

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all persons with disabilities (Goal 4)

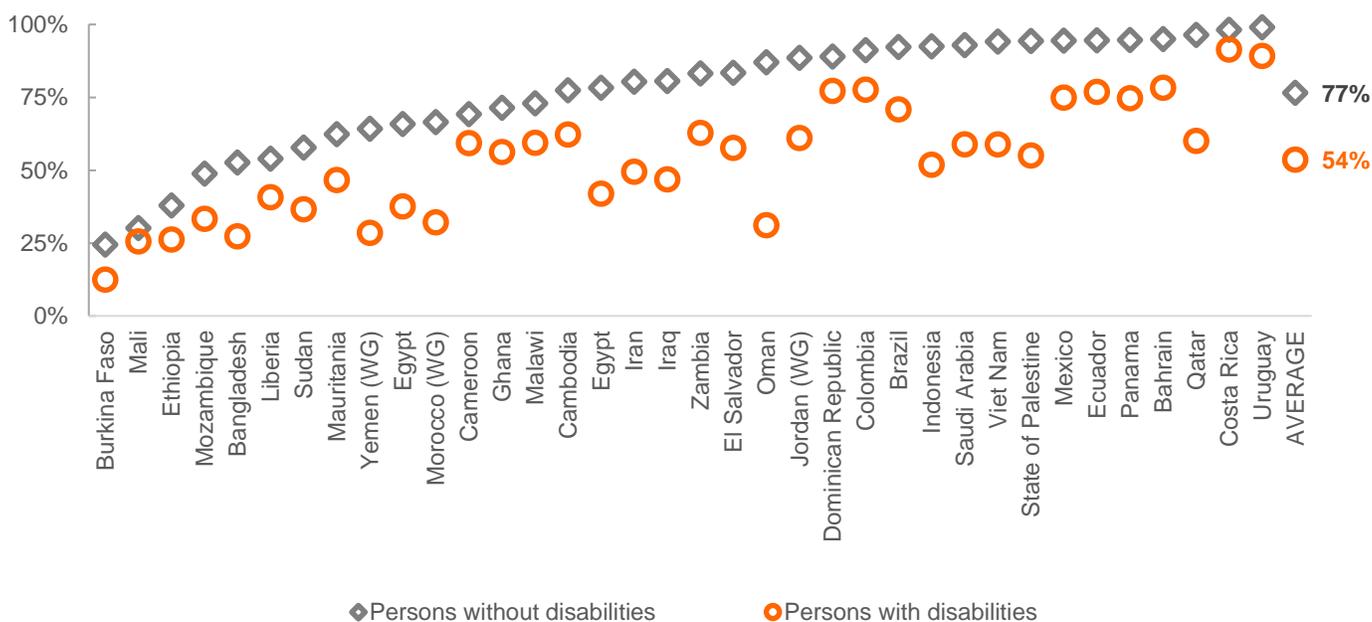


Disability-inclusive development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs provide a powerful framework to guide local communities, countries and the international community toward the achievement of disability-inclusive development. The 2030 Agenda pledges to leave no one behind, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, and recognizes disability as a cross-cutting issue to be considered in the implementation of all of its goals. The Agenda also includes seven targets and 11 indicators explicitly referencing persons with disabilities, covering access to education and employment, availability of schools that are sensitive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building the capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability.

Persons with disabilities remain less likely to attend school and complete primary education and more likely to be illiterate than persons without disabilities. Available data reveals that, on average, one in three children with disabilities of primary school age is out of school, compared with one in seven children without disabilities. Primary school completion is also lower for children with disabilities. These trends are reflected in the lower literacy rate of persons with disabilities: **54 per cent of persons with disabilities compared to 77 per cent of persons without disabilities are literate (Figure 1). In some countries, more than 10 per cent of persons with disabilities have been refused entry into school because of their disability (Figure 2); and more than a quarter of persons with disabilities reported schools were not accessible or were hindering to them.** Crowdsourced data, mostly from developed countries, indicates that only 47 per cent of more than 30,000 education facilities are accessible for persons using wheelchairs.

