



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Programme: From Exclusion to Empowerment








Digital Empowerment

Access to Information and Knowledge
using ICTs for Persons with Disabilities



Nirmala Kewlani, India

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADOD	Accessible Digital Office Documents
FOSS	Free and Open Source Software
G3ict	The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT4IAL	ICT for Information Accessibility in Learning
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IDPD	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
IFAP	Intergovernmental Information for All Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OA	Open Access
OERs	Open Educational Resources
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

UNESCO's approach

UNESCO's vision is the creation of knowledge societies that are inclusive, pluralistic, equitable, open and participatory for all citizens.

Within the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO recognizes the need to:

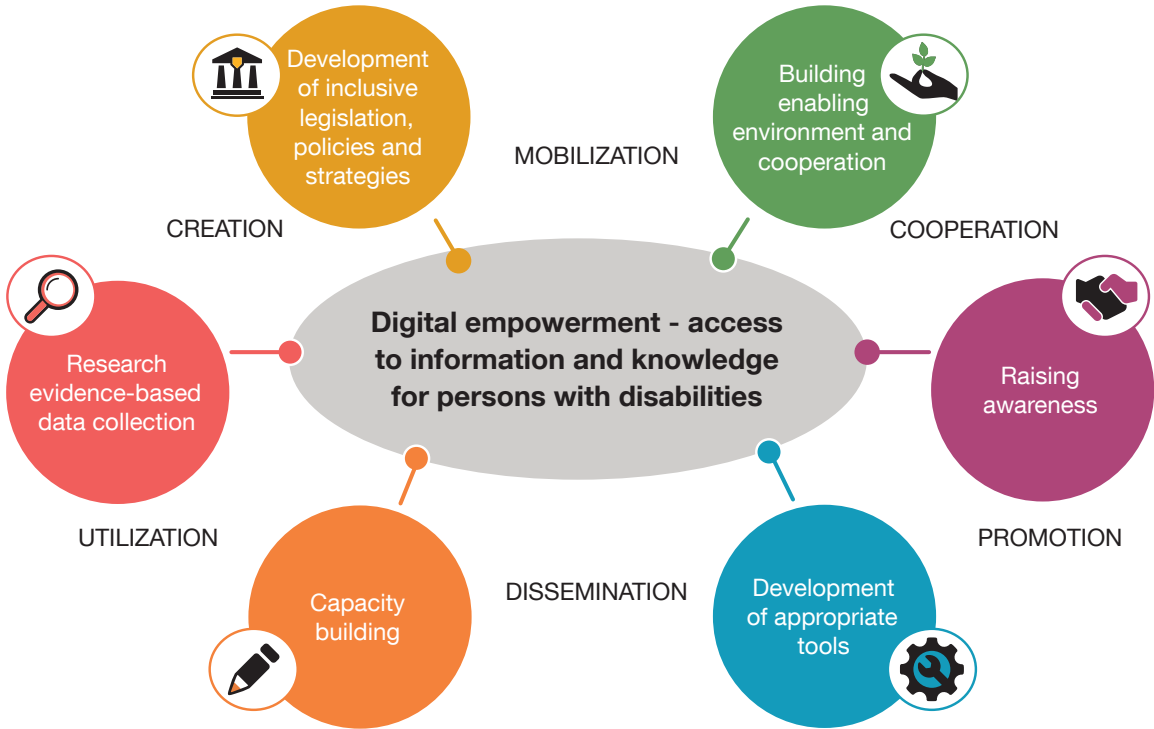
- Prepare national policies and strongly encourages local governments to introduce specific legislation to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Define governments' aspirations regarding services for persons with disabilities, including equal access to information and knowledge, education and the use of ICTs.
- Develop national standards for public goods in terms of products and services, such as accessibility guidelines, recommendations, curricula and other mechanisms to ensure that these standards are maintained.
- Build the capacity of professional communities and persons with disabilities to provide access to

information and knowledge, including hard and software developers and teachers.

- Adapt and personalize ICTs to the nature of specific disabilities, particularly for learning and teaching purposes.
- Enhance social and economic integration through improved access to information and knowledge.
- Collect statistical data and carry out research.

