



Every learner matters

## Disability inclusion and gender equality in education

International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2023 Report

To mark the 2023 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December), UNESCO and Plan International held an international webinar entitled *Every learner matters: Disability inclusion and gender equality in education* on 4 December 2023

**The webinar built on the work and research to date of UNESCO and Plan International on disability inclusion and gender equality in and through education. It also featured academic experts, activists, teachers and people with lived experience of disability.** It aimed 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.

Watch the webinar in [English](#), [French](#) or [Spanish](#)

---

## UNESCO – a global leader in education

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.



## The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



---

Published in 2023 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

© UNESCO 2023



This report is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this report, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<http://www.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

Designed by UNESCO

Cover photo: UNESCO

---

## Introduction

---

**The webinar was organized as part of the observation of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The annual observance of this day was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly to promote the rights and wellbeing of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development.**

Eliminating barriers to education and creating accessible and inclusive learning environments is a priority of the [2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development](#). Persons with disabilities face some of the most significant barriers in accessing quality education. World Inequality Database in Education (WIDE) 2023 [data show](#) that children with at least one sensory, physical, or intellectual difficulty are seven percentage points less likely than the average child to complete primary school. These gaps may be underestimated, as poorer families are less likely to report that they have a child with disability.

The inclusion of learners with disabilities in education demands going beyond access to schooling and adequate infrastructure. It is also a matter of ensuring their participation, learning, progression and attainment; providing accessible learning materials and resources; creating safe, friendly, inclusive and accessible environments; ensuring teachers and other school staff are adequately trained and supported; and working with schools and communities to tackle bullying, stigma and discrimination.

It is also important to recognise that experiences of discrimination and exclusion, which limit opportunities in education, are linked to the intersections of various characteristics and identities. These include poverty, gender, class, race, ethnicity, caste, language, migration or displacement status, HIV status, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The intersection of gender with disability can act as a magnifier, resulting in further education deprivation. It is fundamental to have an intentional focus on inclusion in education and to tackle the root causes of exclusion, including inequality in the distribution of resources and power and the social and gender norms that perpetuate marginalisation.

To ensure that the right to education is fully guaranteed, governments, civil society, schools, and communities must prioritise and elevate a gender-transformative and disability-inclusive approach when designing, implementing, monitoring and resourcing educational policies and practices and build up an inclusive system that leaves no one behind. This means working at multiple levels to improve access to education for all by targeting the root causes of exclusion, strengthening the transformative nature of education systems and services. provision, and creating an enabling environment to actively promote gender equality and inclusion, and transform unequal gender and social norms.

The webinar focused on disability and gender inequality as intersecting challenges to education. It also addressed key topics such as comprehensive sexuality education, bullying and violence, school health and nutrition.

---

# Highlights

---

## 1. Opening remarks

The webinar was opened by **Ms. Florence Migeon**, Focal point for Inclusion in Education, Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNESCO, who guided the proceedings and highlighted the central message of the webinar: By building education systems that respect diverse needs, abilities, and characteristics and eliminate all forms of discrimination in the environment, we can eliminate gender inequalities and promote inclusion in and through education.

**Ms. Geeta Devi Pradhan**, Global Head of Gender Equality and Inclusion, Plan International, highlighted Plan's commitment to advancing the rights of children and young people in all their diversity, and the need to support them particularly when they are vulnerable to exclusion, poverty, discrimination and violence. While both girls and boys with disabilities face discrimination, girls, non-binary and transgender people are at higher risk of stigma and discrimination. Girls with disabilities experience compound discrimination due to both gender and disability, leading to greater inequality and injustice. This often results in reduced access to education, health care, employment and leadership opportunities. Plan is committed to gender-transformative education, to tackling root causes of gender inequality and to the challenging of harmful gender norms. It is important to amplify the voices of girls, activists, and persons with disabilities in this work. Gender discrimination must be eliminated from legislation and service provision, and there must be increased accountability to human rights frameworks.

**Mr. Manos Antoninis**, Director of the Global Education Monitoring Report Team shared insights into the latest tools and analysis in mapping the impact of having a disability on educational outcomes, also considering gender dimensions. The online [WIDE](#) which has data from more than 160 countries drawing from over 1,000 surveys has now introduced a dimension on disability (also one on parental education). The data covers 46 countries. It shows overall that children with disabilities are less likely to complete primary school. It shows that disability affects women and men differently and that there is variation between countries. For example, in Ghana, the completion gap between those with and those without disabilities is larger for males than for females. In Mongolia, it is the opposite, with females without any disability being 31% more likely to complete a secondary education.