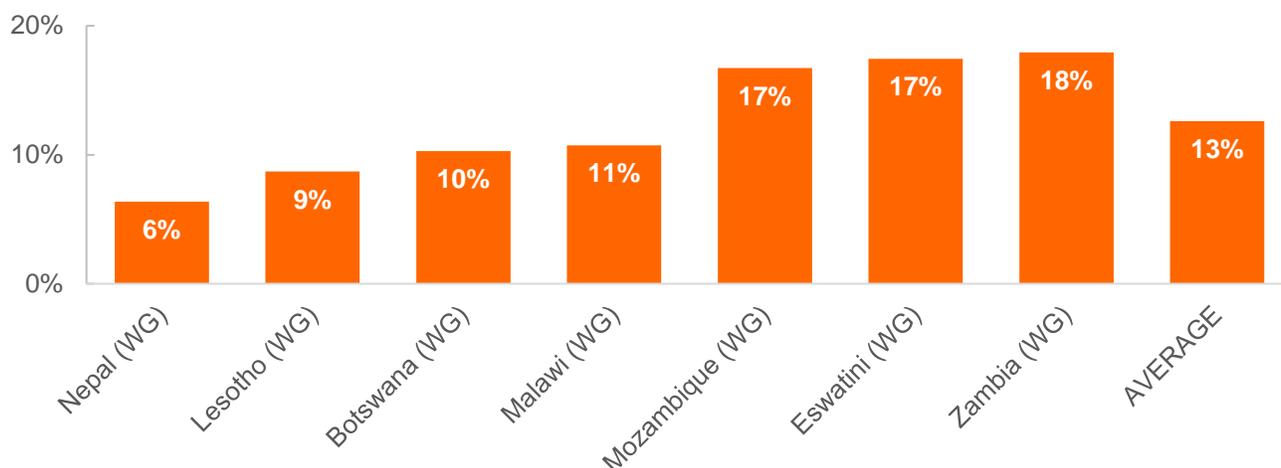
Figure 1: Adult literacy rate for the population 15 years and older, by disability status, in 36 countries, around 2010.



Note: (WG) identifies countries with data produced using the Washington Group Short Set of Questions.

Source: ESCWA¹ and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (on the basis of data from IPUMS²).

Figure 2: Percentage of persons with disabilities who have ever been refused entry into a school or preschool because of their disability, in 7 countries, around 2011.



Note: (WG) identifies countries with data produced using the Washington Group Short Set of Questions.

Source: UNDESA³ (on the basis of data from SINTEF⁴).

Many countries continue to strengthen national policies and legal frameworks to improve access to education for persons with disabilities, with 34 out of 193 United Nations Member States guaranteeing in their constitutions the right to education for persons with disabilities or providing protection against discrimination based on disability in education. Yet, in **44 per cent of United Nations Member States, students with disabilities cannot be taught in the same classroom as other students. Despite this, progress has been made in recent years: 41 per cent of countries in 2017, as opposed to 17 per cent in 2013, provided appropriate materials and communication to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in their schools.**

Actions to ensure equitable and quality education for all persons with disabilities

- Strengthen national policies and the legal system to ensure access to quality education for all persons with disabilities.
- Build the capacity of policymakers as well as other decision makers at the community and national levels to enhance their knowledge on disability inclusion in education.
- Make schools and educational facilities accessible by creating an enabling environment for students with disabilities and by making physical and virtual environments accessible.
- Provide training to teachers and other education specialists to gain knowledge and experience in inclusive education for persons with disabilities.
- Adopt a learner-centred pedagogy which acknowledges that everyone has unique needs that can be accommodated through a continuum of teaching approaches.
- Engage civil society and local communities in inclusive education.
- Establish monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the implementation of policies and laws on inclusive education.
- Improve national collection and disaggregation of education indicators by disability.
- Explore online and smartphone crowdsourcing applications to obtain bottom-up information on the accessibility of schools for persons with disabilities.

¹ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers 2017. Available at: www.unescwa.org/sub-site/arab-disability-statistics-2017 (accessed May to October 2018).

² Minnesota Population Center, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International, various data sets from 2001 to 2012. Data available at <https://international.ipums.org/international/> (accessed in 2017 and 2018).

³ Country estimates calculated or commissioned by UNDESA.

⁴ Stiftelsen for industriell og teknisk forskning, Living conditions among persons with disabilities, various datasets from 2006 to 2017.