



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale

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## United Nations' International Day of People with Disabilities

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### Teachers' unions defend rights for all

Children, youth and teachers with disabilities face significant barriers to the enjoyment of their fundamental rights. Approximately 263 million children and youth are out of school, including a significant proportion who are estimated to be disabled boys and girls (UIS UNESCO 2016).

On this International Day of People with Disabilities, Education International (EI) reaffirms its commitment to ensuring the inclusion of disabled students and teachers in all advocacy efforts. Teachers working with students with disabilities should be adequately trained and supported in delivering quality education, and barriers faced by teachers with disabilities should not be overlooked.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underlines the right of each child to education (Article 28), and the responsibility of governments to ensure that disabled children receive quality education (Article 23). Additionally, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) reinforces the rights of disabled people in relation to education (Article 24), and the obligation of governments to ensure an inclusive system that guarantees the full and effective participation of people with disabilities in society (Article 1). Governments must do more in order to meet their obligations.

### Education unions are working to remove the obstacles

The human rights framework and the CRPD, one of the most widely ratified international treaties, provide a strong basis for implementing the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Quality education for all, including children with disabilities, is an attainable goal and it will bring long term benefits for all children and the wider society. This means removing the obstacles that hinder the full and effective participation of children, youth and people with disabilities in all countries.

Teaching and learning environments must be inclusive, and education institutions need to be adequately resourced to support the learning of each and every student, with a sufficient number of supported, qualified and trained teachers, accessible learning materials and other support including an inclusive curriculum, accessible school buildings, appropriate transportation, and new technologies.

Teachers are vital in ensuring disabled children are fully included in education, yet there is currently a staggering shortage in the number of teachers needed to achieve quality education for all.

### Teachers are keys to inclusive and quality education for all

Teachers play a crucial role in modelling inclusive attitudes and practices. Disabled teachers can be key players in combating discrimination, promoting positive identities among disabled students, and breaking down albeit prejudices.

It is important for governments to recognise that more and more individuals with disabilities of all ages are enrolling or are enrolled in university, and need relevant support to facilitate learning and improve their education experience.



Education International calls on its member organizations to increase efforts to ensure appropriate working conditions for teachers with disabilities and to ensure all children, including all disabled children, receive mainstream quality education by supporting education plans to contain inclusive strategies and practices, and adequate resources to finance inclusive education initiatives.