not reported details on its education programming.*



## ARMENIA



USAID supported efforts of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport (MOESCS) to ensure equity and inclusion for all children under the Government of Armenia's Child Welfare Reform. The reform seeks to close targeted special educational institutions, reintegrate de-institutionalized children into family environments, and mainstream children with disabilities into inclusive education settings. USAID assisted the MOESCS's efforts to improve the quality of inclusive education through policy and programming guidance focused on ensuring children with disabilities in Armenia thrive and learn in inclusive educational settings. This assistance resulted in the development of a *Strategic Vision for Inclusive Education in Armenia* jointly with the MOESCS and a *Roadmap to Inclusive Education in Armenia* that details the necessary steps and timeline to accomplish the policy recommendations by 2025.

## CAMBODIA



All Children Reading–Cambodia (ACR) piloted a screening tool to help schools identify children with disabilities. A total of 199 teachers, 90 school directors, and 19 Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) members were trained on how to use the hearing and vision screening tools to screen 5,594 grade-one students. Of this group, 19 children were referred for additional evaluation by health practitioners and received assistive devices (i.e., glasses or hearing aids) as a result. ACR also partnered with the CCWC to identify 12 out-of-school children with hearing disabilities. These children received hearing aids and have participated in a 1-year bridge program at primary schools, where they learned Cambodian Sign Language in preparation to join grade-one classrooms.

All Children Reading–Cambodia also adapted the teaching and learning material for Cambodia's new early grade reading program so it can be used with students with disabilities.. ACR has integrated techniques and tools to help teachers better meet the instructional needs of children with disabilities. To increase readability and support students with low vision, textbooks were adapted to contain a larger font, less dense layout, and a varied color scheme. ACR also adapted the students' textbooks and decodable stories into braille for students who are blind or have low vision. In addition, ACR created video versions of the decodable stories that include voice narration and Cambodian Sign Language to increase overall accessibility for children. These materials, which were originally designed to support the bridge program, have been posted online and provided to select schools for use during the school year. Finally, ACR also developed awareness-raising videos that highlight the benefits of education for children with disabilities, which were distributed via social media.

## EGYPT



Through the U.S.–Egypt Higher Education Initiative Public Scholarship Program, steps were taken to pave the way for the establishment of Disability Service Centers in five Egyptian public universities (Ain Shams, Alexandria, Assiut, Cairo, and Mansoura). Representatives from public universities and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research traveled to the United States for a study tour of disability centers at the Universities of Colorado and Montana. The study tour focused on developing competencies in disability services and improving accessibility for students with disabilities. An important takeaway for participants was a deeper understanding of the role of these centers within universities and the authority administrators have in making determinations regarding disability and accommodations. As a result of the study tour, university leadership now actively advocates for admission of students with disabilities into more faculties and majors.

## EL SALVADOR



The Bridges to Employment activity engaged with the private sector and public agencies to facilitate inclusive work environments for youth with disabilities and other minority groups. The activity supported the National Youth Institute (INJUVE) to develop a new policy promoting employment of youth with disabilities. In coordination with INJUVE and the Secretariat of Social Inclusion, USAID helped collect feedback on the policy, which included suggestions to promote effective participation of youth with disabilities, renovate INJUVE's existing facilities to be accessible, facilitate equal access to information, provide inclusive training programs and increase stakeholders' engagement.

The Bridges to Employment activity also developed recommendations to improve the accreditation and job certification process for youth with disabilities, which is a prerequisite for large companies to be able to comply with government-mandated hiring quotas. Finally, five videos improved accessibility of guidance to help students and employers bridge the transition into employment by featuring sign language presentations.

## JAMAICA



The Jamaica Association for the Deaf's (JAD) Partnership for Literacy Enhancement for the Deaf (PLED) activity supported parents, teachers, school administrators, and other education stakeholders to address critical gaps in the literacy development of deaf and hard of hearing students. More than 20 school administrators, 80 teachers and deaf culture facilitators, 100 families, and 100 students have participated in various capacity-building workshops and activities focused on Jamaican Sign Language, bilingual teaching strategies, supporting deaf/hard of hearing students with multiple disabilities, and techniques for shared reading and other reading strategies aimed at improving literacy development in deaf and hard of hearing students.

