



Nodira, Age: 18, Country: Uzbekistan

Nodira's Story

Disability Awareness

A MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIT (GRADES 6-8)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Unit Overview	1
National Standards	5
Lesson 1	7
Handout 1: Children Talking About Disability	11
Handout 2: Viewing Guide—Nodira’s Video	12
Handout 3: Nodira’s Story	13
Handout 4: UNICEF and Disability	14
Handout 5: Preventing Disabilities in Children	15
Lesson 2	17
Handout 6a–d: Case Studies: UNICEF and Children with Disabilities	20
Handout 7: Excerpt from Interview with Alexandra Yuster	24

TeachUNICEF was created by the U.S. Fund for UNICEF’s Education Department. © 2008

Unless stated otherwise, the source for all charts, figures, maps, and statistics used in this unit is: United Nations Children’s Fund, (UNICEF), New York. Additional sources are noted when they are required. Website addresses (URLs) are provided throughout this unit for reference and additional research. The authors have made every effort to ensure these sites and information are up-to-date at the time of publication, but availability in the future cannot be guaranteed.

UNIT OVERVIEW

Nodira's Story

Disability Awareness

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

Rationale for Teaching This Unit on Nodira's Story

Nodira's Story engages students by:

- Promoting student reflection about being global citizens.
- Encouraging understanding about the ways in which children, specifically children with disabilities, are excluded from education and essential services around the world.
- Introducing UNICEF programs that address the root causes of exclusion of children.

Unit Overview

Nodira's Story is a unit of two lessons designed to:

1. Raise awareness of the challenges facing children with disabilities worldwide.
2. Increase students' understanding of the challenges children with disabilities face.
3. Explore how various organizations, agencies, and individuals are working to support children with disabilities.
4. Show students how they can support people with disabilities.

Lesson 1: Students will reflect on the meaning of the term "disability." By reading print stories and watching videos, students will learn about the daily life of Nodira, an 18-year-old living with spina bifida in Uzbekistan. Students will brainstorm and discuss strategies which could support children living with disabilities. Students will then compare their strategies with a list of UNICEF activities about working with children with disabilities.

Lesson 2: Students will learn about specific UNICEF country programs supporting individuals with disabilities and will consider the links between poverty and disability. Through reflection on an interview with a UNICEF staff member about inclusive education, they will consider how greater acceptance of different abilities can benefit all children.

Background Information

Children who live with disabilities are among the most excluded of the world's children. While there is no reliable data on the number of children living with disabilities globally, some estimates put the number at 150 million, which is likely to be an underestimate due to widespread under recognition and underreporting of disabilities.

The kinds of disabilities that children face include:

- Physical disabilities—which may affect mobility and motor skills.
- Sensory disabilities—such as blindness or deafness.
- Intellectual disabilities—such as learning disabilities and developmental delays.
- Mental health disabilities—which affect children’s psychological and social functioning.

Disabilities may be caused by birth defects (e.g. congenital) or may be acquired. Poor medical care and malnutrition often contribute to congenital disabilities. Inadequate sanitation can result in diseases such as polio, which causes disabilities. Children who live in situations of armed conflict may acquire disabilities from injuries, such as those inflicted by land mines. Children involved in hazardous forms of child labor may become disabled by accidents, carrying heavy loads over long periods of time, chemical exposure, or other unsafe working conditions.

Most children living with disabilities in developing countries have no access to rehabilitative health care or education. They are often separated from their families and communities and placed in institutions. Unfortunately, many institutions have low standards of safety, hygiene, nutrition, health care, and education. Institutionalized children may suffer from a lack of adult attention and affection. These children grow up without knowing what family life is like. They are often at higher risk for abuse and violence from caretakers and other children. Children who have spent long periods of time in institutional or residential care may have difficulty adjusting to life outside of the institutions, and poor education and lack of physical and emotional care may negatively affect their social and economic opportunities later in life.

Whether in institutions or in their communities, children with disabilities often face discrimination and marginalization that affects their self-esteem, limits their chances to interact with others, and interferes with their educational opportunities. Negative attitudes toward children with disabilities increase their risk of being abused and exploited.

To read more about UNICEF and disabilities, visit <http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/disabilities.php> or http://www.unicef.org/media/media_28539.html.