In order to promote a better understanding of issues related to disability and mobilize support for the recognition of the dignity, rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities, and of the benefits of their integration in society, UNESCO has undertaken an action plan centred around thematic priorities:

- Research and evidence-based data collection
- Development of policies and strategies on inclusion of persons with disabilities
- Building an enabling environment and raising awareness
- Development of appropriate tools for inclusion
- Capacity building.





Male college student in wheelchair at library

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Research and evidence-based data collection

UNESCO believes it is important to conduct research and have access to accurate data in order to better inform development initiatives that are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Data, statistics, monitoring, analysis and evaluation of information are crucial to advancing concrete efforts to mainstream people with disabilities in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In this light, UNESCO has undertaken various initiatives to improve evidence based data collection and research.

UNESCO's Global Report

Opening New Avenues for Empowerment: ICTs to Access Information and Knowledge for Persons with Disabilities

UNESCO's Global Report published in 2013 is the result of collaboration between researchers, public and private organisations, governmental bodies and civil society. It combines the findings of five evidence-based regional studies that looked at the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by persons with disabilities to access information and knowledge.

The report aims to provide governments, civil society, industry, academia and other groups with an insight into the use of ICTs by people with disabilities. It presents an overview and assessment of existing information policies and strategies in this field, the challenges faced and best practices

at local, national and global levels on the effective application of ICTs by persons with disabilities to access information and knowledge.

It also looks at ICTs which are accessible, affordable and adaptable for use by people with disabilities, including Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) solutions and Open Educational Resources (OERs).

The report makes recommendations to UNESCO Member States on how to develop better strategies, policies and legislation and find new synergies at national, regional and international levels, as well as raising awareness of the importance of addressing disability issues.

UN expert group meeting on disability data and statistics

Disability Data and Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation: The Way Forward - a Disability- Inclusive Agenda Towards 2015 and Beyond

A meeting of leading experts, representatives of United Nations agencies, disabled persons organisations and public and private organisations was held at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris in July 2014 to discuss gaps in data on disability and to revise methods of data collection, synthesis and reporting.

In order to include persons with disabilities in new and ongoing development efforts, it is necessary to identify the current challenges in this area and have a better understanding of the numbers of individuals living with a disability and their specific needs.

The meeting contributed to the formulation of a policy brief that provides an informed overview of the current status of disability statistics and formulates recommendations for improving data collection so as to encourage the implementation of evidence-based policy-making.

The expert group also discussed how new and open technological solutions could improve the depth and accuracy of large data collection, specifically with respect to persons with disabilities, and how to engage different stakeholders in efforts towards sustainable development post-2015.

Personalized learning for students with disabilities using accessible ICTs

Accessible ICTs and Personalized Learning for Students with Disabilities: A Dialogue among Educators, Industry, Government and Civil Society

Following a multi-stakeholder debate held in Paris in 2011, UNESCO, in collaboration with Microsoft, published a report in 2012 which focuses on the challenges faced and practical solutions for promoting the personalization of learning through technology in the classroom, particularly for students with learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

It needs to be acknowledged that every child requires personalized help because each has a different learning style depending on whether they have mild, moderate or severe disabilities.

Technology can play a vital role in enabling the development of a flexible curriculum and assisting students with disabilities to participate as equals in the learning experience.

The recommendations in the report target teachers, policymakers and administrators and include practical solutions for the use of accessible ICTs in classrooms, including existing technological solutions. UNESCO's *ICT Competency Framework for Teachers* can be used to build the capacity of teachers on issues related to accessibility.



