

# Moving towards more inclusive assessments for learners with disabilities

Lessons and perspectives from the inclusive PASEC project

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# Introduction

According to article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), children with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system (including assessments) on the basis of disability. It also stipulates that reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided. However, many tests and assessments remain inaccessible to learners with disabilities and do not make reasonable accommodations for them.

This document sets out the key learning points from a partnership between CONFEMEN and Sightsavers between 2023 and 2026 of which the main objective was to **strengthen the accessibility of the PASEC2024 assessment to learners with disabilities, particularly those with mild to moderate disabilities**. The project focused on the tests undertaken at primary level: one at the beginning of primary (2<sup>nd</sup> year) and the other at the end of primary (6<sup>th</sup> year).<sup>i</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all, and PASEC is one of the major tools used by education systems in Francophone Africa to measure learning outcomes. If learners with disabilities are excluded from the assessment, then countries cannot truly know whether they are achieving SDG 4 for *all* children.

PASEC stands for Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN<sup>ii</sup> (Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems of CONFEMEN) and is a regional large-scale assessment programme that evaluates the performance of education systems, especially in French-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It does this by measuring student learning through standardised assessments in reading (language) and mathematics and collects data on teachers, school environments, teaching practices, and home background. Data collection takes place every 4-5 years with ten countries taking part in 2014, 14 in 2019 and 16 in 2025.<sup>iii</sup> The next PASEC round is scheduled for 2028.

Sightsavers has contributed to **strengthening the inclusivity of several national and regional learning assessment programmes**, including EGRA<sup>iv</sup> and PASEC in Mali, and ASER<sup>v</sup> and ICAN<sup>vi</sup> in Pakistan.

This project built on **learning from a previous project in Mali** in 2022/23 in which CONFEMEN and Sightsavers worked together to pilot Braille and tactile versions of PASEC assessments to make them accessible to learners with visual impairments. At the end of that project, it was agreed between Sightsavers and CONFEMEN that any further work on making PASEC tools more inclusive should be at regional, rather than country, level so all countries administering the PASEC assessment can benefit from the revised tools.

Learners with disabilities<sup>vii</sup> being seen to be included in, and capable of taking, PASEC tests can help to reduce stigma and harmful stereotyping of children with disabilities in their local communities. This is an active and important demonstration of learners with disabilities being able to fully participate in the entire education system, including assessments.

Under the current project, the following activities have been carried out:

- Review and adaptation of PASEC tools to make them more inclusive of learners with disabilities;
- Training of the CONFEMEN Technical Advisers on inclusive education and the revised data collection tools;
- Piloting of the revised instruments in all 16 countries that participated in PASEC2024 – with additional training of assessors and country teams in Cameroon and Senegal;
- Observation sessions during the pilot data collection for PASEC2024 in three inclusive schools in Cameroon;
- Sharing of learning and recommendations from the observation of the pilot with CONFEMEN Technical Advisers;
- Analysis of the data collected in Cameroon; and
- Training for the national teams from the 16 countries that took part in PASEC2024 on inclusive education and how to include learners with disabilities in PASEC assessments at an all-country workshop.

## Adaptations to the PASEC2024 instruments

Sightsavers, in collaboration with experts from the University of Glasgow, made adjustments to the PASEC 2024 instruments (see box below) to make them more inclusive of learners with disabilities before they were used in the 16 countries participating in PASEC 2024. Training of assessors on inclusive education and the revised tools and processes was also delivered, and data collection processes improved.

