



Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide

FACT SHEET: EDUCATION

Overview:

The right to education applies to everybody. However, a very small minority of children with currently access education in most developing countries. This has huge effects on development in general, as well as the global mainstreaming of disability issues. Schools are obligated to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions, according to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3)

UNESCO reports that many children with disabilities are being left without any education and that inclusive education has not yet been fully accepted in schools and society. Barriers to inclusive education include accessibility to school buildings, special materials and equipment, training of regular teachers and support workers, differentiated curricula and assessment strategies that suit the child's individual needs.

Education really does have the potential to enable millions of children with disabilities to break free of the cycle of exclusion and poverty in which many of them find themselves.

Statistics on Education for disabled people around the world:

- Researchers estimate that 90 percent of the 115 million children are currently out of school live in low and lower middle income countries, and 40 million have disabilities, according to the World Bank
- An estimated 10 percent of children are born with or acquire a disability, of which no more than 10 percent receive appropriate rehabilitation. Additionally, in low-income countries, children's disabilities are usually identified when they are 3 to 4 years old, leading to a delay in rehabilitative services, according to UNICEF
- Only two to three percent of children with disabilities attended school in Vietnam. Following the introduction of inclusive legislation 47.6 percent of children with disabilities now attend school, according to Vietnam's 2001-2010 Educational Development Strategy.
- In Indonesia, 89% of children without a disability are in school, compared to 29% of those with a disability, the World Bank reported
- A South African study revealed that most schools were physically inaccessible to many learners because of building structure and long distances amongst other factors. The study also found that higher costs apply to education of children with disabilities in separate settings to their non-disabled peers, while inclusive settings incurred lower costs. (NCSNET & NCESS)

Education in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:



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Article 24 clearly outlines education as a priority area. Education is a right that all people should be able to realize without discrimination and at an equal level; it is a tool whereby people with disabilities can reach their full potential, develop their personal talents and enable their full participation in society. Governments must ensure that barriers to education are removed, and that children with disabilities can access education at the same rate as their non-disabled peers. This education needs to be inclusive, meaning that children with disabilities are not separated from others in the education system, with supportive, individual structures in place to help the child to access the curriculum. States are also responsible for the inclusion of people with disabilities in adult and tertiary education schemes.

Article 24 of the CRPD:

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:
 - a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
 - b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
 - c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:
 - a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;
 - b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
 - c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
 - d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
 - e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.
3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community.
4. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

RI Advocacy Recommendations on Education

- Governments must demonstrate their commitment to people with disabilities seeking education by ratifying and implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly Article 24.



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- Governments must provide greater opportunities of the rights of children with disabilities to receive education in inclusive settings.
- Governments must recognize and address barriers to achieving fully inclusive education. These include attitudes, physical access, modifying communication strategies in schools, human resources and training, material resources and increasing the participation of people with disabilities in designing education services.
- Development policies and programs for education must be inclusive
- Developing countries must facilitate more research into the current educational situation of children with disabilities.