Friday, 16th April, 2021

MODULE 8B

RICHARD: Okay, welcome everyone to this, our either afternoon.

GEMMA: Okay Richard just give us a second it takes a second or two, okay go for it now.

RICHARD: Hello everyone it's, yeah, just seeing how many are in, yes. Hello everyone, it's Richard Rieser, General Secretary of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, I would like to welcome you to this our either afternoon seminar on the theme of disabled children and young people, we are very pleased to have with us the Commonwealth children youth disability network, who we work with and in fact have two places on our executive, including Jonathan Andrews who will be speaking to you in a minute. We are also pleased to have Parmi Dheensa here, and, who is both the co‑Chair with Jonathan of the CCYDN, but also runs her own organisation Include Me TOO, which has done work for many years on including disabled young people. We hope to be joined by Joseph Migila from Shivyawata, in Tanzania who is also on the executive of CCYDN and we, we ran it this morning. We had a few technical difficulties we hope it will be better this afternoon so take it away then Jonathan. I'm going to share the screen now and then we can do that. Okay. Right. So people should now be seeing that and I'm going to go on to the first slide. Okay. Jonathan Andrews.

JONATHAN: Thank you very much Richard. So, as Richard mentioned I am a co‑Chair of the Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network, along with Parmi Dheensa. Just to give an overview of who we are and what we do, CCYDN provides a platform for disabled children and young people to connect, share learning, develop skills and knowledge and to advocate and influence disability rights, inclusion, convention on the right of the child and the convention rights of persons with disabilities implementation at national, regional, and global levels. CCYDN provides a strong voice and a platform for disabled children and young people, strengthening their voices increasing their representation and recognition in their roles as key agents, changemakers and positive change in achieving disability rights, equity and better future, inclusive futures. Can I have the next slide please. Thank you, I'll just give a brief overview, quickly, just as the general background of the whole history of CCYDN. So, the importance of the role and the input of disabled children and young people, is of course, enshrined in international human rights treaties, like the CRC and the CRPD, but often in practice children and young people have been excluded from international human rights forums and disabled people's movements. A crucial element to supporting the inclusion of young people's networks and forums is to work alongside DPOs, NGOs, governments, and stakeholders to recognise and support the innovation and development of methodologies and tools that are used by disabled young people to support their human rights and social justice and listen to their voices. A group of us young disabled people came together and sort of formed a number of different organisations, including the Global Disability Children and Young People Charter and this forms with Include Me TOO to become the Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network. Just to give a brief overview of some of the work we have done previously CCYDN officially launched a disabled young people’s delegation, an official side event with Include Me TOO at the United Nations Conference of States Parties in June 2019. The network's members have represented and presented on behalf of CCYDN on platforms including the queens Commonwealth trust, South Asia disabled people forum, CDPF, we are partnered with, disability inclusive forum, United Nations, DAVOS and several official Commonwealth functions, also worked with Include Me TOO on the COVID‑19 hospital communication passport which we should hear a bit more about later on and also been involved in the ideas capacity‑building programme and master class, delivered during November 2020 to March 2021, and was in in fact oversubscribed and the CCYDN was able to accommodate 125 young people with disabilities to take part. So that's really, that's a brief overview of the work at the CCYDN has been doing, in particular, you know, looking at this session today, this module is really focused on disabled children and young people's rights and participation. So, we will look at the Human Rights Framework that protects the human rights of disabled children and young people, second we look at the impact of stigmata boos and discrimination on disabled children and young people's rights and interventions, third we look at the Global Disability Children and Young People Charter which was drafted by the CCYDN, and the inclusion of children within that is very important, as the CCYDN is not only the first disability youth official Commonwealth network but also the first to be focused on children in that way. Also then looking at the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, on the agenda and disabled children and young people, looking at COVID‑19, disabled children and young people and the chance within that and the need to advocate for the protection of rights in the, and the different challenges that have arisen through that. Then finally the role of disabled children and young people in the human rights and disability movements. So, that is an overview of what we will be covering today. I wanted to turn to Parmi to discuss the first section.

RICHARD: Thank you.