### Questionnaires

Parent questionnaire (33 questions)  
Principal questionnaire (102 questions)  
Teacher questionnaire (60 questions)

### Assessor's tools

Assessor's booklet for Early Primary Education (2<sup>nd</sup> year)  
Assessor's booklet for End of Primary Education (6<sup>th</sup> year)  
Pupil monitoring sheet

### Pupil's tools

Booklet for Early Primary Education (Maths and Language)  
Booklet for End of Primary Education (Maths and Language)  
Student support booklet for the beginning of primary school

The following adjustments were made to PASEC2024:

- **Addition of an annex (to the Assessor's booklet) to provide assessors with more information about learning difficulties/ disabilities, including:**
  - A list of the most common disabilities/ learning difficulties, with definitions;

- Stereotypes and misunderstandings about the impairment or health condition that could lead to discrimination;
  - Tips on adapting the learning environment for learners with disabilities; and
  - Advice on useful equipment (e.g. assistive technology such as magnifiers) and changes to the testing environment.
- **Instructions (in the Assessor’s booklet) to give learners with disabilities additional time to complete the test:**
    - Start of primary school learners (2<sup>nd</sup> year) with a ‘reported’<sup>viii</sup> disability or learning difficulty receive **double the amount of time for each item of the test** e.g. where 1 minute is usually given for an exercise they can take 2 minutes;
    - End of primary school learners (6<sup>th</sup> year) with a reported disability or learning difficulty receive **30 minutes additional time for each test session**; and
    - A follow-up sheet should be completed, both for students at the beginning and those at the end of primary school. It should include a note of the type of disability or learning difficulty, using the list in the table contained in the Assessor’s booklet as a reference point if no school record is available, and should be followed by a discussion with the teacher in charge of the class before the test is started.
  - **Inclusion of questions about disability in the Teacher and Principal questionnaires:**
    - **Teacher questionnaire:** addition of specific questions about the number of learners with disabilities/ learning difficulties, impairment types, any special arrangements/ accommodations made in the classroom and for assessments, and challenges around delivering inclusive education; and
    - **Principal questionnaire:** addition of specific questions about the school’s inclusive education policy and estimates of the number of learners with disabilities/ learning difficulties, in the educational establishment.
  - **Drafting of an additional handbook<sup>ix</sup> for assessors on ways to accommodate the specific needs of learners with different disabilities:**
    - List of accommodations that can be made to help to address the specific needs of learners, by disability/ learning difficulty type and useful information for assessors on how to accommodate the needs of different learners.

## Key learning points

The observation of the pilot of the inclusive PASEC in Cameroon, supplemented by subsequent analysis of the data collected, have enabled the identification of a clear, practice-grounded set of learning points. These insights are especially valuable because they combine pilot evidence, training experience, and data analysis - so they go beyond theory into what does - and does not - actually work when making assessments more inclusive of learners with disabilities.

These learning points provide useful insights for reflection and the methodological choices related to the design of more inclusive learning assessments. They can be used to inform the development of PASEC2028, whilst also being of interest to other learning assessment mechanisms at national, regional and international levels.

Below is a synthesis of the key learning points identified:

## **1. Inclusion of learners with disabilities in PASEC tests is possible provided there is appropriate additional support**

Evidence from the observation of the Cameroon pilot and the subsequent data analysis shows that most learners with disabilities want to – and are able to - participate meaningfully in PASEC tests when appropriate adaptations are made.

During the observation of the pilot in Cameroon, we saw that learners with disabilities were keen to participate in the test: the assessors and observers saw this as an indication of engagement. For example, during the sampling process, the learners with disabilities who were selected showed enthusiasm, rather than reluctance, to participate in the test. One of the assessors commented:

*"in the field, what impressed me was the random sampling, it was fascinating to see how everyone wanted to participate."*

However, we observed some learners with disabilities, in particular those with learning difficulties, showing weariness and disinterest as the test progressed which led to reduced levels of concentration and in some cases reluctance to comply with the assessor's instructions.

Analysis of the data from the pilot in Cameroon revealed that, at beginning of primary school test, 96% of learners with disabilities who were sampled were able to complete some of the test, and 97% at the end of primary school test. This is compared to 90% of non-disabled participants at the beginning of primary school (but most of the attrition in this group was from non-completion of biographics, demographics and / or entirely missing mathematics data) and 99% at the end of primary school.