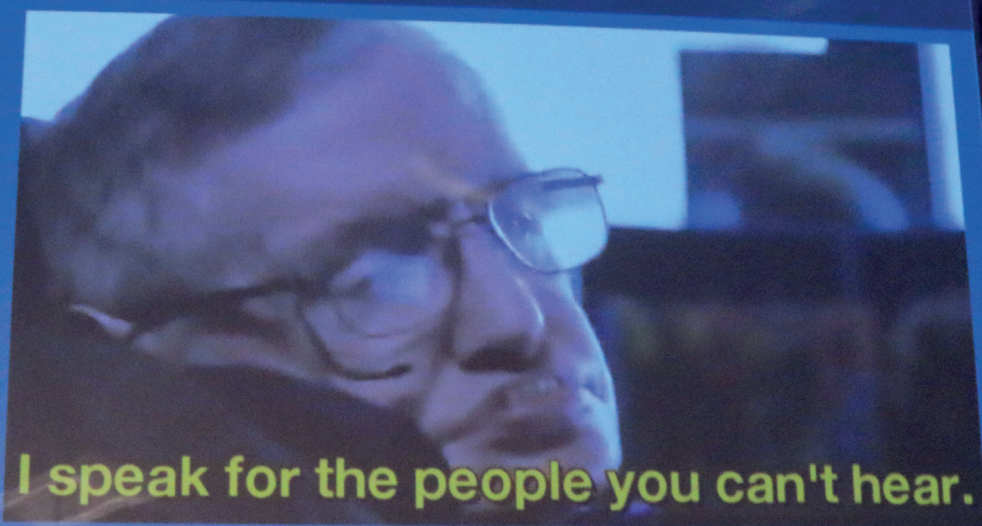
International Day of Persons with Disabilities
Journée internationale des personnes handicapées

2015

Inclusion matters:
access and
empowerment for people
of all abilities

Les questions d'inclusion:
accès et autonomisation
des personnes handicapées

I speak for the people you can't hear.



Celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities, UNESCO Paris, 3 December 2015

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Policies and strategies on inclusion of persons with disabilities

UNESCO recognizes the need for Member States to have legislation, policies and strategies that are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Although many countries have ratified the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and have legislation that is non-discriminatory, much work still needs to be done to protect their rights and to encourage policies and strategies that are equitable for all and which foster the availability of accessible ICTs.

And while policies promoting accessibility may be in place in some countries, in many of them, these are not backed up by the regulations that will ensure their implementation.

The challenge now is to mainstream a disability perspective in all actions, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels of development planning.

➤ Inclusive development framework – The New Delhi Declaration

The New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment a Reality

In 2015, UNESCO's Governing Bodies endorsed the *New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment a Reality* to ensure that its mandate and priorities figure prominently in shaping the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

The declaration is the Outcome Document of the international conference "From Exclusion to Empowerment: Role of ICTs for Persons with Disabilities" which took place in November 2014 in New Delhi, India.

➤ Joint report on disability inclusive development framework

The ICT Opportunity for a Disability Inclusive Development Framework

This report complements previous work on the use of ICTs as an enabler of the economic, social and political inclusion of persons with disabilities. It looks at the specific contribution that ICT can make to achieve

a disability-inclusive development agenda, lists the challenges to be overcome and outlines actions to be undertaken.

➤ Model policy for inclusive ICT and assistive technologies

Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities

It aims to assist Member States in the process of developing policy in order to achieve the wider goal of inclusive education across all educational sectors and settings.

As such, the model policy may serve as a resource for developing the content of new national policy documents, complement existing policy documents, or indi-

vidual sections or annexes could be used as resources for auditing or implementing existing policies.

Within the work, *policy* is understood to refer to the rules, regulations and standards established by local, regional, national and international governments or other recognized authorities.

➤ National consultations on development of policies and strategies

National Consultative Meeting: "The Role of ICTs for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities", 5-6 December 2015, Tehran, Iran

The aim of the meeting, jointly organised by UNESCO and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, was to lay the foundations for the development of concrete initiatives to empower persons with disabilities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This included a review of existing national legislation, policies and strategies, a discussion on the institutional

capacities of key stakeholders and providing practical recommendations on specific actions with regards to using ICTs to improve the situation of people with disabilities by increasing their access to education, public information, social services, and job opportunities.

➤ International consultations and review process

WSIS + 10 Review and Strategic Directions for building Inclusive Knowledge Societies for Person with Disabilities, 2013

Participation in knowledge societies is increasingly dependent on the ability to use ICTs, but the degree to which individuals can participate is determined by many factors including availability, affordability and accessibility. Persons with disabilities face even more obstacles, which is why several of the WSIS Action Lines, including Line 3 on Access to Information and Knowledge, refer to the need to include persons with

disabilities. Within this framework, the report reviews the current status and latest trends and emerging technical solutions that could help overcome ICT accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities. It also makes recommendations that will help UNESCO and other partners shape their strategy for the development of inclusive knowledge societies.



