



Advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities worldwide

CONCEPT NOTE

Side Event - 16th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD

“Universal Design in Kindergarten and School, - guidelines and universal tools”

June 2023

Organizer: Rehabilitation International, RI Commission on Education

Format: In person (TBD -place and time - following the approval of the side event application)

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Background

Inclusive education involves the understanding that all children have the equal right to quality education regardless of gender, disability, learning difficulties, ethnic or linguistic background, or any other personal feature.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has the following definition of universal design:

“Universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

Universal design is a normative strategy that provides the basis for specifying qualities in products, environments, programmes, and services so that they can be used equally by everyone. Universally designed solutions should be good in general.

Universal design should work in unison with other societal goals and be an integral part of general solutions.

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In some instances, universal design will reduce the need for technical aids, in other instances the need for technical aids will remain important. There is no contradiction between the use of technical aids and universal design.

Rehabilitation International (RI) is non-governmental organization in ECOSOC status with UN since 1978. RI Global is a global network that empowers persons with disabilities and provides sustainable solutions toward achieving a more inclusive society for them. From the beginning of our history, we have been driven by a strong belief in human potential and equality. It is for this reason that, education and advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities across the world especially children's and youth, have always been a strong focus of RI and will continue to be a strong focus in the future, with RI taking a strong leadership role in these particular areas as we implement the UN CRPD.

To ensure successful implementing of the goal – “education for all”, it's important to make the kindergarten and school accessible. To achieve this, kindergarten and schools and other institutions working with inclusive education, need guidelines and tools for making their institutions accessible. For that reason, we have implemented the Rehabilitation International project “*Universal Design in Kindergarten and School, - guidelines and universal tools*” to produce guidelines and universal tools that can be used in all countries. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) is a central framework in producing the guidelines.

Objectives of the Event

Universal design manifests itself differently in different countries. Regardless of how it is done, the guiding principle is that universal design is an essential tool for achieving equality in society.

What does universal design mean in a kindergarten and school perspective?



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In many ways the definition of universal design is all-embracing. According to the definition in the CRPD it deals with products, environments, and services. According to the definition services and programmes must be universally designed.

What does this entail in education?

It may be self-evident that learning materials, whether they are paper books or digital must be available to be used by for example blind or visually impaired pupils. The education must also be universally designed, as a part of the service. We are used to saying that the education must be inclusive and adapted to each pupil's prerequisites and needs. This is established in the right to individual education. Universally designed education challenges pedagogy and didactics in such a way that communication and preparations are made to make as many as possible of the pupils understand the message.

In this Side event we will present the guidelines and the universal tools. We will speak about the Seven Principles for the Universal Design

In the guidelines we will present practical tools for use by:

- 1) children with hearing impairment;
- 2) children with visual impairment;
- 3) children and youth with a physical disability and children and
- 4) youth with hidden, invisible, and cognitive disabilities.

In this side event, we will bring panelists and speakers addressing the needs of children and youth with disabilities. As well as examples and advice for the kindergarten and schools and other institutions working with Inclusive Education, who needs these guidelines and tools for making their institutions accessible for all children, including children with disabilities.