However, the data suggests that despite these high percentages, there is a greater likelihood of incomplete, invalid or withheld responses from learners with disabilities compared to non-disabled learners. At the beginning of primary school, proportionally, there is 3% more missing / invalid / withheld data in the learners with disabilities dataset compared to non-disabled learners. At the end of primary school, there is 2% more missing/invalid/hidden data among disabled learners compared to their non-disabled peers.

### **Key learning:**

Learners with disabilities are able to sit PASEC assessments and produce meaningful results.

## **2. The environment and context strongly shape the participation of learners with disabilities**

Different factors may have contributed to more effective participation of learners with disabilities in the PASEC assessment, including familiarity with the school/ classroom environment, the support of teachers who they know, and suitable adjustments being made to the assessment space. Small adaptations, e.g. to lighting and seating, also made a noticeable difference to participation levels.

Also, the fact that the assessment was being carried out in inclusive schools was likely to have been a contributing factor. Staff in these schools have already been trained and sensitised on how to accommodate learners with disabilities/ learning difficulties. One assessor remarked:

*“They are confident and are used to people, unlike in other places where children with special needs are very closed and are not receptive. So the fact that it is an inclusive school made the test much easier.”*

In contrast, learners with disabilities were less able to fully participate in the PASEC assessment when test conditions were not adapted to meet their needs, learners were not sufficiently well prepared for/ informed about how the test would be run and what to expect, and when assessment procedures were overly rigid or lacked flexibility. In order to encourage their full participation, ideally in the run up to PASEC assessments, school management would organise information sessions for the children sitting the test and their parents. This would be particularly helpful for learners with disabilities who may become anxious if they are not aware that the test is coming up or what will be expected of them. It could also be an opportunity to discuss with the families the specific adaptations required to meet the needs of each learner.

School management should draw on local NGOs, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), learning support assistants, and other resources available for additional support needed (e.g. sign language) to enable learners with disabilities to fully participate in the PASEC tests.

**Key learning:**

Inclusion depends not just on the test but on the whole testing environment, including community sensitisation and training of teachers in inclusive education.

### **3. Lack of accommodations and assistive devices reduces the capacity of learners with disabilities to fully engage with the test**

Despite the observation of the pilot of PASEC2024 in Cameroon taking place in inclusive schools, notable gaps were identified: it can be assumed that these gaps will be even wider in countries where there is no national inclusive education policy and/ or inclusive schools are not present. We observed very limited availability of assistive devices (e.g. magnifiers (to enlarge the text), or tactile tools like a bottle or a cup etc for a learner who cannot correctly identify images), and accommodations such as sign language interpretation. This absence of technical support can lead to inappropriate coping strategies (e.g. copying peers) or loss of interest/ engagement of learners with disabilities sitting the test.

In order for future PASEC assessments to become fully inclusive, ideally learners with disabilities would be provided with: assistive “kits” (tactile versions, visual aids/ pictograms, counting rods, etc.), sign language interpreters (if feasible), screen readers, and/or Braille versions of the test. Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) should also be used wherever possible. However, the cost of all these adaptations may be a barrier to being able to make all these provisions, particularly in the context of recent aid cuts and pressure on budgets.

During the observations of the pilot, it was noticed that the granting of additional time to learners with disabilities was not always adhered to (despite the recommendation of the guidelines to do so). In addition, appropriate formats were not provided for in the procedures due to a lack of resources. The administrator training should include greater emphasis on the importance of allowing for a flexible schedule and pace for learners with disabilities.

However, this question raises a fundamental tension that needs to be explained. On the one hand, the granting of overtime or accommodations must be proportionate to the nature of the disability or disorder concerned; on the other hand, the scientific validity of the tests is based on their standardisation, which presupposes comparable conditions for taking the tests for all candidates. Yet, in the absence of an established diagnosis, it becomes difficult to find a fair consensus on the accommodation to be granted: without an objective basis, administrators risk either refusing legitimate accommodations or granting accommodations in a disparate and unjustifiable way. This difficulty is accentuated in schools where the specific functional difficulties of students with disabilities are not systematically identified or recorded, and where no medical diagnosis is provided: under these conditions, it becomes particularly difficult for administrators to decide whether additional time should be granted, and according to what criteria.