Young man with infantile cerebral palsy sitting in a multifunctional wheelchair using a computer with a wireless headset reaching out to touch the touch screen

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Building an enabling environment

UNESCO considers it crucial to create an environment that favours inclusion into the world around them so that people with disabilities can live to their full potential and make a meaningful contribution to society. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), established in 2006, sets out the ground rules for the rights of people with disabilities and the steps that need to be taken to include and empower them.

Since then, experts gathering at international and regional conferences and events continue to develop the policies, strategies and interventions required to turn this goal of an egalitarian society into a reality.

Events such as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and others also serve to raise awareness of the issues around disability and to move away from the association of disability with stigma, charity, medical treatment and social protection.

For UNESCO, ICTs have the potential to make significant improvements in the lives of these people, allowing them to enhance their social, political and economic integration in society by enlarging the scope of information, knowledge and activities available to them.

➤ **Creating an institutional environment - Global Centre for Excellence**

Establishment of a Global Centre for Excellence (GCE) for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Kuwait

UNESCO, in cooperation with the Government of Kuwait, is in the process of establishing a Global Centre for Excellence for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Kuwait City.

The main objective of the Category 2 centre, in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, will be to empower persons with disabilities by increasing their access to information and knowledge through ICTs by:

- Driving a “step change” in capacity to identify, gather, assess and usefully disseminate international knowledge and best practices around technology transfer, so as to address disability issues through the creation of an international repository of expertise.
- Building enhanced capacity towards raising professional standards and developing integrated action programmes - at country, regional and global levels - embracing all spheres of life

where barriers block the full inclusion of persons with disability, especially in regard to access to information and knowledge.

- Creating innovative networks among stakeholders – government, educational and other professional practitioners, commercial, civil society and not least persons with disabilities and their families – so that technology transfer takes place in the most informed and systematic manner increasing the chances of success.
- Playing a major role using ICTs and all communication media - at national, regional, international and global levels - to raise awareness of disability issues and to counter negative attitudes and prejudices.

The centre will assist UNESCO Member States in capacity building and serve as a clearing house for knowledge sharing, regionally and internationally, as well as facilitating international action on the basis of accumulated knowledge and experience.

➤ **Building a favourable legal and educational environment in Uganda**

Creation and distribution of accessible information for persons with visual and hearing impairments in Uganda

The main objective of the project is to strengthen the policy environment and build institutional capacities through technology to ensure inclusive education and access to information in Uganda. In keeping with Uganda's Vision 2040 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the goals of the project will be achieved by a two-track approach which will focus on:

- Strengthening the policy environment through the development of relevant policies and guidelines as well as the establishment of an appropriate governance structure.

- The development of educational materials in accessible formats.

ICT has been progressively introduced in Uganda through the development and implementation of national policy frameworks. In 2006, the government launched a National ICT Policy Framework that envisioned Uganda where national development and good governance are promoted and accelerated by the efficient application and use of ICTs.



Unesco Headquarters, Paris

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International advocacy, cooperation and partnerships

UNESCO advocates for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society respecting human rights principles and values, and encourages Member States to draw up national plans of action for inclusive and sustainable development. The Organization does this through international and regional conferences, national forums, consultations and workshops, production and distribution of resources, and networking of relevant stakeholders as well as partnerships with bilateral and multilateral partners including UNESCO National Commissions, governmental organizations, universities and research institutions, private sector and civil society as well as other UN system organizations.

➤ International awareness raising events

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

In line with the Organization's strategic objective to build inclusive knowledge societies, UNESCO has commemorated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) on 3 December every year since 1992 to celebrate the extraordinary

potential of persons with disabilities. It also aims to raise awareness about disability issues and draw attention to the benefits of an inclusive and accessible society for all.

International conference: "From Exclusion to Empowerment: Role of ICTs for Persons with Disabilities", 24-26 November 2014, New Delhi, India

Some 700 participants from 80 countries discussed how ICTs can help enhance the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities in every aspect of their lives. High-level panel discussions focused on three themes: partnerships and sustainable development, accessibility and technological solutions, and access to information and knowledge.

The *We Care Filmfest*, an ICT solutions-oriented exhibition and a special capacity building workshop took place in parallel with the main conference.