Depending on your knowledge and comfort level related to the topic of Disability Awareness, you might want to consult a specialist.

About UNICEF

UNICEF works to meet the basic needs and rights of children with all kinds of disabilities. It encourages countries to adopt policies that keep children with disabilities in their families whenever possible, and seeks to support parents in meeting the needs of their children in the home. UNICEF promotes inclusive education that allows children with disabilities to attend school with the general population, which allows them greater opportunities to learn and fulfill their intellectual and social potential without being marginalized.

UNICEF supports early detection of disabilities and child-focused health services in local communities. It also works to counteract misinformation and stigma associated with disabilities, and to promote attitudes of acceptance and nondiscrimination. Young people’s own participation and leadership in fighting discrimination is an essential part of UNICEF’s approach.

UNICEF activities to prevent disabilities include:

- Health care and nutrition for pregnant women and young children
- Safe water and sanitation
- Landmine awareness education
- Prevention of hazardous child labor

What is spina bifida?

When a human embryo develops, a narrow sheath—called the neural tube—closes to form the brain and spinal cord. This process is usually complete by the 28th day of pregnancy. If problems occur during this process, the development of the neural tube may be incomplete.

The result can be spina bifida, which can cause partial or complete paralysis. While the exact cause is a mystery, genetic, nutritional, and environmental factors may be involved. If mothers get adequate folic acid (also called folate, a common B vitamin) during pregnancy, the chances of their children being born with spina bifida are decreased.

A Case Study

This lesson plan focuses on Nodira, an 18-year-old living with spina bifida in Uzbekistan. Formerly a part of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan became an independent country in 1991 and is still a country in transition. While it is currently experiencing economic growth, unemployment is common and about one-fifth of the population live on less than one dollar per day.

UNICEF faces a number of challenges in Uzbekistan. Infant mortality is high, and more than half of the women of childbearing age are anemic. Many children experience stunted growth due to poor nutrition. Vitamin A deficiency (which can lead to blindness) and iodine deficiency (which can impair cognitive development) are widespread. Government spending for public health is eight dollars per person per year.

While over 99 percent of the population is literate, most children with disabilities like Nodira are educated separately from the general population. This reflects the widespread practice under the communist government of the former Soviet Union, in which the state takes on the role of caretaker and the children with disabilities become dependents of the state, often spending their entire lives in residential schools, away from home. Separated from their families and growing up in institutions, these children receive an education of inferior quality and have few opportunities to interact with children from local schools. Currently, 18 percent of children with disabilities in Uzbekistan live in institutions and most of those that live at home do not attend school.

For more information on UNICEF's work in Uzbekistan, visit http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan_background.html or http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan_34444.html.

Find information on the drought in Uzbekistan, which has affected agriculture and health, at http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan_1297.html and http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uzbekistan_1296.html.

UNICEF is working actively with the government of Uzbekistan to improve the quality of elementary school education for all children. A Coordination Council on Child Protection has been established and is working to deinstitutionalize children with disabilities and to improve conditions for them. UNICEF is also working to improve prenatal health care and nutrition for women and children. Projects to supplement their diets with folic acid, iron, vitamin A, and iodine are under way.

Set the Tone

Throughout this lesson plan, the term “children with disabilities” is used, rather than “disabled children” or “handicapped children.” This is to convey the message that they are children first and that they should not be defined by their disability. Remember that students will have varying degrees of comfort with this issue. You may have someone with disabilities in your class or students may have someone with disabilities in their families. You may, however, have students who are unfamiliar and even uncomfortable with this topic area. Unfortunately, the use of derogatory terms for people with disabilities is common in many schools. Set a tone from the beginning of the lesson that discourages such terms and encourages students to use language such as: “person with a physical disability” or “person with a developmental disability.” People without disabilities can be referred to as “non-disabled” (rather than “normal,” “able-bodied,” or “healthy”). A useful guide to appropriate language can be found at The Lifespan Institute: www.lsi.ku.edu/~lsi/aboutus/guidelines.shtml.

Evaluation/Assessment

Evaluate students based on participation in class discussions and small group work, the ability to consider possible ways of supporting individuals with disabilities, the ability to identify key points when reading a text, and the ability to calculate and interpret statistics.