**Key learning:**

Without prior identification of needs (diagnosis or functional assessment) nor sufficient assistive devices and accommodations, inclusion becomes more symbolic rather than real.

#### **4. Assessor knowledge of how to accommodate for individual needs can make PASEC tests more inclusive**

During our observation in Cameroon, we noted that whilst PASEC assessors generally showed a strong willingness to make accommodations for learners with disabilities sitting the test, many did not seem to have the required competencies to do so effectively - not in terms of material equipment, rather of a lack of preparation and know-how when faced with various situations. Whilst several assessors had reported having experience of working with children with disabilities, most seemed to still have difficulty in responding to their specific needs during the assessment. This could be due to a lack of familiarity on how to make effective adaptations to the assessment (e.g. reformulation of questions for clarity or making appropriate additions to instructions) or how to respond in real time to the needs of learners with disabilities.

It should be noted, however, that this observation, which was limited in scope, does not make it possible to establish with certainty whether these difficulties are more due to a lack of experience, not targeting the most suitable and well-equipped administrators, or a lack of training, even if the latter hypothesis seems the most likely.

In addition, as would be expected, few assessors had skills in sign language or braille - two skills that, if they were more widespread, could prove particularly useful: the first for the assessment at the beginning of primary school (2<sup>nd</sup> year), which is oral, and the second for the assessment at the end of primary school (6<sup>th</sup> year), which is written. Few administrators observed seemed to have been trained in managing difficult or unusual behaviours. If

administrators with these skills could be identified and mobilised in a more targeted way, this could potentially have a positive impact on learners' performance on test day.

There also seemed to be different levels of understanding of inclusive education among assessors and school staff (a gap that could also be the result, at least in part, of a lack of training) which posed some challenges in delivering the training, in terms of pitching it at the right level. It is worth noting, however, that this was an observation which was limited in scope rather than a full training needs assessment.

Whilst the training provided on inclusive education and the inclusive PASEC was well appreciated and seen as an innovation by the assessors who were trained, with practical examples and simulations being particularly appreciated, it was not sufficient to properly build the capacity of assessors to properly respond to the needs of learners with disabilities. Challenges identified during the training in Cameroon included: the training being too short (half a day), different levels of understanding among the assessors, and the lack of specific content on how to accommodate different types of disability.

In addition, whilst Sightsavers was able to deliver training on the inclusive PASEC directly in Cameroon and Senegal, the use of a cascade training approach in other PASEC countries may have led to dilution of messages and a lack of clarity on approach.

There is already an excellent training video for PASEC assessors but there should also be a complementary video, specifically aimed at filling the gaps in knowledge among administrators around inclusive education and how to adapt assessments for learners with disabilities. This new video should include further information about inclusive education, and guide schools and assessors through the various steps: preparing learners with disabilities selected for the test, as well as accommodating and assessing learners with disabilities during the test. It should also include additional training on the particular safeguarding<sup>x</sup> requirements when working with learners with disabilities.

It would also be helpful to have videos targeting particular stakeholder groups on the following themes:

- **For all stakeholders:** inclusive education and its rationale
- **For national teams and ministries of education:** how to sample inclusive schools and learners with disabilities, taking into account the existence (or not) of databases identifying inclusive schools;
- **For test administrators:** adaptations to be made for learners with disabilities.

This would ensure consistency and quality of training and follow-up.

It would also be useful have additional support mechanisms in place for assessors, for use both before or during the assessment. These might include: an online Community of Practice where all administrators can ask questions; webinars; or a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. It would also be useful to include a recommendation to proactively recruit administrators who already have knowledge and skills in inclusive education (e.g. prior experience with learners with disabilities or proficiency in sign language).

Online self-study modules, hosted on a CONFEMEN-approved learning platform, could also be developed which break down the key learning messages and test understanding through

a short quiz at the end of each section, with online certificates awarded for successful completion.

