



INCLUSIVE
DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERS

Universal Design for Learning in Ghana

From 2019-2020, IDP led a series of activities to support the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) teaching strategies in Ghanaian schools, as part of a formative research project on identifying and supporting struggling learners. Beginning with a pilot project in West Gonja and Ada West Districts, IDP collaborated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Ghana, the Ghana Education Service (GES), University of Education-Winneba, and many others to:

- Develop a UDL teachers' toolkit supporting participants to implement inclusive education methods in their professional practice
- Deliver training workshops linking UDL principles to early grade literacy and numeracy instruction content
- Conduct termly school monitoring visits in collaboration with government-employed school improvement and support officers
- Pilot a Response to Intervention (RtI) model grounded on hearing and vision screenings, learner assessment, and small group instruction



Small group numeracy instruction using local materials in Ada West District

Some core findings and lessons learned from this pilot are:¹

- ✓ **Participation in a comprehensive program focused on UDL can help facilitate a major transformation in educators' preparedness to implement inclusive education in their schools.** For example, participating teachers demonstrated increased confidence in implementing UDL principles in their work, implementing small-group instruction, and preparedness to teach struggling learners.
- ✓ **UDL does not require high-cost material resources in order to be effectively implemented.** Teachers used a variety of low- and no-cost teaching strategies to support their learners with diverse needs, including small group activities, games and songs, use of concrete objects, and providing student choice in response.
- ✓ **Inclusive education is most successful when education and community stakeholders are closely involved.** The more supportive classroom teachers perceived headteachers and district-level officials to be throughout the project, the more comfortable the teachers felt teaching a child with a disability. Also 100% of teachers noted improved community attitudes toward disability, thanks to the involvement of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), religious groups and chief councils, and direct outreach to parents.

¹ The implementation of some pilot activities was cut short due to the global pandemic. However, IDP was able to conduct remote interviews with teachers, headteachers, and school improvement and support officers who reflected on their practices and professional development over the course of the school year

National Expansion of UDL in Ghana

Thanks to the success of the initial pilot, and the strong collaboration from national education stakeholders, IDP supported the following scale-up activities in Ghana. These initiatives included:

- Producing guidance documents on supporting learners with and without disabilities through remote learning during COVID-19. This included the use of UDL strategies in radio and television programming.
- Providing feedback and guidance on embedding UDL into national education frameworks and guidelines in collaboration with the National Teaching Council (NTC). This included the In-Service Education and Training (INSET) Framework for Ghana, the Framework for Continuous Professional Development of Teachers, and the Mentoring and Coaching Framework for Pre-Tertiary Teachers in Ghana.
- Developing curriculum for national train-the-trainer activities on UDL in Ghanaian schools. This included the application of UDL in teaching practice, and also the use of inclusive principles in the facilitation of teacher training workshops.
- Delivering national master trainer workshop on UDL in Ghanaian schools. This included training for 22 national trainers across Ghanaian educational institutions, who in turn trained approximately 200 teacher trainers across Ghana.



Teachers, headteachers, circuit supervisors, and school improvement support officers in West Gonja.

As countries around the world aim to promote the scalability of inclusive education initiatives, IDP recommends the following considerations:

1. **Ensure national education actors have clear accountability mechanisms for monitoring UDL implementation.** Many pilot activities come and go, but those that sustain are grounded in accountable local leadership.
2. **Seek opportunities to expand UDL training to pre-service education institutions.** In-service programs help to support the existing teacher workforce, but pre-service training offers the best opportunity to develop new cohorts of inclusive educators.
3. **Ensure that UDL concepts are embedded into all teacher training initiatives to limit treatment as a standalone subject.** UDL can be applied in the teaching of any subject, and as such, should be embedded across thematic areas to avoid siloing inclusive principles.
4. **Collect and report on teacher and student-level data to contribute to growing evidence base and justify expansion.** Documenting and sharing effective inclusion practices is essential in filling a significant gap in evidence-based inclusion practices in environments with few resources.