Student-specific activities ranged from psycho-educational screening to field trips and reading workshops. Over 25 percent of students supported by the PLED activity progressed at least one grade level, with the maximum of grades progressed being six levels.

## JORDAN



USAID supported the Ministry of Education (MOE's) Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Initiative to incorporate inclusive education practices and establish inclusive learning environments. Teachers were provided with instructional manuals for inclusive education and community reading libraries were equipped with new children's storybooks featuring characters with disabilities.

In addition, USAID supported the MOE and Ministry of Public Works and Housing to construct new schools throughout Jordan equipped with accessible infrastructure, furniture and learning equipment to promote inclusive, environmentally-friendly and student-centered learning for all learners, including students with disabilities.

## KENYA



USAID and the Ministry of Education (MOE) jointly provided more than 5.5 million teaching and learning materials to all grade one and two learners throughout Kenya through the Tusome ("Let's Read" in Kiswahili) early grade reading activity. Nearly 70,000 teachers nationwide, including teachers who support learners who are blind/low vision and deaf/hard of hearing, were trained to implement Tusome's evidence-based instructional approach. Tusome demonstrated significant learning gains by providing textbooks to students at a ratio of one-to-one.

## KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



The Learning Better Together activity is an inclusive education element in the Kyrgyz Republic focused on improving early grade literacy rates and supporting the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) in the areas of inclusive education, multilingual education, and assessment. It aims to ensure a more equitable and inclusive primary education system in the Kyrgyz Republic. The activity's goal is to strengthen the education system through improved assessment and inclusive education for students with disabilities and those whose languages are minority languages.

The Learning Better Together activity supported the development of a conceptual framework and action plan for inclusive education throughout the country in collaboration with the MOES. The plan includes details about piloting and further expanding inclusive education nationwide. The Learning Better Together activity also developed and delivered two packages of training materials for pilot school staff. The first course covers an introduction to inclusive education, and the second is on the use of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health in education. Further training on inclusive education components in the national Education Management Information System (EMIS) was also delivered to the schools' administrative staff and officially appointed EMIS focal points. The project assisted pilot schools in identifying children with disabilities in surrounding communities.

USAID also supported the development of a tool to map locally available services that could assist in supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities into inclusive education; including rehabilitation centers, daycare facilities, psychologists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, and others. The activity piloted a referral mechanism on early identification and intervention for pre-school age children with disabilities and developmental delays in the new Muras Ordo settlement of Bishkek. Early identification and intervention for preschool-aged children with disabilities will contribute to their smoother transition to primary school, thus improving learning outcomes.

The activity also designed a tool for assessing learning outcomes in multilingual environments. The tool will be applied in targeted schools and the resulting data on reading and comprehension skills will inform the design of new methodologies for educators who work with children with disabilities and in multilingual education environments.

## LAOS



USAID's new Learn to Read activity began implementation at the end of August 2019. The goal of the USAID Learn to Read activity is to improve reading skills for all children in pre-primary and grades one and two with a particular focus on non-Lao-speaking children and children with disabilities. The activity will work toward this goal by developing high-quality early reading materials and guidance, training teachers to effectively use the materials, and engaging communities to support reading outside of the classroom.

## LIBERIA



The Accelerated Quality Education for Liberian Children (AQE) activity provides access to education for out-of-school children and youth, including children and youth with disabilities, ages 8 to 15 years old in six counties in Liberia. Priority interventions include assisting the Ministry of Education (MOE) to adopt national accelerated learning program (ALP) policies; providing training on the ALP curriculum and assessment tools; producing and distributing curriculum materials to schools; strengthening community awareness of ALP policies and opportunities; and improving the safety and accessibility of ALPs for all children, including children with disabilities.

