



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Accessibility policies and the work of UNESCO

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„i-access: Accessible information provision for lifelong learning“

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**„All human beings are  
born free and equal in rights and dignity“**

Universal Human Rights Declaration, 1948

# United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

**101** countries have already ratified the UN Convention  
**61** countries have already ratified optional protocol

Articles linked to UNESCO's mandate:

- 5. Equality and non-discrimination
- 6. Women with disabilities
  - 8. Awareness-raising
  - 9. Accessibility
  - 21. Freedom of expression and opinion and access to information
  - 24. Education
  - 27. Work and employment
- 29. Participation in political and public life
- 30. Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport
- 31. Statistics and data collection
- 32. International cooperation

## Other international commitments:

- **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Plan, 2003 and Tunis Commitment (2005)**
  - Access to information and knowledge (Chapters C3)
  - Capacity building, address the need to ensure the benefits offered by ICTs for all, including disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable groups (Chapters C4)
- **Millennium Development Goal (2000)**
  - 2010 MDG report mentions the first disabilities, notes the limited opportunities for children with disabilities and the link between disability and marginalization in education
  - 2010 UN General Assembly at its High Level Meeting adopted a resolution “Keeping the Promise: united to achieve the MDG goals”
- **The Salamanca Declaration (1994)** focused on ‘special needs education’.
- **United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993**
- **Education for All** - aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015

**Globally,  
the number of persons with disabilities  
is not decreasing,  
but in opposite is increasing.**

There are **over one billion** people with disabilities in the world, of whom between 110-190 million experience very significant difficulties.

This corresponds to about **15%** of the world's population and is higher than previous World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, which date from the 1970s and suggested a figure of around 10%.



**Who are  
the most affected  
and  
vulnerable?**



Women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discriminations, and in this regard appropriate measure shall be taken to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms (CRPD).

"Every minute, more than 30 women are seriously injured or disabled during labor... However, those 15 – 50 million women generally go unnoticed".

## Women and young girls

[World Bank, "Health, nutrition and population: Reproductive health and disability"](#)





63% of people with disabilities are older than 45.

Nearly 30% of people in the age group 55-64 report a disability and the incidence of disability will increase as the EU population gets older.

Over 30 % of people over 75 are disabled to some extent, and over 20 % severely disabled.

<http://www.easpd-linz.com/english/>

## Elderly people





## Poor people

Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, according to the UN Development Program (UNDP).

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/facts.shtml>

Poverty causes disabilities and can furthermore lead to secondary disabilities for those individuals who are already disabled, as a result of the poor living conditions, health endangering employment, malnutrition, poor access to health care and education opportunities etc. Together, poverty and disability create a vicious circle.

<http://web.worldbank.org/>



There are an estimated 150 million children in the world with disabilities, about four-fifths of them in developing countries.

EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010 –  
Reaching the marginalized

## Children



There were approximately 800,000<sup>1</sup> persons with disabilities in Haiti prior to the earthquake in 2010, including 200,000 children.<sup>2</sup>

An additional 194,000<sup>3</sup> - 250,000<sup>4</sup> were injured in the earthquake, many of whom will suffer from long-term disabilities.

## Natural disasters

<http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/persons-with-disabilities-and-the-humanitarian-response>





