**Call for Report Input-UN Special Rapporteur on Disabilities Rights**

**Types of input/comments sought**

To inform her report, the Special Rapporteur would like to seek written inputs from all interested stakeholders and strongly encourages sharing concrete examples of good practices where available. She is particularly interested in the following areas:

* **Please inform how persons with disabilities and their representative organizations are meaningfully consulted and their participation ensured during the follow-up and review processes of the 2030 Agenda at the regional, national and sub-national levels.**

In alignment with the 2030 Agenda, UNESCO's Strategic vision for 2022-2029 foresees the need to build inclusive, just and peaceful societies, including by addressing discrimination based on disability. The Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 which was adopted by UNESCO General Conference towards the end of 2021, includes direct programmatic aspects related to persons with disabilities in the Education, Social and Human Sciences, and Communication and Information sectors.

Mandated by a ‘**[Global Call Against Racism](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/global-call-against-racism)**’ issued by the UNESCO Executive Board in 2020, UNESCO have developed a **[Roadmap Against Racism and Discrimination](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000380821.locale%3Den)**, providing a strategic and operational framework to guide the Organization’s action to fight discrimination in all its forms, including the discrimination of people with disabilities. As a flagship initiative nourishing the Roadmap, UNESCO and its Social and Human Sciences Sector organizes the annual **[Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination](https://www.unesco.org/en/forum-against-racism-discrimination?hub=70211)** to serve as a platform to raise the visibility of the disability inclusion agenda. The 3rd edition of the Global Forum in 2023 included a plenary session on “Ending Disability Discrimination through more Inclusive Policy Frameworks” organized with the UN Partnership for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). The [**UNESCO Master Class Series against Racism and Discriminations**](https://www.unesco.org/en/no-racism-no-discrimination/masterclass) aims to raise awareness on discriminations and empower people with disabilities. This Series targets young people, encouraging them to become champions in the fight for inclusion. During the 2023 edition, the workshop titled "Disability: I discriminate, you discriminate, he discriminates, ..." conducted by Tremplin Association, taught the participants how to tackle disability discrimination.

Moreover, the [**UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence**](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/recommendation-ethics-artificial-intelligence), provides a framework to ensure that disability rights remain a central concern in the advancement of artificial intelligence systems. UNESCO revised its strategic documents such as the Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalism, including gender and disability equality as one of the approaches to building open, free and pluralistic media that could be capable of reflecting the full diversity and richness of society.

During 2023, particular attention was given to persons with disabilities as part of inclusive education; Improving educational opportunities and the well-being of students with disabilities in Latin American region is the aim of the project “Developing inclusive education systems: What we know and what we do to enhance the learning of students with disabilities,” supported by UNESCO. Latin American countries reaffirmed in March 2024 their commitment and agreed on updating the Regional System of Educational Information for Students with Disabilities (SIRIED), implementing a regional program of scholarships and peer exchange internships for professional development in inclusive education and developing a public awareness and communication campaign in the region.

Consideration of the needs of persons with disabilities were taken on board in UNESCO's work on sports and through research on the impact of the COVID pandemic; and UNESCO's interventions on media and information literacy, as well as on digital competencies targeted persons with disabilities. UNESCO's guidelines on the inclusion of learners with disabilities in Open and Distance Learning were also implemented. More specifically on education, UNESCO continued to promote and support the development of rights-based, inclusive and equitable systems that target those at greatest risk of being left behind, including people with disabilities.

In February 2024, UNESCO Member States adopted the [**UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education**](https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2024/02/WCCAE_UNESCO%20Framework_EN_0.pdf)at the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi. This is an innovative and critical tool for countries to shape strategies and policies that integrate cultural dimensions into educational systems and that contribute to SDGs 4 and 8 in particular. Underpinned by human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Framework supports culture and arts education as integral to individual and societal health and well-being. One of the five strategic goals of the Framework focuses specifically on access, inclusion and equity in and through culture and arts education. This entails that all learners should be able access, participate in and contribute to culture and arts education, and thrive as a result. To achieve this, the Framework calls for the provision of relevant infrastructure, learning materials, training and skills development to address any obstacles, vulnerability and exclusion.