National Standards

The TeachUNICEF lesson plans are designed in line with National Content Standards. Using the National Content Standards as a guide, these lessons can be aligned with State Standards.

	Lesson	
	1	2
National Organization		
National Council for the Social Studies (K-12) Source: Expectations of Excellence — Curriculum Standards for Social Studies		
People, Places, and Environments Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.	✓	✓
Global Connections Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.	✓	✓
National Council of Teachers of English & International Reading Association (K-12) Source: Standards for the English Language Arts		
Standard 1: Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace.	✓	✓
Standard 7: Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.	✓	✓
Standard 9: Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions and social roles.	✓	✓
Standard 12: Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).	✓	✓
Principles and Standards for School Mathematics Source: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics		
Number and Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates. 	✓	✓

	Lesson	
	1	2
National Organization		
Data Analysis and Probability <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them.	✓	
Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize and apply mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics.	✓	✓

LESSON 1

Nodira's Story

Disability Awareness

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

Objectives

- To raise students' level of understanding and meaning of the term "disability."
- To understand the difference between the physical and social obstacles that children with disabilities face.
- To become familiar with how UNICEF approaches disability issues, particularly the difference between focusing on the needs and rights of children with disabilities and preventing the occurrence of disabilities.

Session Plan

- Opening Activity: 15 minutes
- Making Connections: View It: 20 Minutes
- Imagining the Future: Write About It: 20 Minutes
- Homework: Statistics In the Real World: 5 Minutes

Vocabulary

The following words may not be daily occurrences in a student's vocabulary. Feel free to use this list as a resource for students to expand their working vocabulary as they encounter these words in this unit.

- Discrimination
- Intellectual
- Rights
- Vaccination
- Hinder
- Landmines
- Sanitation
- Immunization
- Mobility
- Sensory
- Institution
- Paralyzed
- Spina bifida

Materials Needed

- Copies of Handout #1, "Children Talking About Disability," for each student
- World map

- Computer with Internet access, connected to video display if possible
- Copies of Handout #2, “Viewing Guide—Nodira’s Video,” for each student
- Copies of Handout #3, “Nodira’s Story,” for each student
- Copies of Handout #4, “UNICEF and Disability,” for each student
- For Homework: Copies of Handout #5, “Preventing Disabilities in Children,” for each student

Opening Activity

Directions

1. Ask the class what the word “disability” means to them, encouraging them to use language that is accurate and not derogatory, and bearing in mind that there may be children with disabilities in the group. Distribute copies of Handout #1, “Children Talking About Disability,” to the class, and discuss the definition at the top of the page. Explain any words that are unfamiliar, or have students look them up in a dictionary.
2. Ask students to look at the selection of quotes from children around the world who are living with disabilities. Discuss:
 - What are some of the concerns expressed by these children?
 - What kinds of emotions are reflected in the quotes?
 - What are “rights”?
 - What do you think the rights of children with disabilities might be?

Making Connections

View It

Directions

1. Explain to the class that they will be learning about the life of Nodira, a girl with spina bifida who lives in Uzbekistan. Explain what spina bifida is. Have students locate Uzbekistan on a map.
2. Distribute copies of Handout #2, “Viewing Guide—Nodira’s Video,” to the class. Show Nodira’s video, found at http://www.teachertube.com/members/viewVideo.php?video_id=171626&title=Nodira_s_Story_Children_and_Disability. Ask students to answer the questions on the viewing guide; discuss their responses with the whole class. Ask:
 - Does having a disability mean that a child cannot learn or have friends?
 - What are the physical obstacles to Nodira being able to learn or have friends?
 - What are the social obstacles to Nodira being able to learn or have friends?

Beliefs and attitudes about children with disabilities often limit their potential. Help students understand that a disability does not limit a child’s opportunities.

Imagining the Future

Write About It

Directions

1. Distribute copies of Handout #3, "Nodira's Story," to the class. Ask them to complete the three questions and then discuss:
 - Why does the story say that Nodira is fortunate compared with other children with disabilities in Uzbekistan?
2. Explain to the class that UNICEF is the UN agency that helps countries meet the basic needs and promote the rights of all their children. It has offices in most of the world's developing countries. UNICEF works with governments and local organizations to develop projects that improve children's health, nutrition, and education. Distribute copies of Handout #4, "UNICEF and Disability." After students read the handout, discuss:
 - What is the difference between the two types of activities described in the handout?
 - When you wrote about what Nodira's family, community, and country could do to improve her life, which kinds of activities did you think of?
 - In what ways were the ideas you came up with similar to what UNICEF does? In what ways were they different?