PARMI: Thank you. So thank you everyone for joining us. Human rights are fundamental. They are fundamental rights of every single human being. It's about the basic needs to live, survive, develop, thrive, and have the right to be safe and treated with dignity. When a person's, when a child's or young people's, when a person's rights are violated they are denied the basic human rights and treated as less of a human being, you know, their human rights are being denied. Human rights are for everyone. Therefore, disabled persons and the reason we are having to highlight that is that so many you know, there are so many years of experiences that we are all sharing collectively, there are still barriers and challenges, still violations of human rights of disabled children and young people and adults. It's so important that human rights are, are supported and protected and acknowledged by disabled children and young people and their communities around them, their caregivers and you know, all in terms of society just generally as well. One of the things that we are going to be kind of covering it, as we go over it, is about the Human Rights Framework, how it works, and the one element that I'll be really focusing on here today, is the UN nation convention on the right of the child, we are all aware of the in United Nations rights of persons with disabilities, but how do they play, work together, you will see they are very complimentary. So the slide that you are saying, there is, you can see, there is so many ‑‑ disabled children and young people are still left behind, they are on the periphery of society. There is an estimation of 180 to 220 million youth with disabilities world‑wide and an estimation of 93 million disabled children, of which nearly 80% of them live in developing countries. They are the most disadvantage groups. Furthermore, youth with disabilities are further disadvantaged and there is some information in the course book at the accompanies this presentation of this module. Next slide. Thank you. I think you know we all agrees with this, in terms of the statement and the observation, but we just highlighted how marginalised and excluded disabled children are, and the day‑to‑day facing of discrimination and being limited of the opportunities and choices and being able to have the chance to thrive. So this slide, just quoting it, "Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalised and excluded groups in society. Phasing daily discrimination in the form of negative attitudes lack of adequate policies and legislation, they are effectively barred from realising their rights to healthcare, education and even survival." You can read more about this in the course book. So next slide please. So we are going to focus now on the International Human Rights Framework. About how we can work collectively, and what these tools are there able to assist us in terms of holding the human rights of disabled children and young people. In terms of disabled children left behind we know they are disproportionately impacted and there is also a huge impact on their life chances. We know they are disproportionately likely to live in poverty, also disproportionately vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse, and the mortality rate for them is extremely high. Children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non‑disabled children. Also, in terms of their value of their life, you know, their value of life is not equal to other children so when there has been murders and killings of disabled children there is a defence of mercy killing and it really dehumanises the treatment of disabled children and young people, it's an experience that's shared in the disabled community. 90% of disabled children are across the developing world have no access to education. Violations continue on their rights, 68% of girls and 13% of boys with intellectual or development disabilities will be sexual abused before their 18th birthday the UN CRC was adopted in 1989, it was a landmark, it was the first time in place for children and disability, in the international rights law and field, this is also a treaty that ensured children's civil, political, social, cultural economic rights and also respecting them as key agents of rights holders and having the right to exercise those rights and their participation. In the, in one of the key articles... for the main principles that underpin the UN Convention on the rights of the child is non‑discrimination, it's in Article 2, that is key because once again in the Article 2 it highlights, it's advocates and says, "No disabled child should be discriminated." Then it's also in Article 3, "The best interests of the child, every child has a right to their basic needs and they should be fulfilled." The right to survival and development is enshrined in Article 6. Article 12, the right to be heard, listened, and be able to express their views and feelings on the things at the matter to them. Next slide please. One of the key slides of the UN Convention on the rights of the child is article 23, this kind of ‑‑ it's very, we would certainly say that with Article 23 this is not, you know, it's not the fact that it references disabled children, as the only Article that is applicable, all the articles under the UN Convention on the rights of the child are applicable, all children, including disabled children and young people, Article 3 really kind of brings to the fore about the right of disabled children to enjoy a full and decent live, which includes participation in their communities, it includes them accessing and receiving education, training, healthcare, rehabilitation, preparation of employment, recreation opportunities. Also the fullest possible social integration and individual development of disabled children. It also recognises their rights to their cultural and spiritual development. At this point we're going to pause and play a video. It's a great video done by children and young people and it kind of gives you a little bit, kind of covers a few of the points I've just covered on the convention of the rights of the child. Thank you Gemma. [Video Playing].

RICHARD: Okay.

PARMI: Thank you. So that gives you a bit of an insight, it's incredible it's one of the most umm... signed‑up treaties. It's also what we want to see for the Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it's key, it is actually starting, it's picked up huge momentum in terms of Disabled People's Movement. It's about [Inaudible] and see I think ourselves as rights holders and equals and valued valuable citizens within society. Now prior to the CRPD, you know, the existing United Nations universal declaration of human rights and the 1980 convention on the rights of the child, even though they considered the potential and the protection of the rights of disabled persons and enshrined those, however the real potential wasn't tapped in, the CRPD has been really significant. It closed those significant gaps in the areas both for development and human rights to support the full inclusion of persons with disabilities. So, one of the articles that really kind of highlights Article 7, Article 7 explicitly mentions children and disabled young people, into obligations to ensure that they enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis as other children. Also, once again, emphasising the best interests of the child in this instance of disabled children and young people, as a primary consideration and to ensure that disabled children have a right to express their views on the matters that expect, affect them, you can see already there is a clear synergy on the convention on the rights of the child, it's building on that momentum. Next slide please. There are several other specific provisions for disabled children that carry on in the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities, Article 3, respect evolving capacity of disabled children and their rights, really important preserve their identities. Article 4, children with disabilities must be consulted and involved when government are developing and implementing policies at the concern them. Access to justice. Justice to ensure that they have access and appropriate measures put into place to ensure that they have access to justice. Freedom from exploitation, violence, and Article 16. Article 18, liberty of movement and nationality. Article 23 which talks about respectful home and family and Article 4 about the right to education once again build upon The Convention On the Rights of the Child. Then Article 30, participation in cultural life and recreation, leisure, and sport, really putting in a key emphasis on that. This, once again, really highlighted the key rights that should be afforded to disabled children and young people, and one of the things we hope you will see through this module in terms of your learning is reflecting on this and in the course book is a table where you know, you can look, we really want you to kind of explore what you are aware of in your respective countries in terms of your laws, your policies, how are they really implementing the convention on the rights of the child and the convention on the rights of people with disabilities, is there some synergy and importantly are those two a key framework for advocate for children and disabled people's rights.