The implementation strategy of the Framework is being elaborated, and will include implementation guidance for Members States, informed by an inclusive and participatory consultative process, in order to operationalize the Framework. In view of the Framework’s strong emphasis on access and inclusion, the needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities will be considered in these future steps.

Since 2023, UNESCO has launched a series of initiatives to promote [disability equality in the media](https://www.unesco.org/en/media-pluralism-diversity/media-diversity/disability-equality-media) due to the underrepresentation of persons with disabilities in the media. Activities are focused on the: (i) equitable editorial policies and programming; (ii) production of accessible media content and services respecting information and web accessibility standards such as WGAC and EU accessibility Act, and (iii) Inclusive media operations and management practices including creation of decent job conditions for media professionals with disabilities.

The last development, on May 15, 2024, UNESCO has organized [the first meeting of African public service media and community media executives and managers](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/promoting-disability-equality-enhanced-diversity-african-media)in Accra, Ghana on the margins of the 3rd African Media Convention. During this meeting, UNESCO has premiered its Practical Manual and a Master Class video series on Disability Equality in the Media. Both resources provide guidance on promoting diversity, equality and inclusion in editorial policies and programming, ensuring factual and impartial representation of women and men with disabilities, including in crisis and emergency situations. They also offer technical recommendations on how to produce accessible media content and services for the target audiences using assistive technologies, as well as on how to implement more inclusive management practices that ensure equal opportunities for media professionals with disabilities. The above-mentioned manual includes specific aspects related to the Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities and reporting specificities which could be emphasized in UNESCO response.

With regard to knowledge sharing and capacity development, UNESCO organized several webinars. On December 3, 2023, for the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, UNESCO showcased pilot projects using the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT) and the OER Recommendation for persons with disabilities. On December 11, 2023, during the International Decade for Indigenous Languages, a webinar explored the potential of OER in promoting indigenous languages and sustainable development. Additionally, on October 10, 2023, during IGF 2023, a session on the Transformative Role of OER in Digital Inclusion highlighted how the UNESCO OER Dynamic Coalition supports inclusive digital knowledge access, aligning with the UNESCO 2019 Recommendation on OER.

To further provide guidance to Member States, UNESCO revised the “[**Learning for All: Guidelines on the Inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in Open and Distance Learning (ODL).**](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000244355.locale%3Den)” These guidelines aim to enhance accessibility and inclusivity for learners with disabilities, demonstrating how ODL can leverage Open Educational Resources (OER), Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS), and Open Access (OA) research for lifelong learning opportunities. The revised guidelines emphasize inclusive education and present an action plan for emergency situations, adhering to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the lead agency for SDG 4 (Quality education and lifelong learning for all) and SDG 16.10 (Public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms), UNESCO is dedicated to advancing these goals with a focus on including persons with disabilities.

Across its programmes, UNESCO has continued stepping up its efforts through its Intersectoral Task Team (ITT) for Disability Rights and Inclusion by supporting Member States to advance disability policies and interventions, and strategically position the Organization as a key actor in the international community. Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences (ADG/SHS), who leads the ITT, is a policy member of UNPRPD, aiming to foster joint activities for resource mobilization. Led by the ITT, UNESCO aims to develop a Disability Inclusion Policy, accompanied by a matrix of good practices, solution-oriented approaches and relevant tools. UNESCO’s Member States (led by Chile and Brazil) adopted a decision at its Executive Board in March 2024 calling for a consolidated and strengthened disability inclusion programme. The decision included the establishment of a UNESCO disability inclusion strategy.

In August 2022, the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE) finalized the development of two dedicated training programmes for educators (school leaders, master trainers/ tutors of teacher training institutions) in Africa to build skills in using digital innovations towards strengthening inclusion, quality, and equity in education. The digitalized courses were deployed on E-Library for teachers - IITE’s new hub that serves as a resource and training centre for teachers around the globe with open education resources. In December 2022, IITE and its home-based consultants in Mauritius and Rwanda finalized the development and further review of the Action Plans and Recommendations to support technology-based and innovation-driven transformation of national inclusive education in the target countries. The Action Plans pursue the support of the use of AI and digital pedagogy to ensure inclusive and equitable education in line with UNCRPD, SDG4, and the national education policies.