One issue with the statistics is that poorer families are less likely to report their child has a disability due to fears of stigma, so the data underestimates the impact of disability on education outcomes. Also, there are different definitions of young children, and of disability, which make data analysis challenging. There is not universal uptake of tools and surveys, including Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the Washington Group Questions, which leads to different assessment criteria. Progress is being made, but there is still work to do for the data to capture with precision the impact of disability on education.

## 2. Disability and gender inequality: intersecting challenges for education

The first panel of the webinar explored the intersections of disability and gender inequality and the challenges and opportunities this poses for access, participation and completion of education across the life course. Panelists shared their thoughts about existing practice and policy environments, and how to address challenges related to disability and education through a gender transformative lens.

The panel was moderated by **Ms. Justine Sass**, Chief of UNESCO's Section on Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality, who opened by recognising that education policies and programmes often treat disability and gender separately, and therefore are not acknowledging or addressing intersectionality. This needs to be changed.

The panel consisted of **Ms. Laxmi Nepal**, Founder of Access Planet Organization, Nepal; **Ms. Mariana Díaz Figueroa**, Lawyer, Director for the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation of Mexico; **Dr. Kafa Akroush**, Head of Gender Unit in Jordan Ministry of Education; **Mr. Dawit Legesse**, Plan International Ethiopia, Education and Early Childhood Care and Development Lead; and **Dr. Yigzaw Haile**, lead investigator, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

**Ms. Laxmi Nepal** shared her experience of participation, learning and completion of education as a girl with a disability in Nepal. Her parents did what they could to ensure she had the best available quality of education. Laxmi was able to go to an inclusive school; however, some community members questioned why her parents would send their blind daughter to school. When talking about inclusive education, it is important to focus not only on the school, but also the family and community. Schools often have limited resources for people with disabilities. Laxmi experienced a lack of Braille textbooks, and had to study without books. Her sighted friends could access all books, resources and libraries. During exams, visually impaired children had the same questions as sighted students, the exams were not accessible. The challenges in her early schooling related more to accessibility. As Laxmi continued her higher education, she faced marginalisation related to being a girl with a visual impairment. She had to travel alone to different places. In public places and on public transportation, a girl with a disability can face abuse and have to deal with people's perceptions on why a girl with a disability is travelling alone.

**When we talk about inclusive education, we should not only focus on the school, but also the community, the family.**

**Ms. Laxmi Nepal from Nepal**

Laxmi began to get involved in community organizations and noted that the access to education of girls and women with disabilities needed improvement. She established the [Access Planet Organization](#) which works with technology to support inclusive and quality education.

**Ms. Mariana Díaz Figueroa** explained how the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) includes an intersectional focus on gender and disability in education, and frames inclusive education. Article 24 mentions inclusive education, and Article 6 recognises that women and girls with disabilities are subject to discrimination on multiple levels. She noted that it is important to understand discrimination in an intersectional way, including considering disability and gender. But often, women and girls with disabilities' rights are not taken into consideration and not fulfilled. For example, women with disabilities have fewer opportunities to access education because of ableism and sexism. When they do access education, there is a greater possibility of drop out. While there are special/separate education programmes for people with disabilities, these learners should be involved in the regular education system. To be inclusive, we need to ensure that curricula and assessments are modified. And that learners with disabilities do not face discrimination or are subjected to different forms of violence. In particular, action is needed within education environments and classrooms to ensure barriers to education facing girls and women with disabilities are eliminated.