       Now we will go to the next subject we are going to cover, looking at the impact of stigma, taboos, the discrimination on disabled children and young people and rights. We know that stigma and taboos [Inaudible] our disabled community discriminating against disabled children and young people, which really impacts on their early years their early chances childhood, against their fundamental human rights. The superstitions, myths, beliefs vary from region to region, amongst countries, communities, and families. Just have, you know, a key impact on the lives and survivor and development of disabled children and young people. One of the things we, in the course book we do cover some of those areas and I know that with the, with the work that the committee, the meet for disabled people's forum are doing as well, it has actually slighted that in the training you have had delivered. You can see in this slide behind this statistics, we all agree there is a denial of many of the rights of disabled children throughout the world, layered in attitudes which viewed the life of a disabled child as being less important, less important, and less potential than that of an able‑bodied child, so many things, friendships, education, to be included have a right to play, recreation, to family, but we see that is played out in the lifetime of disabled children and young people. Sadly, as they grow into adulthood. Next slide please. Just going to touch on a few of the things, you know, in terms of the factors what actually happens in terms of the impact of disability stigma that's associated to it. There is a lack of understanding and awareness regarding the causes of disability and their resulting characteristics. It seems to be a key factor in terms of stigma experienced by disabled people. Disability is also usually blamed on ancestors, parents, mainly mothers and misdeeds of disabled persons from their past lives, supernatural forces, Demons, spirits, witch craft, punishment from God. Various misconceptions about [Inaudible] cultural and religious beliefs and misconceptions about disability are reinforced and informed by insensitive media coverage that perpetrates the negative views of disability. Now we do cover at the in the course work and we know that some of it has been covered in the other modules, what I want you to focus on today and what Richard just asked us to do as well is to explore what can be done in this part of, in this presentation. So we know that the impact of stigmata boost and discrimination on disabled children and young people, in terms of their rights survival and safety, is in [Inaudible] I'm sure we agree that it cannot continue being ignored.

GEMMA: Parmi can you slow down a little.

PARMI: They do face the greater risk of violence, abuse, and neglect from non‑disabled peers. So in terms of what can be done, we have highlighted it slightly at the top, to challenge a negative perceptions, portrayals and prejudices and strengthen the implementation of the convention rights of persons with disabilities, safeguarding interventions are key as well, and the legislation that underpins those to protect and eliminate disability discrimination, violence, abuse, and harmful practices. Disability awareness, disability rights and the respectful rights of disabled persons also needs to be promoted, and increased visibility for and also increased access to ensure that it can really reach out to the wider society. Also is positive narratives attitudes in the media coverage, the representation of betrayals of disabled people and true representation to include the very people, you know, ensuring their stories are shared, and they can be part of the stories and the media culture in a positive way. Grass‑roots advocacy and action communicating messages on disability in a way at the harmonises with local cultural values and activities is key, supporting community, faith leaders, in roles to reduce disability stigma in developing countries. So in terms of addressing disability stigma here are a few things that are happening, I'm sure some of you may have examples as well, so I want to just pick up on that. Advocacy, and self‑advocacy is so key, in terms of our work it's so important to ensure that there are role models that are visible, helping also their peers to overcome the internalised stigma that they have experienced and changing the negative perceptions that might exist in communities. So certainly it's "Nothing About Us Without Us" kind of approach. The Leonard Cheshire Disabled Young Voices Programme, they record at the campaigns of young people with disabilities in Zimbabwe they went on a speaking tour of six secondary school reaching over 1200 secondary children they were able to change the way the children and teachers saw disabilities. There is also a role for families, in terms of the roles, parents are being central in improving the perceptions of disabled children and in the fight against negative attitudes and discrimination they play a key role to build the resilience of the child, a strong sense of their identity their sense of belonging and faith the stigma that is associated with disability. The role of the family in tackling disability discrimination and stigma in developing countries has four main strategies that seem to prove effective. Actively nurturing a child's development taking a child outside the home and participating in family and community events despite the attitudes of others. The second strategy seems to work is inclusion, for not hiding, not feeling that they can't put their child away and really increasing their child's visibility and supporting their child to have the opportunity to get out and interact with others. Acceptance within the community depends on the relationships at the people forge with their peers so this is important, about real inclusion a sense of belonging that is so needed in schools, sport and in areas of you know, community life and that child's journey. Information is key, combating the and tackling the myths and superstitions that continue to persist, they can't carry on being unchallenged, it's so important in terms of parents and carers sharing that information, advocating for the rights of their disabled child, sharing that the challenges and the barriers that they have, working along with disabled people, learning from them, supporting their child you know in term of and also working together for solutions and positive impact for that child. Advocacy is very key issue as you can see in terms of improving professions of service inclusion, so it's about everybody working together, all the social actors from disabled persons to self‑advocates including disabled children and young people themselves, the key people that you know are part of their life in terms of their families. Some of the DPOs have found that working with the communities that they were able to transfer negative umm... attitudes and harmful practices in those communities. So for example, there was a study that was done by African child poverty forum in Ethiopia, they found that the presence of active DPO or disability inclusive DPOs at community level, resulted in major positive differences [Inaudible] to children. Legislation also is very, very key and you know, so advocacy work is so instrumental in ensuring that not only legislation is there for it to be implemented and more so the convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the realisation of the rights of [Inaudible] under the article 8 of CRPD it's, it's stipulates that, you know, there needs to be, they need to avoid and remedy harmful cultural beliefs and practices and prevent discrimination against disabled people. Just two final points, media as we agree is so key and so important the positive reporting criteria around disability, in terms of the learning and your role in how that connectivity can happen within the media and these spaces where we can change perceptions, you know, ensuring that you are part of that change, without you this change cannot take place. For it is important to encourage and use you know, the non‑discriminative positive accurate language that is so important in reducing the stigma associated with disability. One of the things that seems to work in some countries where they have more, better access to radio as a way, a means of keeping connected and keeping informed. Radio broadcasts also have been seen apps being effective in many countries in a wider, where they have quite a wide audience that can be reached, that's a fantastic platform in terms of positive portrayal of disabled people, storytelling, drama, and reporting. You all, all these spaces I'm mentioning are so important of disabled people being in those spaces, they are the key actors. Not just, you know, so, not only are they visible but it's about having those opportunities but they can also, you know, not only focus on issues of disability but they see, be seen, so that positive narrative that positive perception that we want that you know, we are capable and able. Now one of the key areas as well, is reporting a document on abuses, proper reporting, and real documentation against the abuses against disabled children and young people and adults it's so essential if you to tackle stigma and taboos and to generate the advocate strategies we need to put into place to combat them and basically displace and remove the deeper rooted belief systems and the prejudices that we end up continuing to experience. So that this level of persecution does not continue. So thank you.