If students have difficulty understanding why Nodira is considered fortunate to be living with her family, explain that children with disabilities in Uzbekistan and other former Soviet Union countries are often placed in institutions if their families cannot care for them. Children in these institutions often receive less attention and affection than they would in a family environment. Health and safety conditions are often poor, and education is limited. Refer to the "Background Information" section for more information.

Homework

Statistics in the Real World

Distribute student copies of "Preventing Disabilities in Children" (Handout #5). Have students read the information on polio and disabilities. Using the statistics, they can calculate rates of change in immunization coverage and calculate how long it might take each country to reach all children with vaccinations at the current rate. Students can then answer the questions at the bottom of the handout. Students with Internet access can research statistics on polio in other countries using the online version of the UNICEF *State of the World's Children* report.

Further Questions for Discussion

- Why is access to education such an important right for children?
- Without education, what other rights might be denied to children?
- How does a lack of education affect children as they become adults?
- How does your school meet the needs and rights of children?
- Are there ways in which your school could do better to ensure the needs and rights of students are met?

Extension Activities

What Rights Do Children Have?

Research what the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) says about children with disabilities. The CRC is an international treaty for the rights of children. UNICEF bases its work with governments on the CRC, helping them create the laws and services that will help meet children's rights. Article 23 of the CRC refers specifically to children with disabilities. Look for other articles in the CRC that relate to the needs of children with disabilities. You can find the full text of the CRC at <http://www.unicef.org/crc> or a short version at

http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what_rights_flyer_english.pdf.

To learn more about how you can become involved in promoting the CRC, visit <http://childrightscampaign.org/crcindex.htm>.

Children Talking About Disability

What does *disability* mean? Here is one definition:

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Source: Draft International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahc8adart.htm#art2>.

Read what children from around the world who are living with disabilities have to say about their lives:

“I wish that they would look at a disabled child like at a healthy one. So that they [children with disabilities] would have the same rights as them; so that they would be cared for.”

14-year-old boy living in an institution

“Have you any idea why they [people with mobility disability] do not go out? Right, because there are no ramps and lowered curbs.”

17-year-old girl living in an institution

“For me, it is better to be in a family; because in this institution, everyone will leave, we will separate ... the family can support you and give you everything.”

13-year-old boy living in an institution

“I wish that I could take part in events, go somewhere where children who are not disabled can go.”

11-year-old girl, living at home

“I want to read and write, but I have no opportunity. I only chatted with another blind man.”

7-year-old boy who is blind

“You should not have to fight to prove that you are normal too.”

13-year-old boy living at home

“We don’t want pity. We are not different from other people. Maybe it is the people who look at us with pity or laugh at us, who are themselves disabled.”

16-year-old girl with cerebral palsy

Viewing Guide—Nodira’s Video

Nodira is an 18-year-old living in Uzbekistan. She was born with spina bifida. As you watch the video, make notes about what you see and hear. Then answer the questions below.

Nodira’s daily activities	Skills, strengths, or positive qualities you observed	What Nodira says she would like to have
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	
4.	4.	

1. Why does Nodira say that her friends look down on her?

2. Why do you think she tries to be nice to them anyway?

3. Nodira is 18 years old, but she is reading only sixth-grade material. Why?

Nodira's Story

Nodira lives in Uzbekistan. She was born with spina bifida—this means that her spinal column did not close completely before she was born. As a result, she is paralyzed from the waist down and uses a wheelchair. Nodira dreams of going to university, riding in her father's car, and being able to walk like other children. But, for now, she is limited to her house and the area immediately outside.

Nodira, which means “unique” in Uzbek, is one of five children in a poor family. Every morning, after saying her prayers, she feeds the hens and goats from her wheelchair. The rest of her day is spent knitting for other people and helping her mother with the household chores.

Nodira has never been to school because it is too far from her home and cannot be reached by wheelchair. A local teacher used to tutor her at home, and she was able to finish third grade. After that, her parents moved to another town, and the tutor came less often, then stopped coming all together.

