

An inclusive world,
starts with me,
with you,
with all of us

A world fit for every child

SUMMARY

**UNICEF DISABILITY
INCLUSION POLICY AND
STRATEGY
2022-2030**

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Disability Section, UNICEF 3 United Nations Plaza New York, NY, 10017, USA Email: disabilities@unicef.org

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Disability inclusion matters

Every child has the right to grow up feeling happy, safe and loved. Free to play and learn with their peers. Free to find a sense of belonging in the world and to feel valued – at home, at school and within their community.

But many children struggle to realize these rights. Every day 240 million children with disabilities, or 10 per cent of the world’s children, face various barriers that hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Barriers related to mobility or communication can prevent children with disabilities from playing with friends, going to school or getting routine vaccinations, medical help and even emergency support during a crisis. Stigma and discrimination are also barriers that can lead to further isolation, mental health issues, neglect and violence.

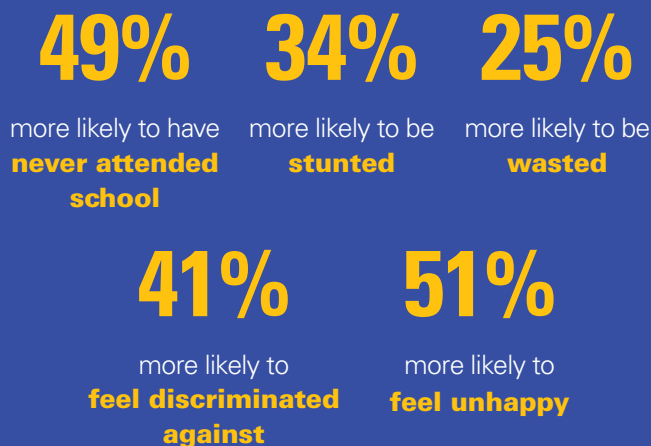
Disability inclusion starts when every one of us contributes to removing physical, attitudinal and communication barriers, including in the digital divide.

UNICEF’s vision is a world fit for *every* child. Inclusion is at the heart of what we do, driven by our commitment to leave no child behind.

The data demands action

Disability inclusion is not new to UNICEF. It has been a growing area of work for more than a decade. In 2021, UNICEF released the most comprehensive statistical analysis of children with disabilities, revealing that as many as 240 million children with disabilities continue to be left behind.

Compared with children without disabilities, children with disabilities are:



The extent to which children with disabilities are deprived, discriminated against and lack hope for the future makes it clear that societies are not doing enough to realize the most basic human rights of all children. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation even worse.

Including children with disabilities in all aspects of life must be a priority for all of us. If provided an environment that enables their full participation, their energies, talents and ideas will make a positive impact to families and communities, around the world.

UNICEF leading the way

Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008, disability inclusion has become a part of the human rights and development agendas, with increased support and investment from the global community.

With its strong presence in 190 countries, UNICEF is uniquely positioned to advance disability inclusion at scale across the globe. UNICEF is a trusted partner not only for national governments but also for donors, researchers, local and international civil society, and the private sector.

Within the United Nations system, UNICEF has a uniquely cross-sectoral mandate and a comparative advantage in its ability to raise attention to and invest in programming, research standard-setting, and resource mobilization across contexts, sectors and political environments, to shift norms and to promote inclusion for all children.



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Introducing the DIPAS

UNICEF's Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (DIPAS) was developed with the aim of delivering disability-inclusive support and services for children in their communities and of mainstreaming disability inclusion across every aspect of our work and our world.

Disability inclusion is not a new priority for UNICEF. It is included in our 2022–2025 Strategic Plan and has been a growing area of work for more than a decade. The DIPAS is guided by the CRPD, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS).

Each thematic sector at UNICEF is already making progress towards its own commitments on disability inclusion. What is new, though, is that the DIPAS provides a road map for cross-sectoral coordination that goes beyond our 2022–2025 Strategic Plan. It shows us how we can strengthen service delivery in communities by working together, strategically, across sectors. As one UNICEF, we will drive more efficient and effective outcomes for children with disabilities. The DIPAS lays the foundations for building truly inclusive communities.

