

## The Importance of Digital Inclusion for People with Disability

### Fact Sheet

#### Statistics

- According to [World Bank](#), there are approximately one billion people, or 15% of the world's population, living with some form of disability, and disability prevalence is higher for developing countries and 80 million in Africa (United Nations - [UN](#)).
- Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, according to the [UN Development Program](#) (UNDP). The World Bank estimates that 20 per cent of the world's poorest people have some kind of disability.
- The [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities](#) addresses accessibility in its [resolution adopted by the General Assembly](#) in 1993. It also provides guidance on the terms "reasonable accommodation" and "universal design" in its "Definitions" Article, on sign language in its "Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information" Article, and on accessibility implications for "Living independently" and for "Personal Mobility."

"The States Parties to the present Convention,

**"(v) Recognizing the importance of accessibility to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, to health and education and to information and communication, in enabling persons with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms."**

- It is estimated that approximately 1 in every 10 children in the world has a disability. Besides poverty and prejudice, the lack of access to assistive technology is a major barrier that restricts children with disabilities to [access education](#) and to participate in the community.
- For many children, assistive technology represents the difference between enjoying their rights or being deprived of them. However, in many low-income countries only 5–15% of those who need assistive technology are able to obtain it ([UNICEF](#)).

#### Key Facts about Blindness

Globally, the [World Health Organization](#) reports at least 2.2 billion people have a vision impairment or blindness, of whom at least 1 billion have a vision impairment that could have been prevented or has yet to be addressed.

According to the 2009 Kenya Census Report, nearly 58,000 children were completely blind (0 -14 years). The estimated number of blind students attending primary and high schools from the same census was 7,500 with 2600 attending Special schools and 400 in the integrated schools.

#### The importance of digital inclusion for people with disability

- For many Africans with disabilities, digital services and products are just not [accessible](#); they were never designed for all people.
- The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – when people were asked to go online to access vital public health information and [remote education](#)—only served to entrench the pre-existing systemic inequalities in the [inclusion](#) and protection of Pwds.

- For our inABLE students and youths everywhere, the pandemic has brought about an extraordinary and unprecedented challenge for governments, teachers, and parents in their attempt to ensure continuity of [quality learning](#).
- As countries work toward managing learning continuity while protecting the safety and well-being of learners, learners with disabilities face a higher risk of [exclusion](#) in these circumstances.
- Today more than any other time, [web accessibility](#) for all needs to be urgently addressed, which is why inABLE is bringing global accessibility experts to Africa, via an accessible online platform with live captions and sign language interpreter, to kick start ICT [digital accessibility](#) policies and action.
- The failure to provide digital accessibility is a global issue. In the United States a [2017 study](#) by Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF) reported 92 percent of the U.S. federal government's most popular websites do not meet basic standards for security, speed, mobile friendliness or accessibility. ITIF also found that **42 percent were not accessible for users with disabilities**.

### Digital Inclusion Advocacy

During the pandemic, people with disabilities have struggled to access digital information. [inABLE](#) is planning to host a virtual [Inclusive Africa Conference](#) on Digital Accessibility taking place on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 9am – 11:30am East African time (EAT). This event brings a dynamic new online forum that will explore global best practices that improve digital accessibility and inclusion for all Africans

The purpose is to promote digital accessibility in Africa by increasing awareness of the needs and rights of people with disabilities to access digital information, including public safety, health and remote learning education that is presently inaccessible. We anticipate at least 500 attendees from across Africa. Register [here](#)

### About inABLE

- inABLE is a nonprofit organization based in Nairobi, Kenya and Washington, DC with a mission to empower the blind and visually impaired youth in Africa through computer assistive technology.
- We envision a world where every individual has all-inclusive access to the same educational, technological, and employment opportunities.
- To accomplish its mission, make an [impact](#), and promote digital inclusion in Africa, inABLE is running the following programs/activities:
  - a. [Computer-Labs-For-The-Blind Program](#)
  - b. [Home school Learning Project](#)
  - c. [Online Education Research](#)
  - d. [Accessibility Tech Lab](#)
  - e. [Books Digitization Program](#)
- Our aim is to establish at least 50 inABLE Computer-Labs-for-the-Blind program sites in special schools for the blind across East Africa to serve at least 10,000 visually impaired students.

For these students, learning basic computer skills gives them hope and enthusiasm for their future. While on an operational level our success is measured in the number of blind and visually challenged youths who can use [computer assistive technology](#) to improve their [educational outcomes](#) and acquire vital employable skills, it's the independence and self-sufficiency they gain that is most appreciated.

**InABLE Beneficiary Testimonials:**

- a. Valerie Olesia Busaka- Student Leader- Read her story [here](#)
- b. Nancy Muthoni- Coder- [Watch video](#)
- c. John Brown: Developing a personal website- [Watch video](#)
- d. Nelson Bwire: ICT student- Read story [here](#)
- e. Anthony Wambua: Software Programmer- Read story [here](#)

**Leadership: Founder's Story**

**Irene Mbari-Kirika, Executive Director and Founder of inABLE** has honed the ability to form strategic relationships, has made inABLE a leader in inclusive education, accessible computer skills training, and assistive technology research. Irene's leadership has created technology-powered special-educational environments to improve the lives of marginalized populations in Africa, and brings opportunities to collaborate on training, evaluation, research, and policy projects globally.

Read her story [here](#).