The right to education for persons with disabilities
- Moving towards inclusion

Presentation by Ms Faryal KHAN, Programme Specialist for Education, UNESCO Kingston
The right to education in legal instruments and international commitments

Normative instruments

International commitments to education

The 6 Education for All Goals

The 8 Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Global partnership for development
The right to education

...But this right needs to be translated into national plans and programmes as we face COVID-19

- The right to education is dependant upon its effective implementation.

- We must ensure that laws are fully implemented and translated into effective policies.

- Current plans and programmes have largely been insufficient with regard to needs of children and youth vulnerable to marginalisation or exclusion.
The right to education

- Schools perform many functions outside of education. They provide a safe haven, a social arena, and, for families with children with special needs, they offer vital one-to-one support.

- Online learning, by comparison, is simply not up to the task.

- So what about their right to an education?

Global Education Monitoring Report Team
• Of the learners with special needs in the Caribbean, up to 2% to 4% find day-to-day life challenging without assistance.

• Disability is more prevalent in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries.

• Disability, gender, nationality, ethnicity, poverty and many other factors affect internet access.

• An online-based, high-tech approach is not always ideal for creating an inclusive learning environment.

• Currently, because of a lack of disaggregated data and information, it is unclear how many students with disabilities are receiving inadequate educational support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
In the Caribbean, the lives of about **7 million students** and their families have been significantly affected by the school closures caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.  

However, this measure does not address educational discontinuity and disruption for all students.

The estimated number of affected students does not take into account all of those who are **marginalized, disadvantaged or “invisible”** in educational systems.

We need to ensure that learners are not left behind during school closures as well as after schools reopen.
Barriers to education through remote-learning practices

• In health crises such as COVID-19, persons with disabilities are often provided with less help and inadequately trained teachers.

• More time and resources are required for students with disabilities to actively participate in learning. This includes equipment, internet access and specially designed materials and support. This makes learning more costly for students and their families.

• Students with disabilities are negatively affected by the classroom shutdown in additional ways. They lose access to school meals and to play with their friends, which are equally important for development and learning.

• Teachers often lack ICT skills and knowledge. They are unprepared to teach online and cannot ensure student engagement, specifically for students with disabilities.

• Currently, there is no available data on special-education teachers’ digital skills in developing or least-developed countries.
Assessing learners’ needs for remote learning

Resources

School, interrupted: 4 options for distance education to continue teaching during COVID-19

Tools and Resources: https://www.nclrd.org/covid19

Modifying curricula and instructions

Resources: Key Questions to Consider When Planning Lessons

Implementing project-based learning

Resources: Project Based Learning for Special Education and Inclusion

Ensuring individualized education programme (IEP)

Resources: Tips for Parents With Special Needs Children and IEPs During The COVID-19 Crisis

Supporting teachers

Resources

EducatingAllLearner.org

Distance Learning & Special ED for Special Educators by The Arizona Department of Education

Best Practices for Educating Online by the Council for Exceptional Children and eLuma

Providing family and caregiver support

Resources

The Government of the United Kingdom: Guidance – Help children with SEND continue their education during coronavirus
Thank you for your attention

Contact:
Faryal Khan
f.khan@unesco.org