Despite many difficulties and frustrations, Nodira is fortunate to be living with her family. Many Uzbek families place children with disabilities in institutions. There are many reasons for this, such as negative attitudes toward children with disabilities and lack of wheelchair access in schools. Many families face poverty and cannot care for children with disabilities at home. Children in institutions often receive less attention and affection than they would in a family. Many children in institutions do not receive the health care and education they need.

These days, Nodira does schoolwork exercises at home and reads as much as she can. Still, it is unlikely that she will be able to finish her elementary school education, much less attend university. While missing out on an education is a great disappointment to Nodira, her greatest wish—finding a true friend—can still come true.

“What I want more than anything is a friend who also has a disability,” she says. “Somebody to talk to that will not feel sorry for me or make fun of me, somebody who will understand what my life is like.”

1. What could people in Nodira's family do to make her life better?

2. What could people in the community do?

3. What could other people in her country, or in the government, do?

Source: 2006 *State of the World's Children* report, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/child7.php>.

UNICEF and Disability

A major focus of UNICEF in its work on behalf of children with disabilities is to address the discrimination that interferes with their development and inclusion in society. To address discrimination, UNICEF carries out activities such as:

- Working to keep children out of institutions, and with their families, wherever possible.
- Developing support systems for families to enable them to care for a child with disabilities in the home. This can include building ramps, providing wheel chairs and other supplies and teaching parents to provide for a child's special needs.
- Promoting inclusive education which enables children with disabilities to learn in schools with non-disabled children. This allows children with disabilities to get a better quality education, and to develop friendships.
- Encouraging governments to pass laws that eliminate discrimination against children with disabilities and allow their voices to be heard in creating policies.
- Promoting community-based health care and other services for children with disabilities and their families; when these services aren't available, children with disabilities are more likely to be sent away to an institution.
- Creating information and raising awareness of the rights of children with disabilities, particularly the right to non-discrimination.

UNICEF also carries out programs to prevent childhood disabilities. These include:

- Nutrition programs for pregnant women and children that prevent disabilities caused by malnutrition. For example, vitamin A supplements for children can help prevent blindness.
- Ensuring access to safe water and sanitation which can help prevent the spread of disease.
- Immunization campaigns against diseases such as polio, once a major cause of childhood disability in many countries.
- Landmine awareness education, which can help prevent disabling injuries from landmines in conflict zones.
- Combating hazardous child labor, which can cause injuries that result in lifelong disabilities.

Preventing Disabilities in Children

Some disabilities which affect children can be prevented. For example, polio is a disease that weakens the muscles and can cause paralysis. It is caused by a virus and can be prevented by giving a vaccine (either by injection or by mouth).

UNICEF is active in a global campaign with many organizations to wipe out polio. Rotary International's Polio Plus program has raised more than \$800 million since 1985.¹

In 1988, there were 350,000 cases of polio in 125 countries around the world. By the end of 2008, there were fewer than 2,000 cases of polio reported, with only 18 countries still affected by this disease.²

By continuing its work in providing children with polio vaccines, UNICEF and other organizations hope to wipe out polio completely.

You can use statistics to calculate how fast polio is being wiped out in different countries. Learn how to do this by using statistics from Rwanda, and following these directions:

- First, calculate the change in the percentage of immunized children in Rwanda from 1997 to 2007. You can do this by subtracting the percentage in Column A from the percentage in Column B. Write the result in Column C.
- Next, calculate the rate of change in immunization from 1997 to 2007 for Rwanda. You can do this by dividing the percentage in Column C by the percentage in Column A and then multiply this result by 100. Write this number in Column D.

$$\text{Rate of Change} = (\text{value at the end of the period} - \text{value at the beginning of period}) / \text{value at the beginning of period} \times 100$$

Here's an example:

Country	Column A: % of 1-year-olds immunized against polio in 1997	Column B: % of 1-year-olds immunized against polio in 2007	Column C: % change from 1997 to 2007	Column D: Rate of change from 1997 to 2007
Rwanda ³	77	98	21	27.27%

1 Source: <http://www.polioeradication.org/content/general/histcontributionweb.18.march.10.pdf>

2 Source: Global Polio Eradication Initiative, <http://www.polioeradication.org>

3 Source: 1999 *State of the World's Children* report (reflects 1997 data)—Table 3: Health, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc99/sowc99d.pdf>;
2009 *State of the World's Children* report (reflects 2007 data)—Table 3, Health, http://www.unicef.org/sowc09/docs/SOWC09_Table_3.pdf.

