

PRESS RELEASE



“Un-silence my world” Campaign

Supporting students with disabilities in Syria stay connected during COVID-19 lockdown

Damascus, 31 May 2020 – UNDP launched today a [solidarity crowdfunding campaign](#) to enable individuals to support a group of students with disabilities, who are preparing to take the national matriculation exam, get internet connectivity to access necessary educational and learning resources, during the difficult time of the COVID-19 induced lockdown.

Long before COVID-19, people with disabilities in Syria have been grappling with many barriers that hinder their full and meaningful participation. Nine years of the current violent crisis have only exacerbated their exclusion. An estimated 27% of the total population in Syria suffer from some form of disability. High school students represent 13% of people with disabilities in Syria.

“Today, access to information technologies is a fundamental-right. The internet is a powerful tool to ensure inclusiveness, especially for people with disabilities, who are at the center of our COVID-19 response” said Ms. Ramla Khalidi, UNDP Resident Representative in Syria. “Coinciding with the exam-preparation period under the difficult circumstances of the lockdown, this campaign helps students with disabilities pursue their education, which is critical for their future.

UNDP will match the amount raised through the individual giving campaign, which will raise funds to provide high school students with disabilities with internet connectivity packages tailored to their needs. Small contributions of US\$ 10, 50 or 120 will support a student with internet connectivity for one, five or twelve months respectively. A contribution of US\$ 500 will provide a student with an access device such as a laptop, tablet or smartphone in addition to internet connectivity for one year.

“I support this campaign,” declared Shahed Shaban, a 21 years old student living with muscular dystrophy and a champion for people with disabilities. “Giving us access to a wealth of resources and connecting us with each other on an equal basis, I believe the Internet sets people with disabilities free. It provides a space where we don’t feel judged.”

The crowdfunding campaign in Syria is part of a pilot regional individual giving initiative of the Regional Bureau for Arab States in UNDP entitled “Solidarity against COVID-19: Together we are one!” in seven Arab countries, including Djibouti, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Somalia and Syria.

For further information, please visit the [campaign donation platform](#) or contact:

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