RICHARD: So going to do this activity now.

PARMI: Yes, the next question. So, throughout this we are going to have six questions and we are breaking it down, as you will probably be used to these during these training modules. So question one is, we want you to share three common negative misconceptions and attitudes in your country about disabled children and young people. So I'll share three common negative misconceptions and attitudes in your country, particularly we want you to focus on disabled children and young people. If you can put that in your chat box as you have done. I believe that Gemma, are you going to be...

GEMMA: Yes, so we have a minute or two now for you to put that in the chat box and then I will read some of the stuff out and then Parmi can respond.

GEMMA: Okay, so they are still coming in. I'm going to start with the last one. In Nigeria [Inaudible] disabled children are seen as creatures that are into witchcraft and nocturnal activities. Parents of families still hide their disabled children, most schools are not able to provide inclusive et cetera for disabled children. Children with disabilities have cursed their families. They are a burden. They can't attend normal schools. They can't go to mainstream school, they are special, they're a burden. Hidden in houses. Misconception that their parents committed a sin at the resulted in disability. The attitude that they should stay indoors. They are a liability, an embarrassment to family and society. That they are clumsy, known as weak. Cursed. That they are a result of parents separation or sin. They won't be of any value to society. Another one says they are hidden, thought to be useless. Going to whiz down a bit. Including children with disabilities in play would hurt them physically, their impairments are a direct result of witchcraft punishment or some sort, children with disabilities will not be good for anything and reliant on their parents or caregivers for the rest of their lives.

PARMI: Sadly those are the stories that continue to come through from across the global. The superstition, the hiding away, the superstition about being cursed all the things that you have actually shared there, we have touched on in the course work and in terms of some of the modules that the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum also touch on, I think I mentioned earlier the committee of disabled people forum, I meant the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, I do apologise, it's been a very long day. But in terms of like, so you can see the importance in terms of ‑‑ I understand that when Richard is saying it will be really great when you do this presentation Parmi to highlight what can be done, that's what we need to focus on. It's that element of collating we know that this is happening, but I think also we are saying it cannot continue being unchallenged. One of the questions that we, you know, how will we challenge that, how are we challenging it collectively? And also in terms of the countries that ratified the Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, what are they doing in terms of increasing awareness of disability awareness and you know, reducing the stigma and abuses and discriminates associated with disability.

RICHARD: Yeah, can I just add Parmi.

PARMI: Yes, certainly Richard.

RICHARD: I mean we are talking about 51 of the 54 Commonwealth countries have ratified the convention and they have all, all of them have signed the CRC, so that is a really strong basis to challenge your parliamentarians about what are they doing on this. I would urge people to think about that. The second thing is, it isn't that hard to find disabled young people who have become super role models, like Greta Thunberg, who probably is the young person that most people listen to, a girl with significant autism and there are a number of documentaries around now about her and how she sort of just single-mindedly (background noise) we will find other young people like that to actually push forward to show that many of these myths are exactly that, just myths.

PARMI: Exactly. Just building on that it's so important, the visibility. So even yourselves here, particularly those that are young people and, you know, just in terms of all of you with your work. How do we plate it in the spaces, the positive stories, you know. Unless you don't hear about them, you know, it's very hard to change people's viewpoints. So it's so important you know, to change the narrative, you know, to have that peer support. So peer support for and role models and associations with other disabled people, you know, for children and young people, for ‑‑ also in terms of families as well so that they can also have that support. It's really important when we talk about social agents, everybody has a role, a responsibility to support the duty‑bearers and support the rights holders to realise the rights that we have spoken about today. There is a lot of work to be done, but it's not going to be ‑‑ you know, there is so much effort in trying to challenge this and we need to really kind of behind together and make sure we can do that. So there is some actions that we can do and I think within the course book there is an element where you can do a campaign, if you are going to do the campaign do share that with us in terms of you know, the CDPF and CCYDN, would be really interested to see what you do and see what you are a learning in result of this space.