In Rwanda, 77 % of 1-year-olds were immunized against polio in 1997. By 2007, 98% of children of this age were immunized.

The change in the percentage of children immunized from 1997 to 2007 in Rwanda was 21% ($98\% - 77\% = 21\%$).

The rate of change during this 10 year period was 27.27% ($21/77 = .2727$. Multiplying this result by 100 gives a rate of change of 27.27% over 10 years.)

Now try calculating the rates of change in polio immunization in these countries:

Country	Column A: % of 1-year-olds immunized against polio in 1997	Column B: % of 1-year-olds immunized against polio in 2007	Column C: % change from 1997 to 2007	Column D: Rate of change from 1997 to 2007
Afghanistan	45	83		
Colombia	85	93		
Iraq	92	66		
Nigeria	25	61		
United States	84	92		
Uzbekistan	97	98		

Based on your calculations, answer these questions:

1. Was there anything that surprised you about these statistics?
2. Why do the countries with the highest immunization rates have the smallest rates of change? Why do the countries with the lowest immunization rates have the highest rates of change?
3. Which country's immunization rates went down instead of up between 1997 and 2007? Why do you think this happened?
4. In general, how would you describe the progress being made in wiping out polio?

Sources of statistics: 1999 *State of the World's Children* report (report reflects 1997 data):

Table 2: Nutrition, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc99/sowc99d.pdf>

Table 3: Health, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc99/sowc99d.pdf>

2009 *State of the World's Children* report (report reflects 2007 data):

Table 2, Nutrition: http://www.unicef.org/sowc09/docs/SOWC09_Table_2.pdf

Table 3, Health, http://www.unicef.org/sowc09/docs/SOWC09_Table_3.pdf

LESSON 2

Nodira's Story

Disability Awareness

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES

Objective

Students will:

- Familiarize students with UNICEF programs designed specifically to work with children with disabilities in different countries.
- Encourage reflection on how inclusive education benefits all children and what can be done to address the rights of children with disabilities in their own school.

Session Plan

- Review 10 minutes
- Case Studies from the Field: 20 minutes
- Time to Reflect: Hear It: 15 minutes

Vocabulary

The following words may not be daily occurrences in a student's vocabulary. Feel free to use this list as a resource for students to expand their working vocabulary as they encounter these words in this unit.

- Confined
- Discriminate
- Exclusion
- Foster family
- Inclusive
- Measles
- Mental retardation
- Mobility
- Segregated

Materials Needed

- Copies of Handouts #6a-6d, "Case Studies: UNICEF and Children with Disabilities," for each small group
- Copies of Handout #7, "Excerpt from Interview with Alexandra Yuster," for each student

Review

Review the homework on polio immunization and discuss.

Immunization Rates

Students may ask why immunization rates dropped in Iraq. Despite the best efforts of many organizations, progress in immunization can be reversed because of factors that cannot be controlled, such as lack of funding, rapid population growth, natural disasters that interrupt immunization campaigns, or armed conflict that makes getting vaccines to certain places difficult or impossible.

Students may also ask why immunization rates are not higher in the U.S. Again, there can be many possible explanations. For example, children in families who lack health insurance may not receive immunizations. Some parents believe that polio is no longer a problem in the U.S. and therefore do not have their children immunized.

Case Studies from the Field

Directions

1. Divide the class into four small groups. Give each group one of the country-based case studies Handouts #6a-6d, "Case Studies: UNICEF and Children with Disabilities." Have each group read their case study and note what UNICEF is doing in terms of promoting children's rights and preventing disabilities in that country. Each group can then give a short report to the rest of the class. Discuss:
 - Are there similarities between these four case studies? If so, what are they?
 - How do you account for the differences between the programs in the four countries?
 - Is there a connection between poverty and disability? If so, what is it? For example, children growing up in poverty may have a higher rate of disabilities because of poor health care and nutrition. Also, if educational opportunities are limited, children with disabilities can find it difficult to get jobs that would lift them out of poverty.
2. Distribute copies of Handout #7, "Excerpt from Interview with Alexandra Yuster." Discuss with the group:
 - What is meant by inclusive education?
 - Give an example of inclusive education in your school.
 - Can you think of any physical changes that could be made in your school to make it more inclusive?
 - Are there any changes that could be made that are not physical—for example, changes in attitudes, beliefs, or stereotypes—that would make your school more inclusive for students with disabilities?