**We must understand discrimination in an intersectional way. We need to understand the challenges and problems that are generated from this intersectionality, in this particular case of disability and gender. A specific example is that young women and women with disabilities have fewer opportunities to access education because of ableism and sexism.**

**Ms. Mariana Díaz Figueroa from Mexico**

**Dr. Kafa Akroush** explained how Jordan has supported systems and institutional strengthening to move towards greater inclusion and gender equality in education. He outlined the ambition and commitment of the Jordanian government and Ministry of Education [on inclusive education](#), including through strategies, plans and policies such as the Education Strategy Plan 2018-2025, which encompasses inclusive education and the Inclusive Education Strategy 2020-2030. Jordan also has the Declaration of Inclusion and Diversity which identifies different vulnerable groups, including children from social minorities, orphans, children with disabilities, out of school children and refugees – with gender cross-cutting. They have a Strategy on Gender Equality in Education 2018-2025 and are developing a National Framework on Inclusion and Diversity in Education, integrating gender. In Jordan, inclusion and gender is part of teacher training. Dr. Akroush recognised that mainstreaming gender and inclusion is a long-term process, but that progress is being made in Jordan. This also includes in evaluation and assessments of their strategies, including for inclusive education. Recommendations from research and assessments are reflected in the policies of the Ministry of Education, for example, recommendations from research conducted on safe transportation to and from school for girls and boys, including those with disabilities.

---

**We should integrate gender...  
if we want to work on inclusion in education.**

Dr. Kafa Akroush from Jordan

**Mr. Dawit Legesse** gave an example of what operationalizing gender-transformative and disability inclusive early childhood education looks like at a national and subnational level, based on the experience of a project in Ethiopia. He started by outlining a positive policy framework, ratification of key conventions, and the commitment of the Ethiopian government to early childhood education and gender equality. However, the downstream implementation of policies and conventions can be limited, which is why it is important for organizations like [Plan International Ethiopia](#) to operationalize these commitments locally, starting with early childhood education.

It is estimated that children and youth under 25 years constitute approximately 30% of all people with a disability in Ethiopia. And gender norms are entrenched in every aspect of society, influencing teaching content and practice.

**Education systems themselves can often reflect and perpetuate  
prevailing harmful gender norms and power relations in  
teaching practices, curricula, and textbooks and this begins in  
early childhood education.**

Mr. Dawit Legesse from Ethiopia

Plan International Ethiopia developed a pilot project, Basics of Reading, Writing, and Math with Augmented Reality and 3D Visualisation, with a focus on preparing children to enter primary schools. This project is testing innovative digital learning applications for children with learning disabilities in two pilot early childhood education centres in Addis Ababa. Through the project intervention, 180 children with learning disabilities accessed early learning programmes with supportive learning technologies while teaching aids were also provided to teachers. The project also paid attention to gender in curricula, teaching and learning. Teachers reported improved participation and school readiness. Research done by Addis Ababa University revealed that digitally supported learning helped children's learning performance increase by 95%.

After their main contribution to the discussion, the panel members finished by sharing what they think is the most urgent action to take forward to ensure that no one is left behind because of his, her, or their disability.

**Dr. Yigzaw Haile** conducted the research on the Ethiopia pilot early childhood education and Augmented Reality project, working with **Mr. Dawit Legesse**. This technology was found useful for children with and without disabilities. Technology has the potential to support quality and inclusive education, but still needs improvement to respond to identified gaps. This includes that it gives more focus to academic skills and less so to other skills that can be

developed through play-based pedagogy. It needs to be better integrated into teacher training programmes and the curriculum of early childhood education. The use of digital technology should continue to be encouraged, including in Ethiopia, to help improve quality, equity and inclusiveness in preschool education.

**Dr. Akroush** said that based on assessments and reports they had done, it became clear that increasing awareness, especially of teachers, on how to support students within the school environment overall, including students with disabilities, was crucial. This can be challenging in large education systems with many Ministry staff, other employees and teachers, but is of fundamental importance.

**Ms. Díaz Figueroa** noted that it is essential to make sure that States can actually foresee and ensure that their policies take an intersectional approach when it comes to gender and disability, recognising that it is important to address the issues that women and girls face, especially in education.

**Ms. Nepal** closed the panelists' remarks by stating that gender equality and quality of education is not possible without making education truly inclusive, which includes recognising that every individual learner has their own abilities and own needs. She strongly recommended to restructure our thinking on education as a lifelong learning process which embraces inclusivity and diversity in society, rather than being only geared towards people getting higher competitive jobs. Education should address intersectionality issues in society, starting from a young age.

