Still left behind: pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities

A global study to be launched at a 10th Conference of States Parties to the CRPD side event

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Despite progress made towards ensuring access to inclusive education at all levels, children with disabilities, especially girls, continue to be disadvantaged in terms of school enrolment, education attainment and learning.

New research by Leonard Cheshire Disability and the UN Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) explores the barriers that girls with disabilities face in accessing education. It highlights approaches and programmes that seek to address these barriers; points to gaps in evidence; and makes recommendations going forward.

The analysis finds very little evidence of good practice that is publicly available and shared, or data on effectiveness. The intersection between gender and disability and the gendered nature of marginalisation for children with disabilities needs to be analysed in depth to help formulate and monitor policies and programmes.
Key findings and recommendations

• The development of gender- and disability-sensitive indicators will provide a more consistent picture of educational inclusion and allow for comparison across programmes.

• The application of an equity-focused gender and disability lens to budgeting and resource allocation will support (hidden) costs that disproportionately affect girls with disabilities.

• Greater efforts to embed gender equality principles in teacher training on inclusive education will promote more positive attitudes towards girls with disabilities.

• Donors and other development partners that invest in education programmes should ensure programmes are both disability inclusive and gender sensitive.

• Governments should develop national education policies to protect children from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation both within and outside the school setting.

• The integration of research and documentation of good practice on education interventions for girls with disabilities into education plans and robust processes to monitor the impact of interventions on girls with disabilities will help build a much needed evidence base.

• Greater collaboration between mainstream and disability-specific organisations and Disabled People’s organisations (DPOs) is indispensable in order to bring all relevant expertise together towards greater impact.
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