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SA 2 - Education

*Eliminating obstacles for individuals
with disabilities to pursue further
education*

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RESEARCH
REPORT



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Issue: Eliminating obstacles for individuals with disabilities to pursue further education

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Introduction

Education is key for communication, academic success, development, and a person's overall well-being as an individual. Quality education ensures that people develop as well-rounded individuals and accede to their true potentials and so, is an indispensable human right. Unfortunately, just like many splinter groups around the world such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities face certain obstacles to pursue further education mainly due to a non-conducive environment, emotional disturbance, communication problems, or lack of specific teaching aids.

Definition of Key Terms

Disabilities: a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual of their group.

Severe disabilities: refer to a person with severe disabilities and need different measurements and evaluation in the aspects of politic, social, laws, education, and health in order to ensure their rights in education effectively and with the best quality

Able-bodied: non-disabled

General Overview

Education is one of the most significant tools to lift socially excluded people from poverty and back into society to develop individuals into becoming well-rounded world citizens. As suggested by UNESCO, if all adults had completed secondary education, worldwide poverty would be decreased by more than half, which simply highlights the importance of one's educational rights. Unfortunately, even though people with disabilities make up the largest minority around the globe (this is about 15% of the global population and about 80% of these people are located in developed countries), most people with disabilities face obstacles in pursuing further education, such as but not limited to the lack of social inclusivity, lack of accessible equipment or specific teaching aids, and lack of knowledge about and sensitivity to disability issues. People with disabilities account for about 14.4% of the global population of students and therefore their inclusivity in society and accessibility to all resources is vital. Students and scholars with disabilities are under-represented and marginalized in many higher education campuses

which do not provide the necessary environment to promote the higher education of people with disabilities. Providing an inclusive education helps combat discrimination, promoting diversity and participation. Students may have disabilities that range from physical, to sensory or mental to intellectual disabilities, which also means that their needs will also differ and can not be generalized. Some may require additional equipment whereas others may require diverse learning methods or teaching aids. Over 14% of all students around the world have a disability which causes them to face additional challenges every day, therefore urgently addressing this issue is quite critical.

Many studies show that students with disabilities usually participate in fewer extracurricular activities, clubs, on or off-campus events as well as projects compared to their non-disabled peers. This is most commonly associated with the lack of social inclusion received, school's lack of funds, lack of specialists, and lack of individualization. Most schools are insufficient in providing disabled students with the adequate conditions they might require. All disabled individuals must be assessed individually, according to their disabilities, and might have their own special needs. It is impossible to generalize the needs of individuals with disabilities to a general population which is why the common curriculum presented to students might be inadequate to the use of students with disabilities.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

UNESCO: This organization is most certainly against any discrimination in the field of education and expresses the principle of equality of educational opportunities as a key value. UNESCO has adopted many international standard-setting instruments including a convention and multiple recommendations to develop the right to education and its accessibility amongst people with disabilities.

Canada: This delegation has reported that the education acts to address the provision of reasonable accommodations to meet the necessary needs of students with disabilities to maximize their efficiency in learning.

Luxembourg: This delegation has adopted a law in 2011 regarding the access of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs to educational and professional qualifications. According to this law, reasonable accommodations may involve classroom teaching, work assigned to the pupil both inside and outside the classroom, in-class tests and evaluations, and final exams.

Iraq: This delegation has developed a strategic national project of educational integration for comprehensive education, that aims to improve the quality of education provided to students with disabilities.

Argentina: This delegation has produced educational booklets entitled "Literacy Support for Children in Special Education" that have been designed for visually-impaired and hearing-impaired children (students with sensory disabilities) and all students in need of these special resources received free books under the Equality Connect scheme.

Norway: The delegation of Norway has regulated the legal framework to allow children with disabilities to access priority admission to kindergartens and municipalities and is responsible for ensuring and implementing this right.

Treaties and Events

1992	<i>The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed</i>
2006	<i>the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted</i>

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Children with disabilities are about four times more likely to experience violence than their non-disabled peers and adults with disabilities are about 1.5 times more likely to be a victim of violence compared to their non-disabled peers. As portrayed by these statistics, disabled people are at a higher risk of violence. They also generally have poorer health, lower academic achievements, fewer job opportunities, and higher rates of poverty. As aforementioned, this is mostly due to the lack of services available to them.

In 2006, by the adoption of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) all these barriers people with disabilities face in their everyday life were recognized by the signing countries. Although this document is crucial to the issue, it is insufficient in providing people with disabilities with all the necessary support and accessibility required. Until it is certain that all people with disabilities have all the same rights, opportunities, level of employment, and social inclusion as the able-bodied, the convention itself is quite critical yet insubstantial.

Possible Solutions

Some possible solutions to eliminate or reduce the obstacles people with disabilities face by the means of pursuing further education may be;

Regularly scheduling mandatory educational panels for all teachers and school staff to inform them about the potential special needs of students with disabilities and raising awareness amongst educators about sensitivity for disability, as this will increase the knowledgeable staff in schools and increase the accessibility of education to people with disabilities. Additionally, promoting inclusivity in all extracurricular activities, clubs, and school-based events will allow students with disabilities to participate in more scholarly activities and ease their process of becoming a part of the community.

On the other hand, providing the necessary time extensions or alternatives for generalized curriculums in schools to students with disabilities is also essential. These students may not be able to complete the given tasks in the same amount of time or with the same resources due to their disabilities and so a flexible time extension must be available to them. Reforming the current extracurricular programs to be more disability-inclusive and promoting diversity in all academic programs will allow all students to fit in easily.

Increasing the use of technological resources in school curriculums will also allow providing a more inclusive educational environment and collecting funds to ramp up the research on educational methods for students with sensory or mental disabilities and universalize the most effective methods for specific conditions will also help improve the quality of education provided to these students.

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