RICHARD: I think we should go on to question 2, if you would like to read that out Parmi a couple of times and then give people time to answer.

PARMI: Question 2, share three common positive perceptions and attitudes in your country about disabled children and young people. That's up to three common or, you know, just generally any positive perceptions and attitudes that has been shared and highlighted and you are aware of, about disabled children and young people in your country.

RICHARD: Okay. We'll be quiet for 90 seconds so you can get those into the chat.

RICHARD: So Gemma, what have we got coming in?

GEMMA: So, more inclusive schools are springing up, but they're just as expensive though and mainly available to elites. There is more awareness on disability discrimination. These aren't quite the... let me see. Some community in Nigeria have this renewed belief that children and youth with disabilities are especially made so by God. That caring for them being economical and supernatural blessings, maybe not quite what you are looking for. Government support and media change the mindset about children and youth with disabilities. Genius, blessing, special, here's one. School have started introducing sign language interpreters to the academic structure. Most DPOs and CSOs have found a common ground to advocacy for inclusive education and government have seen the need to join forces to make this work. That's in Nigeria.

RICHARD: Good.

GEMMA: Somebody in Namibia, question 2, there is more of an understanding that disabled children can learn and therefore schools are mainstreaming disabled children and there are a variety of schools specifically designed for specific disabilities. Disabled children are human, just like other disabled children, disabled children are unique in their own individual way, our trainable, should participate in activities and decision‑making. More and more people expect disabled children can attend mainstream schools. Paralympics has promoted disability sports. Umm... positive attitudes. Children have rights and are to be protected. Children with disabilities serve as a reason for people without disabilities to seek higher education in the medical field. We have more young persons with disabilities stepping into the disability advocacy space, especially with access to social media. This is a positive measure. Umm... somebody has said that their children, that children with autism are not weird but a rare gift from God. Children with learning difficulties are the ones to be thought to be geniuses. Umm... thoughts to be children with divinity. Yes. So kind of a mix of things there.

PARMI: Okay, certainly you can see there is such a long journey ahead of just but I'm sure that we are all happy rise to the challenge. There is a conception that positive attitudes how they have been portrayed, in the spaces, whether it's be stories, films et cetera. I wanted to say that when there is media coverage language doesn't play, you know, language can actually if anything other cause the very much the hat model. I just wanted to ‑‑ charity model. I just wanted to share an example, over the pandemic just as young people were fundraising and trying to do some things in their community, there is a great portrayal of chin and disabled children and young people doing fundraising, you know, reaching out for friendships, also about sport, we talked about sports, stories, it's also about the advancement of technology, but disabled children and young people also being innovators and also being solutions about things that are needed you know, that generally society really can do with. So in terms of positive perceptions we do really need to move forward and in terms, this is why, with this module it's very much about disabled people being valued as right bearers and also what they contribute in terms of family life, community life, school life and it's so important that they, you know, that we need to ensure that we do provide and carry on advocating for inclusion, visibility and ensuring that they can thrive, be safe and also be supportive watching their development and reach their full potential. Because they are not given these opportunities that is why that narrative seems to be very limited. It's all about continued advocacy to show what the potential of disabled children can be, with all their different abilities and whatever small or large measures they make in terms of their, you know, of themselves, their communities, their families, and wider society. Every life is precious and everybody, you know, has, is a human being, and should be treated so with respect and dignity. Thank you.

RICHARD: I want to add Parmi, if I may, before we go on to Joseph who I believe is on. We need to be careful, one of the long‑term stereotypes is that sort of disabled people are super achievers, there was some of those who achieve better than everybody else that children of God and all of that stuff. We need to be careful about that because that isn't true and they are not, and.

PARMI: Yes.

RICHARD: And that stereotype is the other side of the coin of thinking that disabled kids can't do anything. So if someone does something, everyone is, "Amazing, amazing", the reality is that disabled kids can do all sorts of things and have always done so, but when the barriers are removed can do so much more. We need to look at removing the barriers rather than see I think the issue of what is within the child. We must assume that all disabled children and young people have the potential to thrive, but what is stopping them is the barriers in our society and we need to really focus on that. So, that I would say we need to look at those comments in that light. Thank you very much Parmi. Is Joseph with us now to carry on.

PARMI: Richard I think it's Jonathan first and then Joseph.

RICHARD: Jonathan first, sorry, my mistake. Jonathan. Over to you Jonathan.

JONATHAN: Thank you.

RICHARD: Bring up the next slide for you.

JONATHAN: Thank you Richard.

RICHARD: Yes.

