

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization**

**Addressing Inclusion for People with Disabilities  
in Education**



**Headwaters Model United Nations  
Background Guide**



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## Background of Council

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was established in 1946 as a specialized council. This was right after World War II ended, and the committee was created to establish peace and security. UNESCO works to preserve national landmarks, building culture and peace, the eradication of poverty, and interconnecting peoples and cultures in education, science, communication, and information. They were founded on the ideas of peace and equity. To fix the problems that they have been faced with they have taken action in multiple ways, usually by drafting and passing working papers that strongly encourage other nations in a peaceful way to change some of their actions. UNESCO can create programs and encourage nations to use them. UNESCO is a very peaceful council but they can have widespread effects from the actions that they take.



## The Issue at Hand

There are over 93 million children with disabilities all over the world. These children are at a severe disadvantage in developing countries, especially in the field of education. The exact definition of disabled is different depending on where you are in the world, but the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006), adopted by the UN General Assembly, defines persons with disabilities as “having long-term impairments (either physical, mental or sensory) that cause barriers to full integrate into society”. These children have many obstacles to education. In developing countries around 90% of disabled children do not attend school. Some of the reasons for this include simply getting to school, having a curriculum that doesn’t work for them because of their disability, and the inclusion by their peers and teachers. All of these issues need to be addressed in all countries, but the issue of transportation especially applies to developing countries. In developing countries around 90% of disabled children do not attend school.

There are many international groups who have called for this right to be available to people with disabilities. For example, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 26) calls for free and compulsory education “...at least in the elementary and fundamental stages...” and The Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 23) stresses the need to provide services “...free of charge, whenever possible, and taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child.”

There have also been rules and statements made that push for extra attention towards young children, girls, and women with disabilities because of the extreme disadvantage they are put at. (Rule 6 of The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities). The World Programme of Action also calls for special attention to persons with disabilities in rural areas and draws attention to



problems caused by travelling distances. The International Conference on Children's Rights in Education conference was a big stepping stone in the inclusion of children with disabilities in education. They set a precedent for what inclusion in this area should look like. Stating that Education is a right, not a privilege, The child's participation and full development must be supported in all educational goals, setting and practices, Existing identifiable barriers to implementation of the child's rights to education can be overcome, and Education must respect individual, contextual and cultural differences.

There is also the issue of the quality of education provided to individuals with disabilities. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (article 26 (2)) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 13 (1)) along with other international instruments stress the need for the need to guarantee high standards of education for peoples with disabilities.



## Possible Solutions

This is a multi-faceted issue calling for many different solutions. One thing to focus on is the physical access to education. Thinking about ways to create transportation to schools for children with physical disabilities. And once they are at school, creating school buildings that accommodate people in wheelchairs or with other physical disabilities.

One very important thing to think about is curriculum for the teachers so they can effectively teach disabled children. The teachers need to be able to understand disabled children and so it is important to think about the teachers education in this subject.



## Further Reading

Edwards, Alliyah, and New York Model United Nations. "United Nations Children's Fund Background Guide 2019." *nmun*, 2019, <https://www.nmun.org/assets/documents/conference-archives/new-york/2019/ny19-bgg-unicef.pdf> Accessed 6 December 2020.

United Nations. "COMPILATION OF INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS RELATING TO DISABILITY." *un.org*, United Nations, 2003-04, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/discom403.htm> Accessed 8 December 2020.