

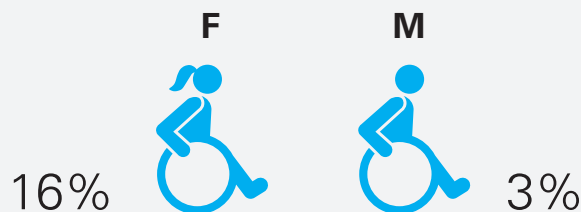
Youth with Disabilities as Leaders

Leadership and Mentoring Task force of the **Global Partnership for Children with Disabilities** has conducted a survey of youth with disabilities to identify how youth with disabilities can access better knowledge, tools and skills to become leaders. It also conducted mapping of organizations that provide youth leadership programs to identify good practices as well as challenges organizations face when including youth with disabilities.

- **50 organizations** from across **26 countries** responded to the organizational survey.
- **73 young people** from **26 countries** responded to the survey on individual experiences in leadership opportunities and **90%** of them are **youth with disabilities**. Almost **50%** of respondents **have physical disability**, **15% visual impairment**, **10% deaf/hard of hearing**, **6% developmental disability**, **4% psychosocial** and only **1%** of respondents has **intellectual disability**.



While almost **80% of young people reported** that they had the opportunity **to be a leader**, only **50% have received leadership training** to support their development.



16% of females felt that **gender limits** their **participation** in leadership and training opportunities compared to only **3% of males**

Challenges to Becoming a Leader



1. lack of experience or skills
2. not included in decision-making
3. lack of accessibility
4. fear of stigma

"I have had challenges becoming a leader with non-disabled people, who would underestimate me because of my disability, and wouldn't allow me to be a leader. But I have had support and encouragement as a leader with persons with disabilities."

"Society should recognize the worth of young people with disability... it took me 22 years of my life to know that I am not the only one with cerebral palsy in my community and around the world. This contributed a lot to who I am today and my leadership drive."



50% of respondents attended trainings on leadership skills, but most of these trainings were specifically for **youth with disabilities only**

“In order to enable young people with disabilities become leaders in society, it is important they are given leadership and mentoring training. It is also important that such trainings are organized with youth without disabilities as well, so that this latter group understands the potentialities and capabilities of their peers with disabilities.”

A Range of Approaches Were Highlighted that Would Support Young People with Disabilities to Become Leaders



- 1. Role Models and Mentors 2. Education 3. Family Support 4. Leadership Training**

“I think that young leaders with disabilities can become leaders by meeting others that have disabilities and have gone places in life to show them that it is possible.”

“It took me 18 years to understand the influence of my mom... Growing up with such a strong role model, I developed many of her enthusiasms.”

Organizational Survey

All programs participating in the survey identified as including people with disabilities in their programming:



51% reporting that they offer programming exclusively to people with disabilities



48% reporting that they offer programming to people with and without disabilities.

91% organizations **experience challenges** including youth with disabilities in their initiatives, among them:

- **68%** highlighted **funding constraints**
- lack of accessibility of venues, offices, lack of accessible transportation
- lack of staff training on disability

Factors, identifies by organizations, that will help to include youth with disabilities in their initiatives on leadership and mentoring:

1. Funding (71%)
2. Support in identifying youth with disabilities (50%)
3. Training for their staff (47%)
4. Accessibility of transport (56%), venues (47%) and materials (47%),lack of staff training on disability

Recommendations for Organizations

1. Make mainstream youth programs inclusive of young persons with disabilities
2. Ensure building venues as well as communication materials and digital platforms are accessible
3. Budget for disability accommodations
4. Partner with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs)
5. Consult with youth with disabilities on ways to strengthen inclusion
6. Recruit youth with disabilities as staff, interns and volunteers