JONATHAN: Thank you. So now I just really want to take a bit of an overview of the Global Disability Children and Young People's Charter. This is something that as a member of CCYDN, and working with Include Me TOO, I played a big part in drafting. So, it's something that umm... is very, it's very important and yes the, the intention of this Charter to support disabled people's rights is obviously something that we all hold very dear, all who are on this call or are presenting today and taking part. So as an overview, disabled children and young people representing 23 countries, 20 of which were Commonwealth countries, took part in the global disability summit in 2018 in London. Include Me TOO facilitated this and supported the association of disabled young people to lead, participate and represent on the international platform, and through civil society young people's workshops, online surveys, youth‑led discussions and global video campaigns participants views were collated on the six themes of the global disability summit, the changes they wished to see and what matters to them the most. The challenges and barriers that they experience, in regards to their inclusion and being listened to. How they want to be included and can contribute. Then suggestions for a global disability children and youth Charter. The real key development of this was gathering those contributions from disabled children and young people across the global. This has developed into the Charter which has 12 commitments to protect the rights of disabled young people as requested by those young people. Provide support and resources, increase inclusion, access to opportunities, live a full life with many possibilities, achieve their goals and achieved their full potential. This Charter underpins the UN CRPD convention on the rights of the child and the SDGs, the aim is to strengthen the rights and inclusion for disabled children and young people by aligning the actions and support gathered to the Charter alongside those commitments made doing the global disability summit in 2018. So, these are commitments such as inclusive education, participation, and representation. Gender equality, which is very much important within that discussion around disability and disabled people it's not a separate issue, it all intersects and it's important that we make sure that our advocacy around disability is also inclusive and gender equal. Safeguarding and ending all forms of abuse and harmful practices. Inclusive and accessible communities. Digital technology. Economic empowerment and employment opportunities which is a big focus of mine in particular, giving people at the chance to be able to do the jobs that they want to and use those skills in the ways that they are best placed to. Not pigeon‑holing people or stereotyping them, but allowing them to have that equal playing field with non‑disabled young people. Also removing stigma and discrimination, support, and wellbeing. Humanitarian crisis, legislation, and policies, which obviously which has been spoken about previously and ensuring that there are those rights within the law, so that all citizens, disabled citizens within those countries can rely on those and utilise those. Commitment to use of data to support the rights of young disabled people. We have a few, just a few quotes from individuals who have been part of this disability Charter. Just to give one, because I know that obviously we want to keep to time, but just to give one for example, from Anna, from the International Disability Alliance, who is the IDA Chair, who said, "I support the children and youth Charter at this global disability summit, because I believe that inclusion is a must, it's urgent and now and especially because I think and I believe that our children and our youth deserve a fair and equal and especially inclusive world." So, that's just a bit about that Charter that the CCYDN and Include Me TOO have been championing. Good I have the next slide please. Thank you, so, now I want to talk about the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 agenda, and disabled children and young people. So, I've, many of you on the call will have an idea of what the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs are they are global cause to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, aiming to leave no one behind, but children with disabilities are being left behind in a number of core areas within this, such as SDG1, no poverty. SDG2, zero hunger. SDG3, good health and wellbeing. SDG4, quality education. So just to give some examples of that, there is lots of evidence that is suggesting around zero hunger that children with disabilities are more likely to experience malnutrition, studies suggesting that good health and wellbeing, children with disabilities are 5 to 10 times more likely to report serious health conditions than those without. Also a study by PLA International about quality education finding that disabled children were 5 to 10 times more likely to be excluded from school than children without disabilities. Some several of the SDGs explicitly state that they cannot be attained unless persons with disabilities are really included, including Goal 4 an inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life‑long learning opportunities for all. Which really focuses on that intersectional focus and that agenda and also in terms of, you know a vulnerable individuals and those with disabilities. So, it is an area where it's really important to ensure that the SDGs and the work that we do, that it's inclusive of disabled people and that a lot of the efforts that are made towards those, these same benefits haven't been seen for disabled young people in the same way and this is something that is really important to focus on trying to change and inclusive disabled children and young people participation is more than just engagement, it's being treated as equal and important partners and advocates in driving change. I think it's now a good idea now to move on to the activity that we had planned on this section. So, I think that might be on ‑‑ ah, yes. So, looking at, what are the key challenges in your country that are experienced by disabled children and young people?

RICHARD: So, again, 90 seconds to 2 minutes. We might take one or two people, I think we've got enough time if they are making interesting comments just to comment on them Jonathan.

JONATHAN: Thanks. Okay, so we have got quite a few responses in the chat. Gemma I don't know if you might be able to maybe go, sort of go through some of those and maybe highlight a few that might be good to sort of focus on, as Richard says.

GEMMA: Sure, sure. Okay, so umm... I'm not sure, possibly Tanzania, poor infrastructures as it leads to accessibility to educational institutions. Also being hidden away. Accessibility, lack of inclusiveness. Not considered to even have rights. Access to education opportunities and quality education. lack of access infrastructure again. Lack of inclusive education. Umm... key challenges including accessing specialist treatments for disabilities and diagnosis. Lack of education for disabilities in South Africa. There isn't even recent data on this. The latest statistics I've found was for 2001 to 2011, that's ten years ago. Discrimination in the workplace. I don't know if you want to talk to them may be. I've got the majority of private schools are not still accessible to disabled children.

RICHARD: Is this still South African?

GEMMA: Yeah... no, sorry, that was a different person. A lot of people are saying inaccessibility and lack of inclusion, many do not attend school. So, I don't know if you want to get anybody to expand on anything? Poor facilities when it comes to education, somebody says.

RICHARD: Yeah.

JONATHAN: Yeah that would be interesting actually to see what facilities.

GEMMA: Poor facilities, poor facilities when it comes to education. That's Conzola, can you unmute and talk to us. Here we go. Here we go.

RICHARD: Hello Edward do you want to tell us something about what you said.

GEMMA: We can't hear you, but I know you are not muted. So can you get a bit closer to your mic Conzolo, please. Can you try again?

RICHARD: Wrong one.

GEMMA: Ah, we can't hear you.