AQE made significant progress across areas of policy, enrollment, teaching and learning materials development, teacher training, and community engagement and also expanded its community mobilization activities by engaging parent-teacher associations. Furthermore, AQE targeted key policies, processes, and frameworks to condition an enabling environment for accelerated quality education. The activity developed the *Learner Eligibility, Assessment and Certification Policy Guidelines*, which were officially launched. The guidelines intentionally cover the entire progression of learners, from enrollment through the certification that would verify eligibility and provide access to the next level of ALP, transition to conventional school, or transition to other alternative programs.

## MALAWI



The Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (MERIT), in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST), hosted the annual Braille Cup reading competition for students who are blind in Malawi. Students from 16 schools participated. In addition, MERIT and MOEST held a pilot reading competition for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The competition involved 18 learners drawn from three schools for the deaf. The findings of the pilot were used to refine a draft handbook on reading competitions for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

MERIT also held a series of workshops with the MOEST, teacher training colleges and disabled persons organizations to discuss how to support families who have children with disabilities in learning to read and write. The workshops prepared participants to train parent support groups on the following: (1) identifying services for supporting children's ability to read and write, (2) understanding what family support groups can do to promote children's ability to read and write, (3) strengthening the relationship between families and schools, and (4) promoting the role of parents as advocates.

The Reading for All Malawi (REFAM) activity, which is focused on increasing the accessibility and quality of English and Chichewa instruction for children with disabilities in Standards 1-4 under the MOEST's National Reading Program, developed and adapted early grade reading assessments (EGRAs) to gauge the reading ability of students with visual and learning disabilities. REFAM also mapped resource networks to identify services available for children with disabilities, engaged disabled peoples' organizations as key contributors to REFAM, and began developing a literacy toolkit for teachers on using Universal Design for Learning principles.

## MOROCCO



USAID supported the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOE) to provide inclusive quality education for all. One of the populations that remains underserved is the school-aged children who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH). In most schools that serve DHH students, education terminates in the sixth grade. Furthermore, teachers generally receive only a few days of training and are not specialized in this area. USAID signed a Memorandum of Intent (MOI) with the MOE, Lalla Asmaa Foundation, and Mohamed V University to develop and implement a teacher training program for deaf education. This activity's purpose is to establish a national deaf education teacher preparation and professional development program that is embedded in a Moroccan higher education institution and the teacher training institutes.

USAID also supported efforts to ensure youth with disabilities could access youth employability services through its Career Center activity. The activity produced e-learning modules on work readiness in accessible formats so that youth with visual disabilities could readily access the coursework on the Virtual Career Center e-learning platform. All career centers were equipped with at least one computer with screen reading technology and other software to enable access for users who are blind/low vision, and adapted signage was posted throughout the centers to advertise the availability of the software and other accessible resources.

The Career Center activity also focused especially on building capacity of career center staff and partners to implement inclusive activities. The activity produced a guidebook and interactive e-learning course for staff on best practices for disability inclusion in work readiness programs. In addition to the development of these tools, all career center staff and central management committees received training on planning for inclusive career center activities.

## NEPAL



The Reading For All (R4A) activity pre-tested educational tools, such as an adapted early grade reading assessment for children with disabilities and the Washington Group Child Functioning Module for screening of functional limitations. R4A continued to improve reading outcomes for children with disabilities in grades 1-3 in 16 USAID-supported Early Grade Reading Program districts. Additionally, R4A conducted a study to understand the knowledge, attitudes, and practices around children with disabilities to inform the level of training needed for various stakeholders. The Government of Nepal formed a steering committee and project technical committee for R4A, and approved the framework and session plan for the training manual on inclusive education, which is a critical first step toward improving learning outcomes for children with disabilities.

In the infrastructure sector, USAID supported the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to complete disability-accessible reconstruction of 15 schools in three earthquake-affected districts. As a result of this collaboration, an additional 137 schools financed by the ADB will also undergo accessible reconstruction for people with disabilities. Under the *Nepal Community Reconstruction Program*, USAID designed access ramps and tactiles for people with vision disabilities for 15 health and school facilities in two earthquake-affected districts. Also in earthquake-affected districts, USAID supplied high-quality reconstruction of 29 schools designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. Furthermore, USAID worked closely with the School Management Committee and Health Facility Management Committees on meeting compliance standards and providing access for persons with disabilities.

