



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*



## ***Inclusive Practice through Keyword Signing – Addressing barriers to accessible classrooms***

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The Open University

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# Inclusive Education

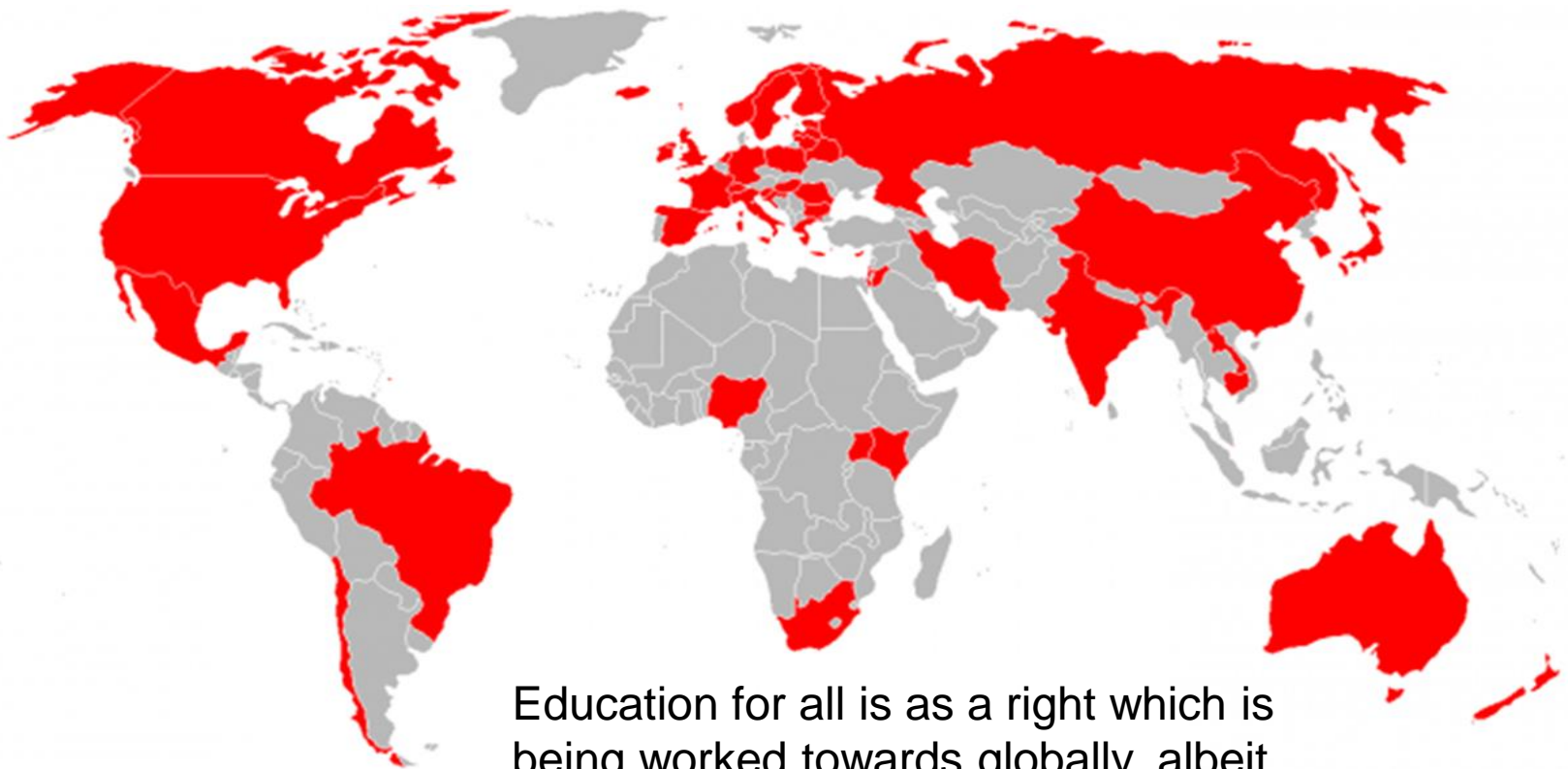
Part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Most European countries are signatories to the Convention on Rights of People is explicit that 'Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels ...' (Article 24).

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) position is that children with special educational needs have *a right to education that allows them to flourish alongside their peers in mainstream settings* (UNICEF, 2012).



# Review of International Policies and Practices



Education for all is as a right which is being worked towards globally, albeit *inconsistently*

# Inclusive Classroom Teaching?

Which pedagogical approaches can effectively include children with special educational needs, aged 7-14 years, in mainstream classrooms.

Whole class, subject- based pedagogies with reported outcomes for the academic and social inclusion of pupils with special educational needs.

Originated from classroom teachers concerns

Social engagement being intrinsic to the pedagogy

Communication must therefore be positioned at the heart of inclusive classroom practice



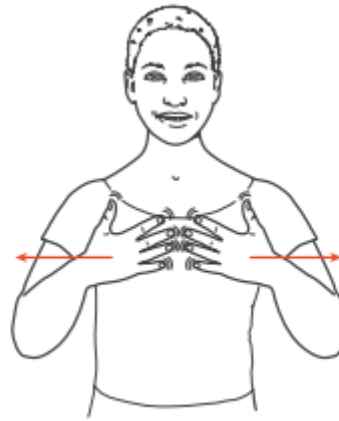
# The Inclusive Indonesian Classrooms Project



# Keyword Signing



Hello



Many



Help

# KWS Research

Taught, learned, and understood, relatively easily.

'Free', require no technologies, can be used within everyday interactions.

Children without SEND typically enjoy learning and using KWS

Improves the language and communication development including those with severe learning difficulties and those without spoken language.

Makes a child's communication easier for others to understand.

The positive effects are greater than using either a 'signs only' or a purely oral approach.



# Signalong Indonesia





# If it so good then why isn't everyone doing it ?

T1 T2 T3 T4

All children

Non Speakers

Speakers only

Min. Comprehension

Detrimental to speech

Encourages speech

Non speakers will not gain speech

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# Epistemological Beliefs and Stigmatisation

Beliefs about how knowledge is created and the relationship between language and development.

It is these often unvoiced beliefs that shape and can *predict* what goes on in classrooms, rather than of knowledge of inclusion and KWS alone.

Teachers with a perspective that sees knowledge as created, primarily, through social and collaborative activities.

Stigmatisation- yes, but not here.



# Challenges and opportunities for policy makers with an inclusive agenda

- Supporting particular *types* of training (e.g. within initial teacher training).
- Post qualification training for a range of professionals.
- Authorities' own materials should include KWS

If an educational system seeks to be inclusive then the visibility of KWS in the everyday life of schools can act as a robust, simple, indicator of the success of this endeavour.



Northern Ireland  
Assembly



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