Inclusive education can be defined as the process of including children with disabilities in classes in a way that addresses and responds to their individual learning needs.

Time to Reflect

Allow several minutes for each student to individually write a short reflection about what she or he has learned.

Alternatively, give each student an index card and ask them to write one sentence saying what they commit to do to make the school more inclusive for students with disabilities. These should be anonymous.

Further Questions for Discussion

- Do you think it is easier to make physical changes to accommodate people with disabilities or to change negative attitudes about people with disabilities (if present)?
- What can be done to change negative attitudes and stereotypes?

Extension Activities

What is Your School Doing?

Interview administrators and special education teachers in your school to find out more about the legal requirements for making U.S. schools accessible to students with disabilities. Find out what your school is doing to meet these requirements.

What are Disability Rights?

Invite a disability rights activist, or someone who works with people who have disabilities in the community, to talk about their work. What do they see as the important rights of people with disabilities, and how do they help to promote these rights?

Case Studies: UNICEF and Children with Disabilities

Case Study #1: Ethiopia

UNICEF estimates that 98% of children with disabilities in Ethiopia have no way to get to school or job training. UNICEF Ethiopia and the Mobility Without Barriers Foundation have set up a project to enable children and youth with disabilities that make movement difficult to have greater mobility.

Typical wheelchairs are difficult to use on the rough roads found throughout much of Ethiopia. A new type of mobility cycle has been developed that can handle these conditions. Young people with disabilities and their parents are involved in manufacturing and repairing the mobility cycles. This income is greatly needed by the families of children with disabilities, because poverty keeps many children from getting education and training. And as young people with disabilities show that they can do useful work, negative attitudes about disabilities will slowly begin to change.

UNICEF is also involved in activities to prevent disabilities. It vaccinates children against measles, which can cause brain damage and blindness, and polio, which can cause physical disabilities. Programs to provide vitamin A help to reduce the risk of blindness. Adding iodine to salt is helping to reduce preventable forms of mental retardation. Landmine risk education programs aim to teach children to avoid contact with land mines, which can kill and disable children.

What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help support the rights of children with disabilities in Ethiopia?	What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help prevent disabilities in Ethiopia?

Source: adapted from, and more information at http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/ET_Disability_fact_sheet_Nov_06.pdf and http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/ET_Feature_Joy_Nov_06.pdf

Case Studies: UNICEF and Children with Disabilities

Case Study #2: Georgia

In the former Soviet Republic of Georgia, most children with disabilities had no choice but to be sent to live in an institution. Children with disabilities were kept away from the rest of society, with few opportunities to develop their abilities and talents.

A UNICEF-supported project called “Inclusive Education” is changing this mindset. The project brings children with disabilities into preschools and elementary schools in Georgia, where they can learn alongside their peers without disabilities.

In the morning, children with disabilities meet in small groups with special education teachers. A special teachers’ manual shows teachers of first-to-third-grade children how to teach mathematics and language to children with disabilities. Speech therapists, physical therapists, and psychologists work with children on a one-to-one basis. Children are also helped to develop basic life skills such as dressing themselves.

In the afternoons, they join children without disabilities in classrooms where they are able to learn and make friends. Children without disabilities are helped to overcome their negative attitudes and stereotypes about children with disabilities by working and playing together.

The schools also provide training for parents of children with disabilities to help them understand and care for their children.

In a sign that attitudes toward children with disabilities are changing in Georgia, educational law in Georgia was changed in 2005 to state that children with disabilities must be provided with free education and that schools cannot discriminate on the basis of disability. UNICEF is helping the government of Georgia to find practical ways of respecting the rights of children with disabilities in education.

What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help support the rights of children with disabilities in Georgia?	What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help prevent disabilities in Georgia?

