



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT

ACCESSIBILITY FOR
A BOLDER LEARNING
EXPERIENCE INITIATIVE

Accessible Arab Region: ICT for ALL

Developing Digital Skills to Bridge the Digital Divide_{is}



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



April 2025

Digital Accessibility @AUB

The ABLE Initiative

- ABLE (Accessibility for a Bolder Learning Experience)
An international initiative aimed at advancing digital accessibility for education and beyond.

Strides in Action:

- Digital Accessibility Team: frameworks, assistive technology (AT), training, support, teaching and capacity building.
- Regional Impact: Training, engagement, and strategic partnerships.

The Digital Divide, Who's Left Behind?

1 in 7 people globally lives with a disability, and many remain **unseen or overlooked** and **have skills or ecosystem barriers to access technology**.

Rigid and autonomous capacity building; Efforts remain **fragmented**, with no unified platform or **technical dictionary** to share knowledge.

The evolving users: With the **rapid advances** in AI and tech skills, accessibility guidelines must be **adaptive** to meet **changing needs**.

Those who **navigate daily life** with **assistive technology**, but it only works in **inclusive environments**.

Those who have **limited awareness**. The ***illusion*** and **false claims** of accessibility often prevails, driven by **lack of experience** and poor implementation.

The new generation of professionals with **Gen Z** methods; without investing in **modernizing skills development**, we risk losing accumulated expertise.

What We've Learned Along the Way

Access by Design: Embed accessibility from the beginning- not as an afterthought.

Cultural Shift: Move from remedy to sustainability - accessibility is core, not a "good to have" add-on.

Global + Local: Combine best practices with regional needs and training.

Collaboration: Knowledge transfer and partnerships to scale accessibility.

Policies That Work: Beyond Formality

- Having a policy is key, but having a policy that **actually works** is critical.
- Developing policies **with** relevant key stakeholders ensures **buy-in** and **practical implementation**.
- Accessibility policies are everywhere, but each organization has **unique dynamics**.
- It is essential to invest in **cultivating an accessibility mindset across all teams** to drive real change, not just compliance.

Immediate Hacks

- **Account for accessibility Intentionally:** In national strategies, and digital transformation plans.
- **Empower key teams:** Train developers, educators, designers, and content creators.
- **Build shared resources:** Collaborative platforms for tools, training, and assistive tech.
- **Monitor and report:** Create accountability systems, treat like cyber security, to ensure progress.

Addressing New Gen Z: Education

- Traditional role-based training must evolve — we need **modern training approaches** that reflect **how younger generations learn**:
 - Interactive, digital-first, real-world project-based learning.
 - Training that highlights accessibility as a skill for innovation and scalability, not just compliance.
- Investing in **new learning models** ensures that accessibility expertise grow in relevance and reach.

Final Thoughts

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel. We just need to unlock it, by working together for everyone."

"With rapid advances in **AI** and **tech skills** among younger generations, accessibility must be a **living, evolving practice**, not a static rulebook."

Connect with ABLE

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