Participants at the event issued an Outcome Document: *The New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment a Reality*.

➤ UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize

UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

The prize was established in 2002 with the support of the Government of Kuwait to honour institutions, organisations or individuals who have contributed to the inclusion in society of persons with disabilities. It is awarded every two years and the US\$ 40,000 prize money is divided equally between two prizewinners.

The prize contributes to UNESCO's efforts to promote the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities with an emphasis on removing

barriers to access information and knowledge as well as learning and participation in society.

It also contributes to the realisation of UNESCO's international commitments on sustainable development goals, raises global awareness and better understanding of the importance of inclusive policies, research and practices, and serves as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism of inclusive approaches in society to accessing information and knowledge.

➤ Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP)

Information accessibility priority - Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP)

The Information for All Programme (IFAP) is an intergovernmental programme established at UNESCO in 2001 to promote the creation of equitable societies through better access to information. It works closely with other intergovernmental organisations and international NGOs, supporting a wide range of projects from individual capacity building, to research or thematic debates. In order to achieve its goals, the programme concentrates its efforts

on six priority areas: multilingualism, information ethics, information accessibility, information preservation, information literacy and information for development. Numerous activities have been carried out in the past by UNESCO and national IFAP committees to promote information accessibility around the world.



A boy with assistive hearing aid and his classmates

©PAD Pittsburgh Association of the Deaf/Flickr



Development of appropriate tools and resources for inclusion

ICTs can play a crucial role in improving the lives of persons with disabilities, but they are faced with a variety of obstacles including financial barriers relating to the cost of devices, hardware and software, lack of accessibility and physical constraints.

However, new trends in science and technology innovation have enabled ICT applications to better meet the needs of people with disabilities. They have increased access to education, information, accessible products and services, provided new employment opportunities, helped raise awareness and facilitated participation by persons with disabilities in cultural and political life, recreation and leisure.

UNESCO believes the scientific and technological community should take the needs of persons with disabilities into account in the development of ICT applications and services, based on the “Universal Design for All” and “Open Access” principles.

➤ Guidelines on Open and Distance Learning

Learning for All: Guidelines on Open and Distance Learning for Persons with Disabilities using Open Solutions

UNESCO has developed guidelines for the inclusion of students with disabilities in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) using Open Solutions such as Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), Open Educational Resources (OER), Open Data and Open Access to scholarly data (OA), which enable information to be freely and legally shared.

The main objective is to provide relevant institutions and other stakeholders with practical guidelines on how to make ODL accessible to students with disabilities.

This includes policy and decision-makers, distance learning institutions, quality assurance and recognition bodies, teacher associations, civil society dealing with disability issues, families and not least, persons with disabilities.

The guidelines are based on lessons learnt from champions in distance learning and their experience dealing with disability issues. Central to them is how Open Solutions can ensure that technological developments, new pedagogical approaches, software and course content provided in diverse formats including open and distributed via open communication channels, can best be harnessed.

➤ Guidelines for Accessible Information in Learning

Guidelines for Accessible Information. ICT for Information Accessibility in Learning (ICT4IAL)

The document provides practical solutions for the preparation and sharing of accessible information for persons with disabilities and their teachers, for learning and training purposes. This includes how to make texts, images, audio, video and media files accessible.

The procedure for creating and sharing information is universal, and today it is technologically possible for almost anyone to do this. However, depending

on the way it is presented, information may or may not be easily accessible to different users, including persons with disabilities.

It is for this reason that all authors should try to achieve a minimum standard of information accessibility and there are many resources that can teach them how to do this without having to become an expert in either ICT or all forms of disabilities.

➤ Creating accessible information workspaces

Accessible digital office documents for persons with disabilities

The Accessible Digital Office Documents (ADOD) Project provides guidance on the accessibility of office documents, office document formats and office applications that can help users, purchasers and policymakers use and make decisions about office applications.

The *ADOD Assessment Framework* was developed by the OCAD University's Inclusive Design Research Centre as part of an Enabling Change

Partnership project, with support from UNESCO and the Government of Ontario, Canada.

Although information about how to create accessible office documents exists on a range of websites, the ADOD Project centralises guidance on how to go about doing this, providing instructions on how to make information accessible for persons with disabilities.