The DIPAS also focuses inwards, providing comprehensive organizational strategies to help UNICEF to become a model for an inclusive, diverse workplace, and a global leader for disability inclusion.

Vision

The DIPAS establishes a framework for achieving UNICEF’s ambitious vision of a more inclusive world by 2030 – a world where all children, including those with disabilities, live in barrier-free and inclusive communities. Where children with disabilities are embraced and supported, at every stage of life, to realize their rights and achieve full participation in society.



Goals

1. Children with disabilities are empowered and recognized as their own best advocates and seen as essential to the expansion and sustainability of inclusion
2. Children with disabilities receive the support they need across their life course to live independently and to be included in communities
3. Children with disabilities grow up in enabling environments with access to resources and opportunities to realize their full potential
4. Children and people with disabilities benefit from a full range of UNICEF programmes and organizational investments that embrace inclusivity and diversity

In addition to our goals to build inclusive communities, UNICEF also aims to become a model of an inclusive, diverse workplace, and a global catalyst for disability inclusion.

Vision

All children, including those with disabilities, live in barrier free and inclusive communities where persons with disabilities are embraced and supported, across the life cycle, to realise and defend their rights, and to achieve full and effective participation.

Goals

Children with disabilities are empowered and recognized as their own best advocates and seen as essential to the scaling up and sustainability of inclusion.

Children with disabilities receive the support they require across the life course to live independently and be included in communities.

Children with disabilities grow up in enabling environments with access to resources and opportunities to realize their full potential.

Children and persons with disabilities benefit from a full range of UNICEF programmes and organizational investments that embrace inclusivity and diversity.

Cross-Sectoral Strategic Priorities

Prevention of stigma, discrimination, neglect, and violence against children with disabilities and promotion of diversity and inclusion

Disability inclusive infrastructure, services, programmes, and coordination platforms

Access to comprehensive community care and support services

Access to assistive technology and relevant services

Disability inclusive action in humanitarian, emergencies, and fragile contexts

Full and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities

Strategies

Programmes

Cross-sectoral coordination

Data and research

Inclusive systems strengthening

Innovation

Advocacy, Community Engagement, and Social Behavior Change

Humanitarian Action

Organizational

Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodations

Information and Communication Technology

Institutional Architecture and Capacity

Supply

Communications and Advocacy

Enablers

Partnerships

Financing and Resource Mobilisation

Leadership, Accountability, and Coordination

Outcome

UNICEF models dynamic inclusivity by embracing people and cultures in all their diversity

Importance of partnership

We recognize that ambition on this scale cannot be achieved alone. It must be grounded in robust commitment and strategic leadership within UNICEF and other United Nations agencies, working in partnership with organizations of persons with disabilities, governments, the donor community, the private sector and civil society. We will capitalize on established relationships and engage in new partnerships to help children and their families, with and without disabilities, to live and fully participate in their communities.

The DIPAS was developed with these partnerships at its core, through a consultative process with UNICEF staff in more than 80 countries, and external experts from organizations of persons with disabilities, implementing partners, United Nations agencies, governments and, most importantly, children and young

people with disabilities. It was also shaped by the commitments made by UNICEF and others at the 2022 Global Disability Summit.

UNICEF will support partners to expand their workforce capacity to develop accessible needs assessments, effective case management and equitable community-based services. We will strengthen our investments, partnerships and technical assistance to help governments to realize universal access to comprehensive services. This will make sure that children with disabilities can access the support and care they need, within their communities.



How to build a disability-inclusive community

UNICEF has a vital role to play in strengthening the components needed to build disability-inclusive communities, and to create and monitor the necessary enabling environments.

The path requires multiple and overlapping strategies designed to mainstream and coordinate disability inclusion across every area of our work and the work of our partners.





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Making it happen with a twin-track approach

Achieving this ambitious vision will require commitment to disability inclusion and concrete action from all of us. These commitments will follow two complementary paths promoting equal access for persons with disabilities to mainstream systems and services, recognizing that disability-targeted interventions are also necessary to address and eliminate barriers.



Disability inclusion

Twin track approach to disability inclusion



Mainstreaming

The integration of disability inclusion into sectoral and cross-sectoral programming and organizational systems and structures.