## NICARAGUA



Supporting inclusiveness in its programming is a Mission priority. Core activities have two overarching goals: (1) strengthening the capacity of the two main Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) in the country to develop the capacity to network with the private sector for more inclusive employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and (2) supporting the access of persons with disabilities to services, namely education, employability and personal development skills.

The Technical Vocational Education and Training Strengthening for At-Risk Youth (TVET-SAY) activity supported female students from the Southern Caribbean Coast who are deaf to obtain a certificate of completion in Administrative Computer Sciences after three years of technical studies. These young women were key in raising awareness of the needs of students who are deaf, and the limitations of education centers in meeting these needs. The TVET-SAY activity also worked with the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN) to develop a sign language interpreter training program that was led by deaf members of the TVET-SAY Youth Advisory Council.

In addition, the Education for Success (EFS) activity provided targeted support to learners with disabilities, including learners with intellectual disabilities from primary, secondary and vocational training programs through regular home and school visits. EFS worked directly with parents and caretakers to support their children's education, improve their school attendance and build their self-esteem. EFS also held focused work sessions to promote the use of motivational games among parents and children and youth with disabilities.

## PARAGUAY



USAID/Paraguay has supported the inclusion of people with disabilities for more than 10 years in areas such as labor, elections, and education. The Inclusive Education and Sports project, which ended in early 2019, promoted the social, educational, and recreational inclusion of people with disabilities. The project, implemented by Fundación SARAKI, a local nongovernmental organization, worked closely with the Ministry of Education (MOE), the National Sports Secretariat, private and public schools, civil society organizations and parent-teacher associations, among others, to promote inclusive education and sports for people with disabilities.

One of the most relevant achievements of the project was the MOE's approval of the *Inclusive Education Guide*, which establishes the policies, principles, and practices for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the public school system. The project provided technical assistance for developing the guide with the active participation of more than 500 teachers, parents, students, and representatives of disabled persons' organizations. This guide sets a framework of principles, guidelines, and best practices for the implementation of inclusive curricula for public and private schools nationwide. In addition, with the project's support, the MOE developed user-friendly, practical handbooks for teachers based on the guide and distributed more than 20,000 copies of them nationwide. USAID piloted the implementation of this new guide in eight public and private schools and four support centers. The project trained more than 1,700 teachers, parents, and service providers and supported the implementation of work plans for each targeted school based on the guide. The level of implementation of the work plans surpassed the 50-percent target in each school (average of 79.63 percent). The project not only benefited 151 children who studied in inclusive schools, but managed to reach other children and athletes with disabilities through outreach activities and the organization of inclusive and adapted sports tournaments for 465 beneficiaries; this number includes 45 caregivers of children with disabilities. The project provided training to approximately 160 teachers from the piloted schools on developing educational materials, universal learning, reasonable accommodations, and learning techniques, among others. In addition, the program provided support at the classroom level based on specific needs.

The project also engaged civil society organizations to advocate for a change in the MOE's segregated approach (which established "Special Centers" for the education of people with disabilities) to a more inclusive "Support Centers" approach. Thanks to USAID's assistance, the MOE decided to transform these "Special Centers" into "Support Centers" for inclusive schools. In addition, the project finalized the establishment of a civil society observatory to monitor the implementation of the *Inclusive Education Law*. The observatory conducted five research projects on subjects related to inclusive education (e.g., enrollment of

## PARAGUAY

people with disabilities, investment on infrastructure and accessibility, and education for people with hearing disabilities). These have resulted in presenting to the MOE three specific public policy, inclusive education-related proposals coming directly from the civil society.