RICHARD: Can we go back to the person from South African, because I've got a question to ask them as well.

GEMMA: Conzolo if you stop your video and your mic for the moment, we'll maybe try and come back to you in a second. So, somebody in South African, it was Non (name [Inaudible])

>> Yes, that's me.

GEMMA: Yes, thank you.

>> I know my name is very difficult to pronouns.

GEMMA: Yes, for us British, yeah, thank you.

>> All right, so I was speaking about a lack of educational, accessible education for children with disabilities in South Africa, and the fact that there isn't proper recent data on it, and the recent statistics I was able to find out, just how many children with disabilities are in South African cools, they mentioned 600,000 schools, I mean that's some data coming from 2001 to 2011, like I said that's about ten years ago. When policies are being made, like right now, I attended the NYD, the National Youth Development Agency where they are working on a strategic plan, they spoke about accessible education for all, for children but disability was not mentioned at all. They put on a whole lot of slides but nothing spoke about disabilities, so whenever strategic policies are being drafted and ridden down and disability is not even included, this is speaking about the youth of South Africa, even in employment, you know, it's just, the problem is not even recognised or acknowledged, and that's how I feel about it. A lot of problems are acknowledged and they are trying to fix them, but when it comes to disability and the lack of access, it's not even acknowledged, it's like it doesn't even exist.

RICHARD: Do you know about the court case a few years ago in the Western Cape, where there was a child with intellectual impairments, that the school refused and it went up to your higher courts and they insisted that the child have a right to education, the right to education has been interpreted to, "Those that would benefit from it", rather than all children. Did you know about that case?

>> I didn't know about that case Richard, actual, until you made me aware of it; trying to figure out how it can be, you know, how this is lawful, especially coming from South Africa who are so big on, I mean, human rights [Inaudible] it's unacceptable.

RICHARD: A colleague who is also disabled, Professor Michael stain at Harvard disability Law Centre, the case is written up on their website and there is a lot of other useful stuff there about using the law to challenge. I think some of us need to be much more up on that and using it. That was an example in South Africa, I think all of you could be looking at the law to challenge. That's your area, Jonathan. How do you see people using the law more?

JONATHAN: Yeah, I think it, I think a lot of it comes into being aware of the rights that are actually there. So, for example, in the UK, you know, as you will be aware Richard, there are rules at the exist in relation to services and employers having to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled people and I've just found quite often there is a real lack of awareness as to what that is and how that stretches and people not often knowing that they can even request something. So that's just as an employment sphere, but actually in all kinds of cases and in all kinds of jurisdictions, if citizens are not made aware of the legal rights at the exist, they can utilise and rely on to defend themselves, they aren't going to be able to do that. I think that sometimes we have an assumptions that oh the law is there, that's great, but actually if we are not telling people what it is and how they can use it and how practically you do that to support yourself and others, then there isn't much that those people can do. So I think it's about making people more aware of what exists.

RICHARD: One way that you can do that is to, you don't have to be a lawyer to take these cases. You can look at what the statute says, what the laws say, what the international treaties say and then go to the human rights institute in your country and quite a lot of African countries and India, Bangladesh, have human rights institutes who will take cases against their government when you can point out the breach of the law. So you don't have to just do it on your own. But in the UK we have got the Equality and Human Rights Commission who bring cases as well. Did you want to go on to your question 4 then Jonathan?

JONATHAN: Yes, we'll do that. So question 4 is to choose two commitments from the Global Disability Children and Young People's Charter, so the Charter we were just presenting on just before this and to choose two commitments from that which you wish to support and what action you plan to take, or advocate for. So, as previously, if we have 90 seconds to provide your response in the chat.

RICHARD: I will put the Charter things back up on the screen to remind people.

JONATHAN: That would be very helpful. Thank you.

RICHARD: So which two of those and what would you do to implement them?

RICHARD: Okay Gemma do you want to look true the chat and tell us what people are saying.

GEMMA: Yes.

RICHARD: Okay.

GEMMA: Umm... could you just pop it back to the different slides while we do this please?

RICHARD: Yeah. There we go.

GEMMA: Okay, so Stephen in Ghana said he picked commitment 2 and 12. Lilian, Tanzania, inclusive education, advocate on accessible structures, infrastructures and bringing down barriers like language barriers in schools to disabled children. Somebody else said number 12, data collection, and also number 4 worst forms of child Labour. Am just looking to see if there is any specific action described. Okay, here we go. Kingsley, I think Uganda, number 1, inclusion, and number 2 education. These are what I will support and what I see as being one of the most pressing needs, along children and youth with disabilities is concerned, [Inaudible] concerned stakeholders. Advocacy visits, leaders or people in authority follows et cetera. Somebody else says number 1 and 9. Umm... Vendina says number 4, sorry question 4, two commitments to support including number 2 and number 9. I will participate in whatever initiative I can, as a disabled person to educate myself and others about our rights for inclusion. I will support and advocate for wellbeing of my clients that I work with to establish a meaningful place like the communities of bellies.

PARMI: Gemma that's fantastic, I'm also looking in terms of time as well,.

GEMMA: That's fan, yes, I'll be quiet.