## Countries at war or in post-conflict situations

### UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2011 EFA

#### The hidden crisis:

#### Armed conflict and education

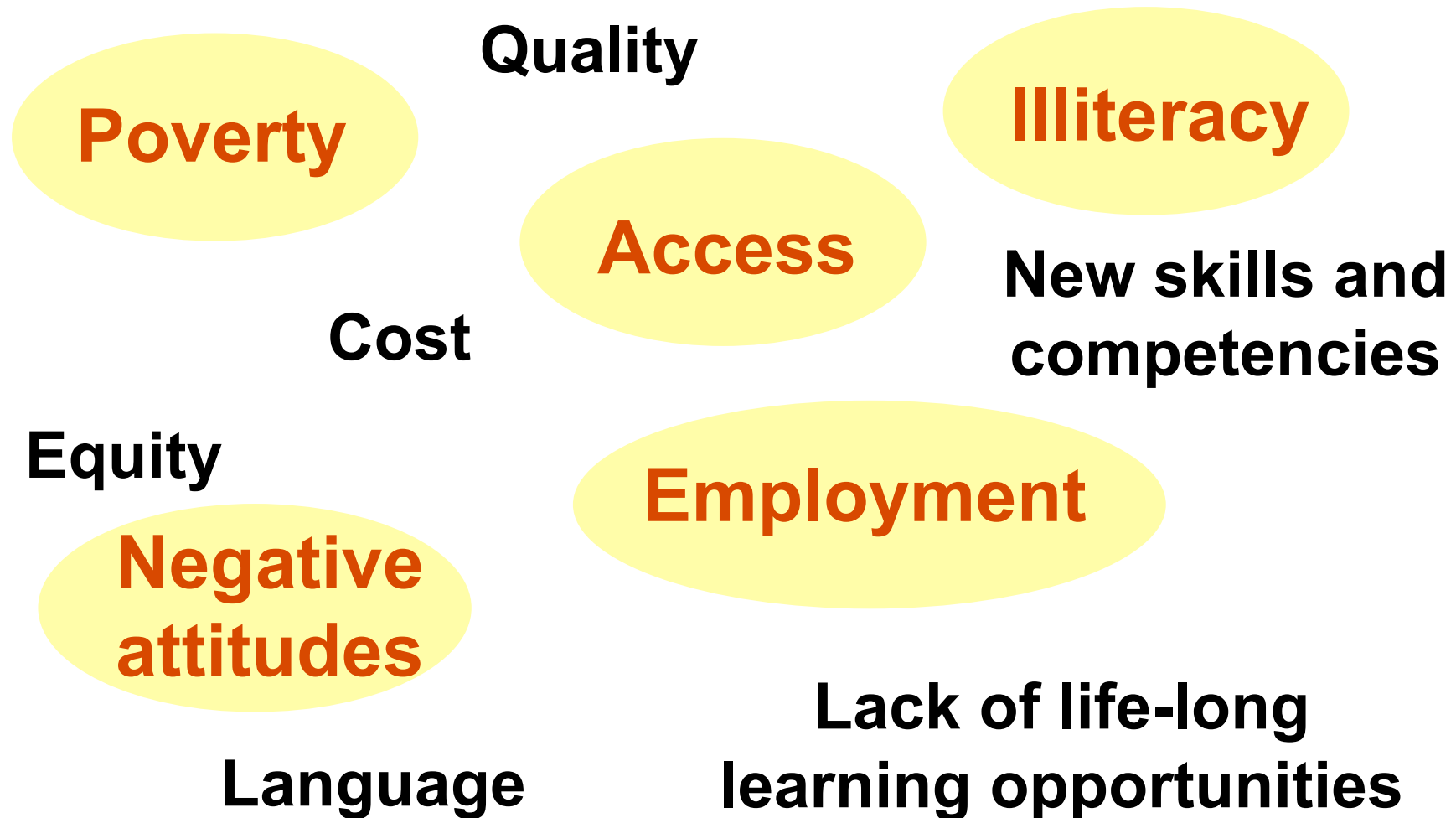
Over the decade to 2008, 35 countries experienced armed conflict, of which thirty were low income and lower middle income countries.

The average duration of violent conflict episodes in low income countries was 12 years.