Targeted

Targeted actions and investments to advance the rights and well-being of children with disabilities, as well as the inclusion of staff with disabilities



Removing barriers to inclusion and providing care and support

UNICEF will accelerate action on these cross-sectoral strategic priorities:

1. Prevention of stigma, discrimination, neglect and violence against children with disabilities, and the promotion of diversity and inclusion
2. Improvement of disability-inclusive infrastructure, services, programmes, workplaces and coordination platforms
3. Access to comprehensive community care and support services, within and across sectors
4. Access to assistive technology (like wheelchairs, hearing aids or spectacles) and relevant services
5. Disability-inclusive action in humanitarian, emergency and fragile contexts and across the full humanitarian, peacebuilding and development spectrum
6. Full and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities



Creating and monitoring enabling and accessible environments

UNICEF will focus on the following programmatic strategies to create and monitor the enabling, accessible environments needed.

Data and research

We will continue to invest in excellent data and research to develop evidence-based strategies and costed plans to help to build inclusive, accessible communities with access to basic services for all. We will continue to collect and monitor evidence related to the participation of children with disabilities and their families or carers.

Disability-inclusive policies and legal frameworks

We will use the power of our global and national influencing platforms to advocate the establishment of disability-inclusive policies and legal frameworks, and the costing and budgeting to support integrated and accessible infrastructure and service for children with disabilities.

We will amplify the voices of children and young people with disabilities. We will highlight the intersecting impacts of exclusion, discrimination and neglect, so that policymakers understand the need to act.

Inclusive systems strengthening

We will work with governments to promote disability inclusion across national systems, and in humanitarian, emergency and fragile contexts. We will encourage governments to embed accessibility and non-discrimination across all regulations and practices. We will help governments to build the capacity of service providers.

Cross-sectoral coordination

We will strengthen coordination and collaboration across thematic sectors to work more efficiently and effectively as one UNICEF to build inclusive communities. For example, for a school to be accessible and inclusive, it needs accessible transport and infrastructure. It needs WASH, education, health and nutrition, social protection and child protection programme specialists to work together. There must be collaboration with stakeholders and with all levels of government to ensure children with disabilities, and their families or carers, can access inclusive and barrier-free services and support.

Innovation

We will invest in innovative solutions that help us adapt to changing understandings of disability, and improve disability identification, needs assessments and accessible information systems.



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With a growing understanding across UNICEF, and across the world, of the importance of mental health during childhood and adolescence, as well as of the challenges posed by climate change, we will also accelerate work and investments on disability inclusion in these areas. We will explore innovative solutions to address disability inclusion within disaster risk reduction and responses to climate change and environmental degradation.

Assistive technology

UNICEF has the largest humanitarian warehouse on the planet. The scale of our procurement division brings unique purchasing power. We have already secured high-quality paediatric wheelchairs and hearing aids at the lowest cost per unit in the world.

We will increase our investment in assistive technology and inclusive products, continuing to systematically add them to our global supply catalogue, meeting the quality standard set by the World Health Organization.

Changing attitudes and beliefs to erase stigma and discrimination

We will erase stigma and discrimination through scaled up, targeted social behaviour change strategies and by expanding community engagement on inclusion.

Humanitarian action

We will embed disability inclusion as a core element of humanitarian action and coordination.

UNICEF will ensure that all service delivery – including in humanitarian, emergency and fragile contexts – is disability inclusive and builds strong linkages across humanitarian and development programming.

A disability-inclusive risk analysis will be integrated into systems strengthening initiatives to build resilience in fragile contexts and settings prone to disasters.

Resources

Adequate funding and resources are needed to build inclusive communities. We will raise funds and invest in the areas of work that UNICEF is directly responsible for delivering.

We will use data to produce costed plans and will advocate investment from governments, the private sector and other donors to help to provide accessible, disability-inclusive basic services for all.

We will build staff capacity and expertise across UNICEF to advance a comprehensive, rights-based approach to disability inclusion.

“UNICEF’s Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy sets a bold vision and clear targets for the entire Organization to advance disability inclusion. We need YOU – your commitment and actions – to ensure that every child with a disability has the same opportunities as their peers without disabilities. Change starts with me, with you, with all of us.”