USAID also focused on raising awareness on the importance and benefits of an inclusive education system. The project continued its innovative communication campaign under the slogan “Who Is Training Whom?,” which portrayed students with and without disabilities interacting with and learning from each other. In addition, USAID trained more than 40 teachers in communications strategies and launched an awareness-raising campaign in all piloted schools. Using an innovative approach, high school students made their own puppets and wrote inclusion-friendly plots for a puppet show, which were then presented to elementary students and their teachers. This gave the entire school community an opportunity to learn about different types of disabilities and engage in constructive discussion on the challenges and opportunities inclusion entails. Additionally, the project continued strengthening 22 organizations to improve their capacity to provide services with an inclusive approach. At the beginning of the project, the implementing partner and these organizations co-created tailor-made strengthening plans. Thanks to USAID’s assistance, by the end of the project, these organizations were successful in achieving an average implementation of 78 percent of these plans.

Another important aspect of this project was the development of inclusive sports. Working with the National Sports Secretariat and as a result of USAID’s technical assistance, 249 students and athletes with disabilities participated in inclusive and adapted sports in their schools or special tournaments. Furthermore, as a result of the direct support the project provided, the National Sports Secretariat approved security and health protocols for inclusive sports and a 2-year plan to promote them nationwide. The project also supported the National Sports Secretariat’s first Inclusive Summer Camp, which sought to raise awareness on the benefits of inclusion among children. Also with USAID’s assistance, the Paraguayan National Sports Secretariat and the Civil Service Secretariat organized the first ever inclusive soccer tournament for public officials. Various ministries participated in the event, with teams of players with and without disabilities. The successful experience has encouraged the addition of an Inclusive Sports category in next year’s Public Civil Service Annual Tournament. Finally, the project also worked with the National Physical Education School and helped review its program of studies to cover inclusive sports. As a result of this assistance, physical education teachers are already trained with an inclusive focus.

## RWANDA



The Soma Umenye (Kinyarwanda for “Read and Know”) activity trained teachers in best practices for early grade reading instruction, including approaches for children with disabilities in grades 1-3. The activity benefitted more than 1.3 million learners, including those with disabilities. The activity also trained school leaders on using evidence-based approaches to early grade reading and results from student assessments to strengthen instruction and student learning.

Looking ahead, Soma Umenye plans to digitize reading material to make it accessible to children with disabilities in support of Rwanda’s *Education Sector Strategic Plan*, the *Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy* (2019), and the *Information and Communication Technology in Education Policy* (2016).

## SENEGAL



The Lecture Pour Tous (Reading for All) activity collaborated with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to ensure that children with disabilities were included in scholastic planning. Activities included producing textbooks in braille for children who are blind and developing a module on inclusive education to help teachers tailor lessons as needed for children with disabilities. The activity also helped produce other technical tools, such as student tracking data sheets, to help teachers easily identify certain types of learning disabilities among students. As a result, teachers are now better equipped to create a conducive learning environment for all students during reading lessons.

The activity also worked with the Association for the Social Progress of the Blind in Senegal to transcribe braille characters and assessment tools, and ensure that training was properly conducted. Finally, through regional social and behavior change campaigns, Lecture Pour Tous worked with local artists to produce inclusive posters demonstrating positive parenting behaviors and encouraging families to fully engage their children in learning, including their children with disabilities.

Subsequently, early grade reading assessment (EGRA) trainers received training on methodologies and procedures for how to work with children with disabilities when administering EGRA. For in-service teacher training, the Gender and Inclusive Education module was revised, and social inclusion aspects were reinforced with fact sheets to help teachers identify certain types of visual, hearing, and learning disabilities, such as dyslexia.

To better identify practices that may help or hinder the development of strong reading skills among students with disabilities, the activity conducted a study using existing data on disability incidence rates in Senegal, as well as collecting new quantitative and qualitative data on how disability identification is or is not conducted. Lecture Pour Tous distributed a total of 10 braille books at one elementary school, and 90 percent of the storybooks have been translated into braille. Additionally, a small number of students with vision disabilities were assessed with a braille version of EGRA in two schools.