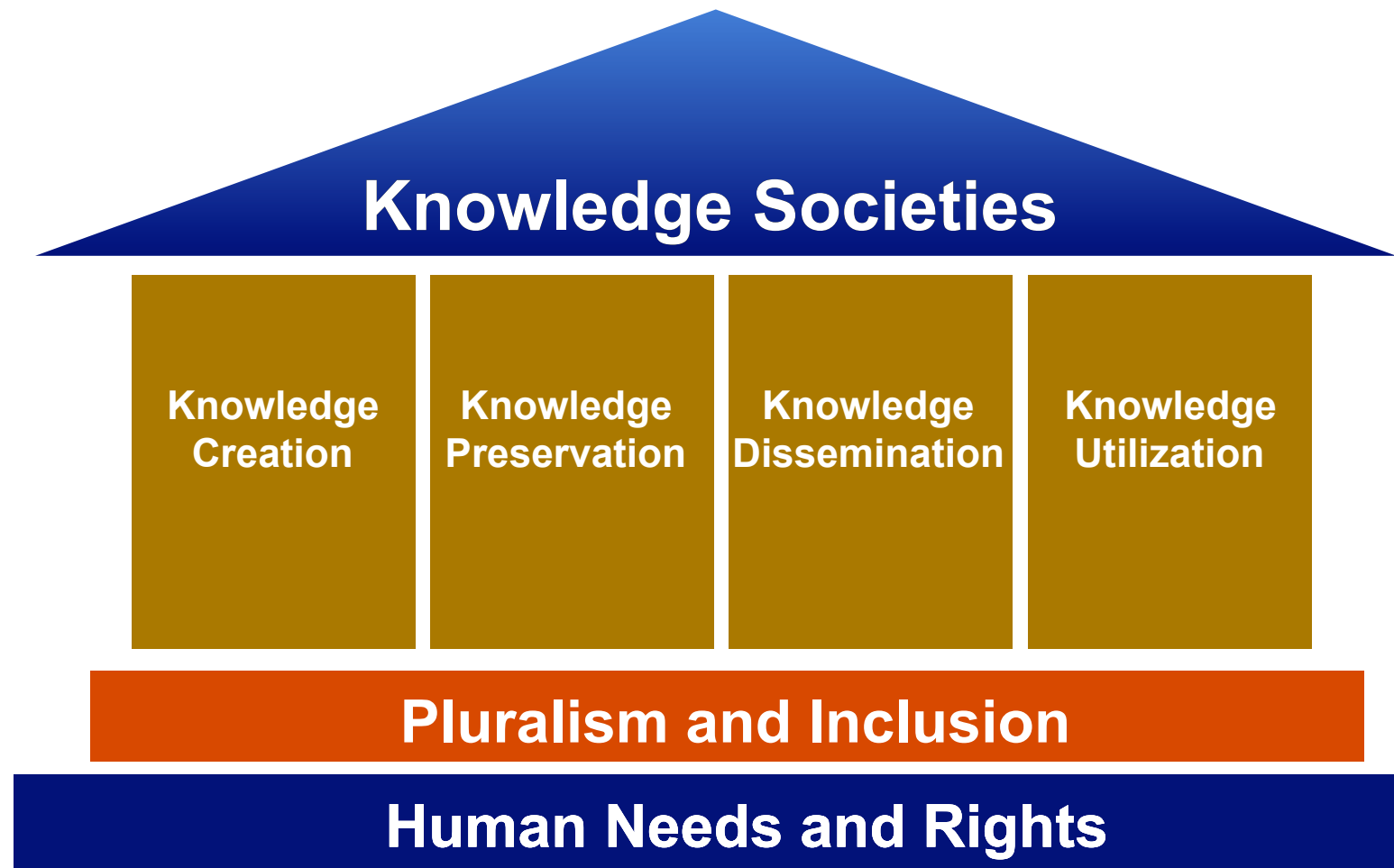
21 developing country spend more on the military than on primary education.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001911/191186e.pdf>

# Critical challenges



# UNESCO's concept of Inclusive Knowledge Societies





# UNESCO's approach within the context of ICTs and Persons with Disabilities

- 22-23 February 2010 - Experts meeting on “Mainstreaming ICTs for Persons with Disabilities to access information and knowledge” provided key recommendations for UNESCO's action:
  - **Making UNESCO ICT accessible**
  - **Mainstreaming ICT in inclusive education**
  - **Mobilizing resources and international cooperation**
  - **Creating an information and knowledge access ecosystem**

# Linkages with other activities

- **Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace, adopted by the General Conference in 2003.**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> consolidated report presented to the Executive Board, May 2011 indicates that the following measures concerning Persons with Disabilities were taken by:
    - Majority of Member States (24 provided reports: EU countries such as Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Spain and other countries from other regions); reported on initiatives undertaken to increase broadband connectivity targeting also distinct social groups, such as youth, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities;
    - The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Lithuania introduced web accessibility standards (WCAG) for all public websites;
    - Denmark, Egypt, Guinea, Spain put efforts to build capacities of the Internet users, including persons with disabilities, for creating digital local content using ICTs;
    - Azerbaijan, Japan and Republic of Moldova introduced specific provisions for facilitating access to knowledge of people with visual impairments, including libraries and transmission of audio works through the Internet;
    - Canada implemented several projects to make interactive content and applications accessible for all, regardless of geographic location, technology, or disability.