A female dwarf is interviewed by a radio presenter at a radio station, 2 December 2008, East Java, Indonesia

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Capacity building

UNESCO believes that everybody should have the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary in order to understand, participate actively in, and benefit fully from the emerging knowledge societies.

In terms of persons with disabilities, this involves not only moving towards inclusive ICTs but also capacity building for all stakeholders including the training of teachers, ICT professionals and the development of digital material that is accessible.

It also includes helping governments to formulate disability inclusive policies and strategies and development programmes.

But most importantly, it also involves building the capacity of persons with disabilities to take advantage of the opportunities that ICTs can offer them in terms of access to knowledge and information and their full participation in the society.

➤ Report on Using ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities

South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean

The report provides with a meaningful assessment of the status of access to ICTs for persons with disabilities and identifies both the good practices and the problems, pending needs that require the most support in the region. It also evinces the

needs to enhance access to ICTs and the duty of all societal stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, as well as international organizations, to work towards attaining access to information and knowledge for all.

➤ Accessible educational portals in Rwanda

Making Rwandese educational portals accessible to people with disabilities

Within the framework of the *Rwanda Joint Flagship on Youth and Women Employment*, UNESCO help formal training institutions to provide digital educational materials for young people living with disabilities.

It works in close cooperation with the National Council of Persons with Disabilities and some of the activities are in direct support of the council's Strategic and Operational Plan. Planned activities during the four-year project will focus on three areas:

- A policy brief on ICTs and Disabilities will be produced to inform all policy interventions. Furthermore, guidelines will be produced on ways in which government ICT programmes

can be adapted to people living with disabilities. Training of officials from the Rwanda Education Board, the Ministry of Education and Rwanda Workforce Agency and National Council of Persons with Disabilities will focus on making educational material accessible.

- Support for the establishment of a National Resource Centre which will provide information relevant to people living with disabilities and for the establishment of training facilities based on the Inclusive Learning Lab (i2Lab), a UNESCO-led approach to building a diverse, dynamic and inclusive learning environment for persons with disabilities.

➤ Support for the rights of persons with disabilities in China

Information accessibility and use of ICTs for persons with disabilities in China

Project aims to support the Chinese government's efforts to reduce barriers to the implementation of policies related to persons with disabilities, as well as to foster an enabling and more inclusive environment for the full implementation of the UNCPRD. In particular, and in cooperation with the China Disabled Persons' Federation and other national and international partners, UNESCO is working to further

promote information accessibility and the innovative use of ICTs for persons with disabilities, as well as to make people aware of the best practices for inclusive education.

UNESCO is also supporting the capacity of media professionals to report on issues related to persons with disabilities and their rights.

➤ Media sensitization workshop in Pakistan

Handbook for Decision Makers on Access to Information and Knowledge Platforms for Persons with Disabilities

In October 2014, UNESCO Islamabad in collaboration with the Special Talent Exchange Programme (STEP), a Pakistani disabled person's organisation, organised a media sensitization workshop on enabling universal access to information and knowledge for persons with disabilities. This includes, for example, being able to read price tags, to physically enter a hall to participate in a gathering, to read a pamphlet with healthcare information, to understand a

bus schedule, to receive crucial warnings about disasters, or to view webpages.

Also discussed was the need to develop sign language for both the private and public media, captioning and subtitling (open and wide) for deaf people, braille newspapers and signs, screen readers and magnification, as well as use of webpage layout and browsers that can enable the blind or visually impaired to access websites.