**Key learning:**

Inclusion in assessments does not depend solely on the instruments being used: they also depend on the competencies of those administering them. Truly inclusive assessments requires systematic investment in both assessor capacity and learning resources.

## **5. Interaction, empathy and two-way communication between assessors and learners with disabilities are essential levers for ensuring the effective participation of learners with disabilities**

During the observation of the pilot in Cameroon, we noted that the interaction between assessors and learners was often one-directional and inflexible, with learners sticking strictly to the assessor's spoken instructions. Learners with disabilities rarely asked for help or expressed their needs. For example, there was a student with a disability who, rather than seeking help from the assessor to resolve a practical issue around sitting the test, turned to his classmate for help. In addition, some assessors showed impatience with the difficulties faced by learners with disabilities and as a result, rushed through the test. Others misinterpreted the behaviour of learners with disabilities during the test, for example seeing disengagement as a lack of ability.

Training of assessors in softer, interactional skills is required in order to enable them to interpret communication cues, support emotional and behavioural needs, and create two-way interaction. Explicitly trying to recruit assessors with solid experience of working with learners with disabilities may also help to resolve these challenges.

**Key learning:**

Full inclusion is not just technical — it is also relational and communicative.

## **6. Further adaptations to the PASEC tools and processes are required to enable fuller inclusion**

Whilst the assessors who used the adapted PASEC2024 in Cameroon felt they were well adapted, potential improvements for the next round have been identified: limiting the reliance on written formats, provide alternative response methods for learners who cannot read or write, and reduce the number of questions and therefore the duration of the assessment. Its current duration can lead to fatigue and disengagement, especially for neurodiverse learners who may struggle to process information or concentrate for long periods of time. The analysis of the data from the Cameroon pilot also suggested that some questions in the test are overly complex or redundant (especially for learners with additional needs).

In order to better accommodate learners with disabilities, future versions of the PASEC tools would ideally include oral versions, images and pictorial supports, as well as adapted elements; whilst still adhering to the necessary scientific standards to enable the comparison of results within the framework of an international assessment. It would also be helpful to reduce the cognitive and time burden through further rationalising the test.

PASEC assessment tools and processes are, of course, standardised across all settings. However, assessors are told to stick strictly to scripts while also being asked to make adaptations for learners with disabilities. This can create confusion about what level of adaptations are allowed without rendering the assessment invalid.

**Key learning:**

The adapted PASEC instruments reduce access barriers, but further adaptations need to focus on giving respondents multiple ways to access and respond to test questions (e.g. written, oral, large print, Braille, audio or digital format compatible with screen readers).

## 7. A better understanding of individual needs can contribute to fully inclusive PASEC assessments

In order to effectively deliver an inclusive PASEC assessment, assessors need to be informed of the impairment/ learning difficulty that a learner has so that they can follow the instructions in the Assessor's' booklet and make suitable accommodations based on impairment type. PASEC assessors should not be expected to identify impairments. Ideally this information would be passed to them by the classroom teacher, as recorded in the child's individual education plan (IEP), but could also be collected through the parent-caregiver questionnaire (see below). Given that this often won't be the case, we added a table of disability types to the Assessor's' booklet as part of making the PASEC2024 assessment more inclusive of learners with disabilities.

Recognising that most teachers will not have been trained in inclusive education or the identification of functional difficulties, use of a standardised tool (such as the Washington Group question sets) as a survey instrument for parent-caregivers and teachers could improve the identification of functional difficulties. The parent-caregiver questionnaire, used in PASEC rounds including 2024, does not contain any questions on functioning and using a recognised tool might help with the identification of a learner's functioning level. However, such tools may need to be adapted (e.g. to be in the form of an interview) and/or simplified as it may be difficult for parents/caregivers to understand them and they can take significant time to complete.