**The education system is and should be there to enhance and embrace diversity in society and not to exclude or segregate any group.**

**Ms. Laxmi Nepal from Nepal**

**Ms. Justine Sass**, as moderator of the first panel, summarised key takeaways from the panel discussion, including that:

- The vision we have for education is important.
- We need more data on gendered experience of learners with disabilities.
- Policies and strategies that promote cross-sectoral collaboration, address learners with disabilities' needs and challenge harmful gender norms are important.
- Teachers need skills and support to deliver for disability-inclusive and gender-transformative education inside safe learning environments, and accessible teaching and learning materials, including to address the digital divide.
- Partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities are also essential when working at the intersection of gender equality, education and disability rights.



### 3. Moving towards gender-transformative, safe and inclusive learning environments for learners with disabilities

The second panel focused on how the intersections between gender inequality and disability are being addressed in specific areas of programming. Examples were drawn from disability-inclusive comprehensive sexuality education, school nutrition programmes and initiatives to address school-based bullying and violence.

The session was moderated by **Ms. Ramil Andag**, Global Inclusion Specialist, Plan International, who introduced the discussions by emphasizing the programming and advocacy work of UNESCO and Plan International aimed at addressing the intersection of gender and disability. This included a UNESCO brief on bullying among learners with disabilities in educational settings and work to promote comprehensive and inclusive sexuality education including for learners with disabilities. For Plan International, gender-transformative approaches guide all programming and influencing work, including in inclusive, quality education and early childhood development.

The second panel consisted of **Ms. Christina Msowoya**, primary teacher at Salima Resource Centre, Malawi; **Ms. Maria Guadalupe Bargiela**, activist for the rights of persons with disabilities, Instituto Interamericano sobre Discapacidad y Desarrollo (Inter-American Institute on Disability and Development) - Luz de Frida, Argentina; **Mr. Murali Padmanabhan**, Regional Disability Inclusion Advisor, Asia & Pacific, United Nations World Food Programme, Thailand; and **Mr. Stuart Cyprian Higenyi**, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) Youth Network, Uganda.

**Ms. Christina Msowoya** shared her experience of participating in [Breaking the Silence](#) trainings that aim to make comprehensive sexuality education available to learners with disabilities. This includes through interactive learning methods which empower educators with skills and tools to provide life skills education, including raising awareness of students of their rights and responsibilities.

**Comprehensive sexuality education in Malawi has been used as a tool that is bringing change to the lives of many adolescents, more especially those with diverse needs.**

**Ms. Christina Msowoya from Malawi**

An example provided was a deaf/blind boy who touched the breast of a sighted guide, making her very angry and emotional. In addressing the issue with the student, it became clear that he didn't understand and hadn't been taught the importance of privacy and consent. So this demonstrated the importance of awareness for learners, but also of empowering teachers with knowledge and skills. Another example related to helping girls with disabilities to manage their menstruation, when previously they had experienced stigma and bullying from other students. A further example given related to how life skills education has helped students, particularly those with disabilities, to develop skills like assertiveness and decision-making, and to have high rather than low self-esteem, and to be

ready to continue their education. Defensive and survival skills have also been taught so learners understand danger signs, abuse, harassment and how to manage this, including how to report to authorities. This includes teaching boys about how to treat girls with respect and supporting girls to speak up and stay safe.

**Ms. Maria Guadalupe Bargiela**, an activist for rights of people with disabilities in Argentina, talked about the barriers for young people with disabilities to access comprehensive sexuality education, and how the feminist collective in Latin America addresses the issue. Ms. Maria Guadalupe is part of an activist group called Movimiento Estamos Tod@s En Acción (We Are All in Action Movement), hosted by the Instituto Interamericano sobre Discapacidad y Desarrollo (Inter-American Institute on Disability and Development), with a project '[Luz de Frida](#)' (inspired by Frida Kahlo) which has worked on gender and disability since 2020. The programme is accessible to all, recognising that many marginalised groups' voices are not heard and they do not get the information and services they need in accessible ways. This includes supporting girls to get clear information and products to manage their menstruation.

**People with disabilities are often made invisible when it comes to speaking about and accessing information on [menstruation]. We often don't have the information that we need. We often don't get the help that we need.**

**Ms. Maria Guadalupe Bargiela from Argentina**

She noted a historical taboo and silence about menstruation in Latin American, and called for action to break down barriers and address these issues in the open. People with disabilities are often completely invisible, removed from society. People who are part of the project have numerous disabilities, and want to show that they are present and can adapt. The work is very important as it provides clear and accessible information about how to deal with periods, the menstrual cycle and what is needed. People with certain disabilities find no accessible menstruation products and may require support to manage their periods.