# Broadband Commission for Digital Development

- The second major output document **“Broadband: A Platform for Progress” of the ITU/UNESCO-led Broadband Commission for Digital Development** was released on June 6, at the 3rd meeting of the Commission in Paris, France.
- Within the context of inclusiveness of access, the report advocates that every member of society would have access to a high-speed, high-capacity broadband connection to the Internet. Continually expanding networks – based on broadband Internet and other ICT advances – will stimulate new forms of flexibility.
- Among issues, accessibility aspects for persons with disabilities were addressed by stating that ***“Broadband connectivity can significantly increase the independence of women and men with disabilities, so their needs should be taken into account in designing and implementing Internet infrastructure at all levels (backbone, user facilities and access devices).”***
- The report also makes a strong case for broadband as a driver of economic growth and new jobs, citing country case studies and reports by leading consultancies that point to increased employment opportunities, higher labour productivity and a strong stimulus to GDP.

# UNESCO's Employment Policy

- **On 13 October 2010, UNESCO has introduced a new Policy on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities.**
- UNESCO aims to provide reasonable accommodations necessary to enable a person with a disability to enter into and remain in employment within the Organization by implementing measures in various areas.
- [http://manual-part1.hq.int.unesco.org/EN/ACirculars/ACHR5\\_ENonly13Oct10.pdf](http://manual-part1.hq.int.unesco.org/EN/ACirculars/ACHR5_ENonly13Oct10.pdf)
- **Scope and application of the policy:**
  - Reasonable accommodation
  - Selection and recruitment
  - Career development and training opportunities
  - Performance appraisals
  - Retention in employment and return to work
  - Working environment
  - Buildings
  - Office environment
  - Meetings, conferences, workshops and seminars
  - Flexible work arrangements
  - **Access to information**
  - **Dissemination of information and awareness training**
  - Monitoring and implementation
  - Confidentiality of information
  - Transitional provisions

# Inclusive Access to Digital Office Documents

- **Guidelines for Inclusive Access to Digital Office Documents.**

UNESCO and Ontario Ministry of Social Services and Community (Canada) provided support to Inclusive Design Institute (OCAD) for the development of guidelines for inclusive access to digital office documents.

<http://adod.idrc.ocad.ca//wordperfectX5-review>

# Report on use of ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities

Asia-Pacific Regional Report

Eastern Europe and Central  
Asia Regional Report

North Africa and Arab States  
Regional Report

Latin American and Caribbean  
Regional Report

African Regional Report

Report on Use of ICTs  
in Education for  
> Persons with Disabilities

Policy recommendations for UNESCO's Member States  
on accessible, adoptive and affordable ICTs in education  
for Persons with Disabilities:

- National/regional education and information policies
- Linkages with other policies
- Existing Open Educational Resources
- Existing technical solutions
- Gender issues
- Open Document Format
- Web accessibility standards
- Impact and sustainability issues
- Budgetary implications and funding sources
- Successful cases studies at grassroot level



# First findings on use of ICTs to access information and knowledge

- Accessibility is included in many national documents, but it is a low priority for many stakeholders.
- Lack of accurate statistical data which is needed for formulating policies and schemes.
- Lack of linkages between existing policies and strategies, such as education and information society policies.
- Lack of gender sensitive policies and strategies.
- Amendment of copyright laws including an exception permitting conversion and sharing of books in accessible formats without cumbersome procedural requirements or delay.
- Introduction of electronic accessibility policy in order to ensure that all information which is digitally available, such as web sites and electronic documents adhere to accessibility standards.
- Awareness raising and capacity building of media professionals to report accurately on accessibility related issues.

## First findings on use of ICTs to access information and knowledge (cont.)

- Promotion of access to and capacity building using ICT for schoolchildren and students with disabilities in educational institutions, libraries, youth centres and other public places.
- Promotion and mainstream of inclusive education at all levels, all teacher training programmes should include disability and assistive technologies as an integral components of the curriculum.
- Introduction of flexible approaches and adjustment to diverse needs of users/learners using of assistive technologies by persons with various types of disabilities.
- Introduction of new services and development of assistive technologies accessible for persons with disabilities, including available in local languages.
- Promotion of content sharing, such as virtual library networks for sharing accessible content.
- Involvement of multi-stakeholder participation to oversee monitoring and implementation

# Critical challenges to use ICTs to access information and knowledge