Analysis of the data from the Cameroon pilot revealed that logging of disability or impairment type of those taking the test was also inconsistent as the data collection tools contained a free form field in which the assessor could type anything: for example, physical disability was recorded in four different ways (Handicap Physique, H.Physique, Handicap Phisque, and H. Physique) – this made it difficult to categorise disability type. In future PASEC rounds a drop-down list (if electronic) or checklist (if hard copy) of impairment types, ideally based on a standardised categorisation framework (e.g. Washington Group Questions), should be added to the data collection tools in order to improve data consistency and enable comparison and analysis. Ideally, the drop-down list would consist of functional difficulties e.g. hearing, seeing, communication, rather than medical labels e.g. deaf, blind. This would also reduce use of inappropriate language and labelling around disability in schools.

In the Cameroon pilot data, there were multiple instances where incorrect use of language (e.g. 'visual disability', 'hearing disability') could either cause under-reporting or inappropriate labelling. Language should be non-discriminatory and aligned with the CRPD. Language

used can influence in a positive way but when used insensitively (either intentionally or unintentionally), it can create stigma or be hurtful for learners with disabilities and their families. Terms with negative connotations such as 'suffers from ADHD or autism,' 'high/low functioning,' 'symptoms,' or 'challenging behaviour' should be avoided. It is more appropriate to use neutral, precise descriptors such as 'autistic traits,' 'reasonable adjustments,' 'communication,' or 'sensory differences.' As many learners' disabilities are not clinically diagnosed, it is important to keep language non-clinical at school level. This should be included in future PASEC training and will hopefully help teachers and parents to talk more openly about learners who are experiencing difficulties at school.

**Key learning:**

Reliable, usable, comparable disability data is important in order to deliver a fully inclusive PASEC assessment.

## **8. Data related to specific needs must be robust in order to contribute to the effectiveness of the inclusive PASEC**

Coherent and consistent data is key to understanding how learners with disabilities perform in PASEC assessments. Errors in data entry and coding must be minimised, impairment type categorised consistently, and there should be no missing variables.

Although analysis of the data from the Cameroon pilot showed that learners with disabilities were willing and able to sit the PASEC test and generate valid data, they tended to be more likely to provide incomplete or invalid responses. Performance gaps between learners with disabilities and their non-disabled peers were visible: however, they may reflect test design biases and accessibility barriers rather than a real lack of capacity. This is an area that should be documented in more detail before it can be confirmed.

Having coherent, consistent and complete data can also provide a snapshot of the current situation with regards to the performance of learners with disabilities, compared to that of their non-disabled peers, in each country.

**Key learning:**

Inclusive assessment requires coherent, consistent and complete data, not just inclusive participation.

## **9. Inclusive PASEC assessments should accommodate, as far as possible, the individual requirements of each learner**

The adaptations to PASEC tools to make them more inclusive of learners with disabilities were made with mild to moderate disabilities in mind but future rounds should avoid this differentiation. Ideally, they would include a wider spectrum of learners and take an approach centred on the right of every child to sit the test rather than categorising disabilities by level of severity. Further integration of universal design for learning (UDL) approaches, the introduction of versions of the test adapted for different impairment types or learning difficulties (in particular, dyspraxia — especially at the end of primary school (6<sup>th</sup> year), where learners who understand and read correctly may still be unable to write) and adaptations to the test environment should enable this.

During the observation of the pilot in Cameroon, we observed some learners with more severe disabilities being able to sit the PASEC test. As stated above, the data analysis from the pilot showed that most learners with disabilities who were sampled were able to complete some of the test. Even if the learner only manages to complete some of the assessment, the data is still useful for future planning of the PASEC. It should be noted, however, that the observation did not capture the specific type of disability involved, which limits our ability to document this finding in more detail.

**Key learning:**

Inclusion is incremental – excellent progress has been made to make the PASEC assessment more inclusive of learners with mild to moderate disabilities but we should aim for full participation over time such that learners with more severe disabilities are also included.

## Conclusion

While the in-depth observations were carried out in inclusive schools in Cameroon, all PASEC2024 instruments, collection procedures and training of administrators were improved for all 16 participating countries with a view to inclusion. There is a "continuum" in inclusive education: from the mildest to the most severe disabilities, or from the easiest and least expensive adaptations to the more complex and expensive.