Catherine Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF

Enablers of success

These programmatic and organizational strategies will be supported by key enablers of success:

- **Partnerships:** UNICEF recognizes the potential for mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities, governments, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, donors, civil society, UNICEF employees with disabilities and others. We will capitalize on existing relationships and actively seek new partnerships.
- **Engaging with the business sector:** engaging with the private sector can be pivotal in delivering on the DIPAS and goes well beyond the funding of initiatives. The potential role of business will be critical in advocacy, spreading awareness, instigating joint campaigns, employing persons with disabilities, building skills and offering apprenticeship opportunities, designing innovative solutions and technology, shaping workplace practices and employability, and providing assistive technologies and products.

- **Financing and resource mobilization:**

Adequate funding and resources must be allocated at all levels of the organization to ensure the operationalization of the DIPAS commitments.

- **Leadership, accountability and coordination:**

Through the DIPAS and its associated accountability framework, UNICEF's leadership across the organization commits to ensuring meaningful progress, including through bold accountability standards for action.



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Accountabilities

1. By 2025, UNICEF will increase, by at least 2 per cent, its organizational budget expenditure, to progressively accelerate disability inclusion across its programmes and operations, in both development and humanitarian action, committing to a target of 10 per cent of total expenditure by the year 2030.
2. By 2025, UNICEF will progressively increase the number of employees with disabilities by at least 2 per cent across all offices, with the aim of reaching 7 per cent representation by 2030.
3. By 2025, all UNICEF regional offices will have at least one dedicated full-time disability specialist for programmes and operations, to coordinate and support disability inclusion in the region.
4. By 2025, 75 per cent of UNICEF staff will have undergone training on disability inclusion.
5. Generate evidence from data insights and research through dedicated capacity (i.e. The Centre of Excellence on Data for Children with Disabilities) to guide programme design and investments.
6. Disability inclusion, specifically of children with disabilities, will be systematically mainstreamed into media communications and advocacy.
7. By December 2023, regional and headquarters Divisional Directors will have developed divisional/regional action plans on DIPAS.

Measuring progress through existing commitments and indicators



**Global Framework for DIPAS
Accountability and Monitoring**



UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025
Renewed ambition towards 2030



Informed by normative frameworks – CRC, CRPD, CEDAW

Global coordination mechanisms

The following disability inclusion working groups will be set up to coordinate, monitor and report annually on progress towards programmatic and organizational goals.

- **A Global Disability Inclusion Programmes Technical Working Group** to coordinate, monitor and report on disability-inclusive programmes will be set up by the global lead on disability under the supervision of the programme group director. This group will include disability specialists from: each thematic area; data and research; emergency operations; global communications and advocacy; supply division; innovations; and regional and country offices.
- **A UNICEF/UNDIS Operations Working Group** to coordinate, monitor and report on UNICEF's disability-inclusive organizational targets and the UNDIS will be set up by the head of the culture and diversity team in the Office of the Executive Director with support of the global lead on disability and under the supervision of the deputy executive director of management. This group will include representatives from: the division of human resources; information and communication technology division global shared services centre; the division of financial and administrative management; supply division; evaluation office; and the disability team (Programme Group Leadership Team (PGLT)).



Conclusion

Through our *Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy*, we establish a bold vision for the world we want to see by 2030 and outline the programmatic and organizational strategies and investments needed to deliver it.

The DIPAS commits all of us to do more to deliver disability-inclusive services and support for children in their communities. It calls for greater cross-sectoral coordination for accelerating and scaling up results. It calls for disability inclusion to be mainstreamed across our organization at every level, to advance the rights, respect the experiences and meet the needs of the world's many children with disabilities. To live up to

our commitment to leave no child behind, we must capitalize on our unique position as a global catalyst for change. Realizing our vision for disability-inclusive communities takes us much closer to UNICEF's vision of a world fit for *every* child.

For UNICEF to become a model for an inclusive, diverse workplace and a global leader for disability inclusion, it must invest in organizational change. We must all take responsibility for making disability inclusion part of our work and our world: consciously, actively and in everything we do, every day.

**Disability inclusion starts with you,
with me, with all of us.**





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UNICEF
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
United States of America

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<https://www.unicef.org/disabilities>

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