Source: adapted from, and more information at http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/reallives_3238.html and http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/georgia_1817.html

Case Studies: UNICEF and Children with Disabilities

Case Study #3: Sri Lanka

One afternoon, 14-year-old Thinesh was idly digging in the dirt with a bottle when his hand scraped the rubber corner of a landmine. Thinesh could have been killed or lost his arm. Instead, realizing that he had accidentally found a landmine, he stayed calm and called on adults to alert the police and have it safely removed.

Today, Thinesh is a child educator in a Mine Risk Education program funded by UNICEF. The program uses a range of imaginative methods to reach young people with messages about how to keep themselves safe from landmines.

For example, the program developed a board game to teach about the dangers of landmines. An animated game involves children playing the role of a landmine, and other children have to demonstrate how to avoid it. Children are taught songs that carry safety messages, and posters are placed in school hallways that illustrate the dangers of landmines. Billboards, lectures, and house-to-house visits help to educate parents about the risks as well.

The program is increasing awareness of mine risks, knowledge of warning signs for landmines, and understanding of how to avoid danger which is decreasing deaths and injuries. It is also making local communities more sympathetic and positive toward people who became disabled by landmines. This is in part because the program uses landmine survivors as teachers who can talk personally about their experiences.

What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help support the rights of children with disabilities in Sri Lanka?	What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help prevent disabilities in Sri Lanka?

Source: adapted from, and more information at http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/reallives_1712.htm, http://www.unicef.org/srilanka/media_1719.htm and http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_29565.html

Case Studies: UNICEF and Children with Disabilities

Case Study #4: Macedonia

Every child has the right to grow up in a nurturing family. Yet many children with disabilities in Macedonia are placed in institutions that are often understaffed and lacking in resources. Without adequate care that promotes their fullest possible development, many of these children live out their lives in diapers, bottle fed, and physically confined to their beds. They have no contact with their families and communities or opportunities to socialize with other children.

UNICEF Macedonia is supporting a project to eliminate the need for children's institutions by finding them alternative care options. Wherever possible, children are returned to their biological families, and given special assistance to help them cope with the child's special needs. Where no biological family members can care for the child, foster families are being found that can care for children in a home environment. The foster families receive special training and support to be able to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

One foster mother describes her child's progress: "When he first came to the family, he wasn't able to walk, he wasn't able to eat, and he wasn't able to go to the bathroom by himself. Little by little, I taught him how to eat. He can now go to the bathroom by himself at night and he's just greatly improved overall."

UNICEF is also identifying and renovating buildings that can be used as day care centers. It is training staff to make individual education plans for each child, and to locate resources—such as physical therapy and psychological services—that the children need. The centers provide both specialized education and support for foster families that take on the challenges of raising a child with disabilities.

What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help support the rights of children with disabilities in Macedonia?	What (if anything) is UNICEF doing to help prevent disabilities in Macedonia?

Source: adapted from, and more information at http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/TFYRMacedonia_28532.html, http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/reallives_3047.html and <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/TFYRMacedonia.html>

Excerpt from Interview with Alexandra Yuster

(Alexandra Yuster is UNICEF Senior Advisor on Child Protection.)

Children with disabilities face a whole range of obstacles that societies have set up for them. First of all most services don't take into account what their needs might be, so they're less likely to be able to access education or to have health care which meets their needs.

We know that children with disabilities are in fact at greater risk, we know that they are more likely to be institutionalized, to be separated from their families and they are more vulnerable to abuse. Even their parents or others who are caring for them may feel a certain sense of frustration that may lead to abuse.

One of the most important things that UNICEF is working on is trying to promote an inclusive approach to education—trying to make sure that children with disabilities are included in the school environment and that schools environments are adapted to make sure that they are included. Some children with disabilities will require some additional special education—like children who are blind will need to learn to read Braille, children who are deaf will need to learn sign language—but that's no reason why they need to be entirely segregated from other children.

It is important to note that this is important not only for the children with disabilities, it's important for all the children. Because if we're going to fight this kind of exclusion that exists in our society, whether against people with disabilities, or people of a different race or a different ethnic background, then children need to come into contact with and understand the abilities and the contributions of all children from whatever different situation they come from.

If we ensure that children are included in school and help other children to accept that kind of diversity, then we are doing ourselves a great favor of building more accepting and, in the end, more peaceful societies.

Source: adapted from www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/child7.php