PASEC is already engaged in a process of transformation towards making learning assessments more inclusive of learners with disabilities. The PASEC2024 pilot represents an important first step in this journey, testing adaptations to assessment tools and procedures in order to enable taking better account of the diverse needs of learners. In this context, Cameroon served as a testing ground for innovation, building on the country's longstanding experience in inclusive education and the presence of inclusive schools where these adaptations could be trialled. The lessons learned from this pilot have helped identify strengths, limits and further adjustments needed to make assessments more accessible. These findings are already informing the reflection and preparations for PASEC2028, with the ambition of moving towards an assessment system that more accurately reflects the learning achievements of all learners, including those with more severe disabilities.

The adaptations made to the PASEC2024 tools and processes have worked well and have without a doubt made PASEC assessments more inclusive of learners with disabilities, have proved that learners with disabilities are able to sit the tests, and have brought about a mindset shift, but further systemic changes are still needed to move to full inclusion.

There are three critical priorities to achieve this:

1. **Strengthen enabling systems** – including ensuring good disability data, clear accommodation policies, assistive resources, and stronger data infrastructure.
2. **Strengthen human capacity**, through more thorough and consistent training of assessors, practical tools, and ongoing support systems for assessors.
3. **Further adaptations to the assessment tools and processes**, ensuring accessible formats, reduced cognitive load for learners with disabilities, and multiple means of response.

Making PASEC fully inclusive is not just about making further adjustments—it requires some changes at system level across test design, administration, data, and mindset. Solid groundwork has been done to make the PASEC tools and processes more inclusive of learners with disabilities. Mindsets of stakeholders have shifted, having seen and understood that learners with disabilities are able to sit the tests. Any further work to increase the inclusivity of the PASEC in future rounds will be able to build on the work already done and will be incremental. Most improvements to inclusivity suggested in this document are fairly simple and can be implemented at relatively low cost. Depending on the level of ambition, some may require more significant investment but any further costs of improving the inclusivity of the PASEC must be seen as a justified investment in the rights and ability of children with disabilities to take a full part in PASEC assessments, as in any other part of the education system.

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<sup>i</sup> A secondary school level test was also introduced to PASEC2024 but this was outside the scope of the project.

<sup>ii</sup> CONFEMEN stands for Conférence des Ministres de l'Éducation des États et Gouvernements de la Francophonie (Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking States and Governments). It is an intergovernmental organisation of education ministers from French-speaking countries, based in Dakar, Senegal

<sup>iii</sup> Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Senegal, Chad, Togo, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Central African Republic, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Djibouti, Nigeria

<sup>iv</sup> Early Grade Reading Assessment: a standardised assessment tool used to measure basic reading skills in young children, typically in early primary school

<sup>v</sup> Annual Status of Education Report: a large-scale household-based survey (mainly in India but adapted for use in other countries) that measures children's learning levels, especially in reading and basic maths

<sup>vi</sup> International Common Assessment of Numeracy: an international assessment tool used to measure children's foundational numeracy (math skills)

<sup>vii</sup> Throughout this document, when we refer to learners with disabilities, it should be noted that this also includes learners with learning difficulties

<sup>viii</sup> A 'reported' disability is based on either a parent or caregiver informing the school about a disability/impairment or learning difficulty their child is experiencing or as a result of a discussion between the assessor or the learner's class teacher or headteacher.

<sup>ix</sup> This was not incorporated into the PASEC 2024 tools as the handbook was developed after the tools had been finalised. The handbook should be considered for inclusion in the standardised tools for future PASEC rounds.

<sup>x</sup> Safeguarding refers to the set of policies, procedures and practices aimed at protecting children – in particular the most vulnerable, such as learners with disabilities – from any form of mistreatment, abuse, neglect or exploitation during their participation in supervised activities (in this case, taking the PASEC test). This includes, for example, rules of conduct for administrators, procedures for reporting concerns, and increased vigilance in situations of increased disability-related vulnerability.