In light of global crises, UNESCO has remained steadfast in its commitment to inclusivity and equity by stepping up its actions to limit the harmful impact on populations already discriminated against. The Organization has adapted its strategies to ensure that people with disabilities continue to receive support, emphasizing inclusive policies for well-being, accessible information, and capacity-building. UNESCO’s programmes and interventions are designed and implemented to address cross-cutting goals related to the 17 SDGs.

* **Is the data gathered for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development being disaggregated by disability? If so, how is it accessible for persons with disabilities?**

The [**World Inequality Database on Education**](https://www.education-inequalities.org/) (WIDE) draws attention to unacceptable levels of education inequality across and between countries and between WIDE already covers inequality due to gender, location, region, wealth, ethnicity and religion. Recently, it has **added disability** to the list of characteristics it uses to disaggregate educational stats, with the UNICEF Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey being the main source of information.

The [**2023 Global Education Monitoring (GEM Report)**](https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/en)continues its ongoing annual monitoring of SDG 4, including on 4.5 and target 4.a. The 2023 Report examined the theme of technology and analyzed its implications for inclusive education. Chapter 2 of the global report focuses on equitable and inclusive access to education for disadvantaged groups – populations living in remote areas, affected by displacement or emergency, with a disability or constrained by time.

* **Please provide information on whether capacity-building programmes are in place, including specific funding, to allow persons with disabilities to meaningfully engage and participate in the process of follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional, national and sub-national level**.

The consultation with persons with disabilities is essential to the implementation of UNESCO's actions in a spirit of representativeness and inclusion. Thus, the OPD Policy Lab Tool was established to enhance consultation with persons with disabilities under the framework of the project conducted by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and in partnership with UNESCO ROSA, UNDP, UNFPA, the Federation of Organizations of Disabled People in Zimbabwe (FODPZ) and the National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH). The OPD Policy Lab empowers Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to influence policy discourse as collective voice. Commissioned under the UNPRPD, the OPD Policy Lab provides a platform for OPDs to influence policy- and law-making by providing an open forum for creating and testing new ideas and solutions. Between 19 and 21 December 2023, UNESCO organized a workshop within the framework of the UNPRPD on “Strengthening Disability Rights Accountability, Governance and Coordination in Zimbabwe”. Participants included the Federation of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, six different Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and ten United Nation Agencies. The goal was to strengthen disability inclusion in UN programmes, structures monitoring and reporting frameworks. This joint workshop sought to ensure that disability issues are placed on high priority in all United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) related processes.

To mark the 2023 International Day of Persons with Disabilities, UNESCO organized an international webinar on disability inclusion and gender equality in education in partnership with Plan International.

It featured academic experts, activists, teachers and people with lived experience of disability andaimed to share the latest data and monitoring tools, promote better understanding of the intersections between gender equality and disability inclusion in education, share good practices and lessons that ensure quality, inclusive and gender-transformative education, and identify challenges and recommendations to be addressed at different levels.

UNESCO has published a global status report on school health and nutrition “[**Ready to learn and thrive**](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000381965.locale%3Den)”. UNESCO CLT sector has worked on many projects promoting the rights and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in various countries: Nigeria, Ukraine, Brazil, Rwanda, Mauritius, Ghana, Fiji, Micronesia, India, Jordan, Chile, and Ecuador. Among the goals of the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education, adopted in February 2024, is access, inclusion, and equity in and through culture and arts education. Moreover, as part of the joint project "For Better Access of Persons with Disabilities in Tunisia to Rights and Services", the UNESCO Maghreb Office organized a national consultation in Tunisia between 7 and 10 June 2023 involving various stakeholders, including Persons with Disabilities (PWD), to discuss challenges and issues related to inclusive communication, aiming to develop the guide and capacity-building process in a participatory and inclusive manner. Also, during the co-construction workshops of Art Lab Morocco, over a dozen associations of people with disabilities were engaged in brainstorming sessions regarding pioneering projects to be developed within this framework. In 2023, UNESCO conducted regular dialogues and consultations among OPDs, media organizations, experts and other public and civil society organizations on the development of a Practical Manual and Master Class on Disability Equality in the Media. The accessibility and conceptual aspects were reviewed by persons with disabilities and experts with disabilities, including the technical features related to the accessibility of the materials. These consultations were held to promote the active participation of persons with disabilities, including media professionals, international experts and researchers.