**Mr. Murali Padmanabhan** shared insights on what is needed to ensure that mainstream schools provide disability-inclusive and gender-transformative environments through school feeding programmes, recognising that public education often excludes learners with disabilities from formal education. As the world's largest humanitarian agency focusing on food and nutrition security, the World Food Programme (WFP) targets those who are food-insecure and considers intersectionality. One of the major programmes is school meals. WFP started to consider the impact of disability and how to contribute to inclusive education, including how providing meals for a child with a disability can ensure that the family has an incentive to send the child to school regardless of other barriers.

**We wanted to look at and understand what it means to a child with disability when it comes to inclusive education, and how the school meal programme can support and incentivize parents to get their children with disabilities to educational institutions.**

**Mr. Murali Padmanabhan from Bangkok**

WFP conducted [operational research in Nepal and Lao PDR](#) to build understanding. There is an enabling policy environment through educational policies and also ratification of relevant UN conventions. But what are the barriers to inclusion? They are two-fold: barriers within the school and barriers outside of the school. It starts with community and parental attitudes, and even those of neighbours who might question why a child with a disability is being sent to school. But the community needs to be engaged to promote inclusion and operationalise policies. Then it is important to consider the school environment, starting with how the child can reach the school, what happens in the school, how the child is treated and supported by staff, whether they can access food with dignity, and how children with specific can be fed. Programmes also need to consider additional barriers, for example for girls with disabilities and ethnic minority groups. Recognising there are many different committees, teachers, parents, associations, and local bodies in and surrounding schools, it is necessary to bring all these stakeholders together, including with organizations of people with disabilities. To address challenges in the environment, attitudes and institutions, it is essential to work together with other experts and agencies to ensure that school meals do contribute to children with disabilities reaching school. WFP reviewed their own policies and budgets, worked closely with local authorities to build their capacity and strengthen their standard operating procedures, and helped ensure schools and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities were constructed in an accessible way that doesn't compound barriers.

**Mr. Stuart Cyprian Higenyi** shared his educational journey as a person with a disability, including transitioning from secondary to higher education to become an engineer. Affirmative action in Uganda helped him to get an education.

He also provided his reflections on the challenges girls and boys with disabilities face in pursuing their education in Uganda. Both girls and boys are dropping out of education in Uganda, right from primary school, and increasingly so in secondary education. Eight (8) out of 10 girls with disabilities drop out at primary level. These kinds of statistics are important to include in advocacy.

High dropout rates are due to lack of reasonable accommodation. There are different disabilities existing in the community, and students may go to inclusive schools, but still there is no reasonable accommodation. For example, a girl with cerebral palsy needs support with her personal hygiene but feels uncomfortable in communities where she doesn't feel included. Early pregnancy also means young girls are unable to continue their education. Boys with disabilities face mental health issues and bullying. They try and fit in, but often feel excluded from and by other students, so they end up dropping out of school.

These are some of the challenges that mean there are increasing numbers of students with disabilities dropping out of school in Uganda.

When considering supportive environments for students with disabilities, teachers play a big role. Attention is usually focused on teachers at primary and secondary level, but it is also essential to ensure that teachers in tertiary institutions know about inclusion, as many do not.

**For inclusive education, we need to engage all possible people involved in education – parents, the community, and teachers at all levels, right from primary up to tertiary institutions. We must have inclusive education that starts from primary up to when the student finishes.**

**Mr. Stuart Cyprian Higenyi from Uganda**

In closing, the panel members shared one key recommendation.

**Mr. Higenyi** said that youth with disabilities should be involved in decision- and policy-making. For example, the SDG4Youth Network was able to come up with a Youth Declaration for the Transforming Education Summit documenting what youth want, including inclusive education. We should give a say to youth so that they can advocate for their own rights, including their right to education.

**Mr. Padmanabhan** called for disaggregated data to understand the specific needs of girls, boys and others with a disability. Data guides us on who we need to engage with, where capacity needs to be built, and what are the barriers that can be removed. Data disaggregation will help to make inclusive education more effective, including through school meal programmes, which can be adapted according to the needs and number of children with disabilities in schools.

The key recommendation from **Ms. Bargiela** was to be attentive to the needs and requirements of women with disabilities. Public policy must take them into account, going beyond infantilizing them to make these populations visible. Women with disabilities have rights and a place in society. They should be listened to and valued.

