

# SALAMANCA STATEMENT

The Salamanca Statement of the UNESCO World Conference On Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (June 1994) states that:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain acceptable levels of learning;
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
- Education systems should be design and educational programs implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs;
- those with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs;
- Mainstream schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Moreover, they provide an effective education for the majority (without special needs) and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

The statement went on to urge Governments to:

1. Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve the education system to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties.
2. Adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in mainstream schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
3. Develop demonstration projects in conjunction with LEA's in every locality and introduce a teacher exchange programme with countries having more experience with inclusive schools.
4. Establish decentralised and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating educational provision for children and adults with special educational needs.
5. Encourage and facilitate the participation of parents, communities and organisations of disabled people in the planning decision making processes concerning the provision for special educational needs.
6. Invest greater effort in early identification and intervention strategies, as well as in vocational aspects of inclusive education.
7. Ensure that, in context of a systematic change, teacher education programmes, both pre-service and in-service, address the provision of special needs education in inclusive schools.

**The statement was adopted by 94 Governments and over 20 NGOs. In October 1997, the UK Government gave its support in the Green Paper Excellence for All. NUT adopted this as a policy in 1996.**