UNESCO, in collaboration with local partners and NGOs, launched initiatives in Burkina Faso and Rwanda to empower teachers with disabilities through digital skills training. These projects, aligned with the UNESCO ICT CFT, aim to create more inclusive education systems by developing digital skills among teachers with disabilities. Following a multi-phase approach, these projects begin with tailored self-study and training resources in multiple languages and involve key stakeholder partnerships to ensure sustainability. These initiatives aim to break down barriers to digital inclusion, ensuring equitable access to quality education for all learners.

UNESCO has been building [**capacity among Ministry actors**](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/making-education-systems-more-inclusive-ministry-actors-southern-africa-apply-systems-thinking)in order to enhance coherence and coordination among stakeholders to foster inclusive education systems for learners with disabilities. Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwehave been usingthe UNESCO tool [**Welcoming learners with disabilities in quality learning environments**](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000380256)toidentifying important systemic leverage points where transformative changes can be made to ensure access to quality inclusive education for persons with disabilities.

UNESCO has been enhancing its efforts to mainstream disability inclusion for health and well-being. UNESCO launched activities around qualitative research on school violence and bullying against learners with disabilities, including capturing testimonials from youth with disabilities; co-convening a virtual cross-regional workshop on violence and bullying in schools; and the establishment of a procedural guidance document on the collection of youth-led evidence on SVB involving children and young people with disabilities.

In Zambia, Zanzibar, and Zimbabwe, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) materials, training manuals, guides, and learning materials were translated into local languages and rendered more disability-friendly to improve accessibility. For example, in Zambia, a sign language package is in development, and in Uganda, UNESCO worked with the Ministry of Education to advance digital literacy and equipment to reach young people with disabilities. In South Sudan, materials were developed into sign language and Braille, and 185 in-service teachers were trained on delivering inclusive education. In Zimbabwe, UNESCO also supported the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to transcribe modules into Braille. In Mozambique, teaching and learning materials were also being developed for the Inclusive Education Resources Centres in Portuguese for learners with disabilities.

A needs assessment was carried out by UNESCO Bangkok in the Asia Pacific region, together with Leonard Cheshire and the Asia-Pacific Disability-Inclusive Education Working Group focused on teachers’ experiences and professional learning and development needs for providing CSE to learners with disabilities, including teachers’ and learners’ challenges, experiences, and professional learning and development needs for providing sexuality education to learners with disabilities; what support teachers need to deliver disability-inclusive sexuality education; and with recommendations for teaching training modules on CSE and inclusion, with disability as one of the components, as part of the teacher training curriculum in teachers’ colleges and universities.

UNESCO Santiago, in coordination with UNESCO Offices in the LAC region, has been implementing the project “Developing inclusive education systems: What we know and what we do to enhance the learning of students with disabilities,” which contributes to improving educational opportunities and the well-being of students with disabilities in member countries of the Ibero-American Inter-Governmental Cooperation Network for People with Special Educational Needs*.* In 2023, within the framework of a long-standing partnership on education for health and wellbeing, UNESCO and the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) conducted research on the teaching competencies required to implement effective comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) with children and adolescents with disabilities in the region. This research was carried out in Argentina, Mexico, and Uruguay and resulted in a teaching competencies framework that could be incorporated by schools to monitor the performance of teachers working with children and adolescents with disabilities and CSE.

In addition, UNESCO organized a webinar on Disability Equality in the Media in December 2023 to present the preliminary findings of the Practical Manual and gather feedback from relevant stakeholders. On this occasion, a total of 14 media institutions and 39 academic and civil society organizations, including other entities of the UN system, shared their suggestions and actively contributed to the debate.