**Ms. Msowoya** recommended that all governments train more educators with diverse needs on comprehensive sexuality education. Those with diverse needs should also be given a platform where they can express their feelings and talk about things that affect them. In so doing, more people's needs will be addressed. It is also important to have opportunities for teachers to learn from each other, within and between countries.

#### 4. Closing remarks

Following the second panel, some closing remarks and overall reflections on the presentations and recommendations from the webinar were shared by **Ms. Joanna Herat**, Chief Interim of the Section of Health and Education, UNESCO. She recognised the broad range of contributions on inclusive education from different regions and perspectives. A key takeaway is that we all need to work together to improve the quality of education for children and young people with disabilities and to make sure that education is both inclusive and advancing gender equality.

**What all the speakers talked about was tackling the root causes that perpetuate inequality and the need to address those.**

**Ms. Joanna Herat from UNESCO**

**Ms. Herat** summarised some of the key points and takeaway messages made through the presentations, including:

- There are still some gaps remaining in data, especially on gender and disability and disaggregation is needed.
- There are legal frameworks, conventions, policies and strategies in place, but one of the challenges is putting these into action.
- People with disabilities are often invisible.
- We need to continue to ensure access to mainstream education for learners with disabilities and to create safe learning environments through inclusion.
- We need to be cognizant of those at heightened risk of stigma, for example girls, non-binary and gender-diverse learners, and to consider other intersecting forms of vulnerability.
- The intersection of gender and disability is a magnifying glass when it comes to discrimination in education. Gender and disability are often treated separately, but hopefully we can begin to change that.
- We need to restructure our thinking on the role of education. Education is to learn, to do and to think, to be creative and to be citizens. It is not just for getting the highest paid job.
- Partnerships are crucial, as is working across different sectors.
- At the heart of this work must be young people with disabilities, being meaningfully involved and driving – to the extent possible – the change that needs to happen.
- Civil society is also important, including mobilizing at the community level, providing services, and providing education. We need to continue to find ways for civil society to be pushing us all to do better and to be part of that progress.
- Government is also key, including engaging with available legal frameworks.

## 5. Webinar Key Messages

In conclusion, when considering all the webinar inputs and discussions, three inter-connected main messages for supporting work at the intersection of disability inclusion and gender equality in education can be emphasized:

### Key messages

- Gender and disability are intersecting challenges for education, but are often treated as separate issues or challenges in policies, programmes and practice. This situation must change.
- Persons with disabilities, including young people, girls and women, and organizations of persons with disabilities must be at the centre of programming and advocacy for inclusive education and as champions for their own rights and needs.
- We need to reimagine education and involve all stakeholders in doing so, including students, teachers, parents, community members and policy makers if we are to make education truly inclusive and gender-transformative.

### Want to know more?

Watch the webinar here in [English](#), [French](#) or [Spanish](#)

Visit the event webpage with more information in [English](#), [French](#) or [Spanish](#)

### Contacts:

UNESCO contact:

[inclusion@unesco.org](mailto:inclusion@unesco.org)

[Healtheducation@unesco.org](mailto:Healtheducation@unesco.org)

Plan International contact:

[info@plan-international.org](mailto:info@plan-international.org)



**unesco**

United Nations  
Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization

## Every learner matters

### Disability inclusion and gender equality in education

UNESCO and Plan International co-organized an international webinar on the occasion of the 2023 International Day of Persons with Disabilities under the title: “Every learner matters: disability inclusion and gender equality in education”.

The webinar aimed at sharing the latest data and monitoring tools, better understanding the intersection between gender equality and disability inclusion in education, sharing good practices and lessons that ensure quality, inclusive and gender-transformative education, and identifying challenges and recommendations to be addressed at different levels.

## Stay in touch



[inclusion@unesco.org](mailto:inclusion@unesco.org)



<https://on.unesco.org/inclusion>

Education for Inclusion and  
Gender Equality  
Education Sector  
UNESCO  
7 Place de Fontenoy  
75007 Paris, France

Follow @UNESCO on social media



Subscribe to UNESCO's  
education newsletter

[on.unesco.org/educationnewsletter](https://on.unesco.org/educationnewsletter)



Sustainable  
Development  
Goals