More information

- **Opening New Avenues for Empowerment: ICTs to Access Information and Knowledge for Persons with Disabilities**
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002197/219767e.pdf>
- **Report on Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education for Persons with Disabilities - South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean**
English version: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002163/216382e.pdf>
Spanish version: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002163/216382s.pdf>
- **Disability Data and Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation: The Way Forward - a Disability-Inclusive Agenda Towards 2015 and Beyond**
http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/egm2014/EGM_FINAL_08102014.pdf
- **Accessible ICTs and Personalized Learning for Students with Disabilities: A Dialogue among Educators, Industry, Government and Civil Society**
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/accessible_ict_personalized_learning_2012%20.pdf
- **The New Delhi Declaration on Inclusive ICTs for Persons with Disabilities: Making Empowerment a Reality**
https://www.unesco.de/fileadmin/medien/Dokumente/Kommunikation/New_Delhi_Declaration_Inclusive_ICTs_Making_Empowerment_a_Reality_26_11_2014.pdf
- **The ICT Opportunity for a Disability Inclusive Development Framework**
https://www.itu.int/en/action/accessibility/Documents/The%20ICT%20Opportunity%20for%20a%20Disability_Inclusive%20Development%20Framework.pdf
- **Model Policy for Inclusive ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities.**
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002272/227229E.pdf>
- **National Consultative Meeting: “The Role of ICTs for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities”, 5-6 December 2015, Tehran, Iran**
<http://www.un.org.ir/index.php/response-development/response-poverty/1585-9-dec-2015-unesco-organizes-national-consultative-meeting-on-the-role-of-icts-for-empowerment-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-iran>
- **Global Centre for Excellence (GCE) for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the State of Kuwait**
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002340/234051e.pdf>
- **Creation and distribution of accessible information for persons with visual and hearing impairments in Uganda**
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/news-and-in-focus-articles/all-news/news/first_meeting_on_promoting_the_rights_of_persons_with_disabilities_in_uganda_through_the_use_of_inclusive_technologies/
- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**
<http://www.unesco-ci.org/ict-pwd/>
- **International conference: “From Exclusion to Empowerment: Role of ICTs for Persons with Disabilities”, 24-26 November 2014, New Delhi, India**
<http://unesco-ci.org/ict-pwd/ND2014/>
- **UNESCO/Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**
<http://en.unesco.org/prizes/digital-empowerment>
- **WSIS + 10 Review and Strategic Directions for building Inclusive Knowledge Societies for Person with Disabilities, 2013**
http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/wsis/WSIS_10_Event/WSIS_review_event-2013_UNESCO_report_disabilities_final.pdf
- **UNESCO Intergovernmental Information for All Programme (IFAP)**
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/intergovernmental-programmes/information-for-all-programme-ifap/priorities/>
- **Learning for All: Guidelines on Open and Distance Learning for Persons with Disabilities using Open Solutions**
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244355e.pdf>
- **Guidelines for Accessible Information. ICT for Information Accessibility in Learning (ICT4IAL)**
<http://www.ict4ial.eu/download-guidelines>
- **Accessible digital office documents for persons with disabilities**
<http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/overview> (an overview of the project)
<http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca/> (provides help creating accessible documents)
- **Making Rwandese educational portals accessible to people with disabilities**
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/news-and-in-focus-articles/all-news/news/making_rwandese_educational_portals_accessible_to_people_with_disabilities/
- **Handbook for Decision Makers on Access to Information and Knowledge Platforms for Persons with Disabilities**
http://unesco.org.pk/ci/documents/publications/Access_to_Information.pdf

The way ahead

1

In today's world, information and knowledge are key determinants of wealth creation, social transformation and human development.

2

People with disabilities face many challenges including discrimination, social exclusion, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and limited access to information, education, healthcare and employment.

3

UNESCO considers that ICTs have the potential to make significant improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities, allowing them to enhance their social, political and economic integration in society by enlarging the scope of information, knowledge and activities available to them.

4

Every person, particularly children, with a disability requires personalized help to learn and technology can play a vital role in assisting students with disabilities to participate as equals in the learning experience.

5

Data, statistics, monitoring, analysis and evaluation of information are crucial to advancing concrete efforts to mainstream people with disabilities in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda process.

6

Although many countries have legislation, strategies and policies that are non-discriminatory to persons with disabilities, much work still needs to be done to ensure they will be implemented.

7

The challenge today is to mainstream a disability perspective in all actions, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels of development planning.

8

New trends in science and technology innovation have enabled ICT applications to better meet the needs of people with disabilities.

9

UNESCO considers the scientific and technological community should take the needs of persons with disabilities into account in the development of ICT applications and services, based on the "Universal Design for All" and "Open Access" principles.

10

All authors of e-content should try to achieve a minimum standard of information accessibility. There are many resources available that can teach them how to do this without having to become an expert in either ICT or all forms of disabilities.



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English version:
<http://www.unesco.org/ict-disability>
<http://www.unesco-ci.org/ict-pwd/>

French version:
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