PARMI: Looking at the Charter, one of the things we would say in the course book as well there is a link so do sign up, do get your DPOs and NGOs to sign up, talk about these, promote these, it's come directly from disabled children and young people, to recognise them as social actors and be supported, just to highlight you know, Richard and Gemma, Joseph is not getting a great reception, I think we did anticipate that. So me and Jonathan are just going to cover a couple of points on the last two areas s I'm just going to mention the COVID‑19, the COVID 19 disabled children and young people statement and recommendations. During the, just as you can see on the screen there is, you know, there is some logos, lots of the organisations that have stepped up and supported and endorsed this, we are really delighted that the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum did the same as well. If you go on to the next slide Richard, I'm just going to kind of try and summarise this. Thank you. So, so what I just wanted to kind of highlight was ‑‑ just bear with me one moment. So I what I wanted to just highlight, disabled children and young people came from you know, from DPOs, youth‑led DPOs and NGOs, we came together with the Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network, we came together to talk about the barriers that they were having, they wanted to make sure they were visible in the space where there was phenomenal work being done on disability advocacy, in terms of really highlighting the rights violations really during the pandemic that continued and continue, for disabled persons. It's so important to make sure that narrative, we talked about the narrative haven't we today, it's really important to have a narrative of disabled children and young people about what was so important to them, so they shared their stories. What they came with, once again there is a link in the course book and I know that it will be put on the website, they came up with some key recommendations. These recommendations, as references, each of these they, reference which Article of the Convention On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities each of them are advocating for, plus the convention on the rights of the child, plus Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Disability Children and Young People Charter, it talks about accessible learning, we know it was impacted, Health and Social Care, the importance of that, accessible information, distancing and support and wellbeing, because obviously it's all about how do you make sure that disabled children and young people do not get left behind in terms of their caregivers and having that support they have for their independence et cetera. Participation and representation, you know, just because there is a pandemic doesn't mean their voices are no less important than any other time. The key barriers and challenges that young people women and girls, disabled girls are experiencing. There is a whole element of safeguarding, protecting, you know, disabled children and young people from all forms of abuse and harmful practices. During the pandemic we were all aware it was very much heightened and extreme or were at risk. Then also economic empowerment and in employment, youth generally are of the, you know, are the increasingly the highest population globally and then when you look at disabled youth as well, and also about the impact of economic, the economic situation on youth generally and then you break it down to youth with disabilities you can imagine, it's you know, it's very, looking very, very uncertain and it's very much about you know, increasing those opportunities. You know, whilst at the same time tackling the barriers and challenges they already experience, the other element we have spoken about is stigma and discrimination, we saw how people are being treated and discarded during the pandemic and not being considered in responses at the time. Independent living, you know, people's lives continue and you know it's about supporting their rights to do so. So that was very important. The other element I think that has been picked up today is data, where, we need to look that data about disabled children and young people and disabled people, just generally, just how can, you know, we really move progressively in society and in our country if we don't actually know quite the population is and how it's been impacted, then that all comes down to [Inaudible] legislation and policy. So that's very, very key. So, just a little bit of an overview on that and I'm going to hand it over now to Jonathan.

RICHARD: Just to say that all of that is still very relevant. I think a lot of people thought, oh well COVID, threats in the past, by no means, India has massively higher levels than it had a year ago now, there has been a rise in different parts of Africa again, it's not gone away, until everyone on the planet is vaccinated and has boosters it won't go away.

PARMI: Exactly Richard, the other thing is how [Inaudible] there are disparities time and time again and intersectionality, so many things came to the surface in the COVID‑19 pandemic, I'm sure with the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, we're working collectively together to continue raising those and with other partners and social actors so thank you for that.

RICHARD: Thank you Parmi, we have ten minutes left, I'll pass on to Jonathan now isn't it.

PARMI: Yes.

RICHARD: Okay, there you go Jonathan.

JONATHAN: Thank you Richard. So yes, the role of disabled children and young people in the human rights and disability movement. I will keep this brief and succinct, because I know that it's very important that we fit all of this in and it's a very important area to cover. So as has previously been mentioned and there has been a big focus on this, children and young people often are excluded from those forums where the disabilities rights are discussed and decisions made and power held. That's part of why CCYDN exists to ensure that young people with disabilities are able to be part of that and actually advocate for ourselves. Just a few other examples of areas that it's really important to cover, it's empowering youth with disabilities in Rwanda, where an estimated 42% of young people are unemployed or under employed, and the government's efforts to promote youth development and employment have not, may have made some impact but it's still, you know, still that significant amount and it's particular only problematic due to half the population being under the age of 20. So, UWEZE youth empowerment was set up a group of youth, a Ross disability organisation whose mission it is to serve as a platform for children and youth with disabilities, it's been making great strides there. It's also important to remember Leonard Cheshire, Making It Count, the power of youth advocates in the disability movement and the Making It Count project is focused on realising the potential of youth with disabilities by empowering us to see ourselves as experts of our own experience and bringing a deeper understanding of the challenges that they face in selected SDG areas, so remember going back to the point about linking to the SDGs. Also, the European Disability Forum committee, which recognised and developed in recognition of the importance of mainstreaming disability in all areas concerning youth, given that there is lots of areas where young people with disabilities face the highest levels of discrimination and the additional barriers in a number of areas of society, and the youth committee has a number of priorities each year, 2021's main priority being housing and independent living. Which is, not necessarily, something, particularly in terms of housing that somebody might instantly think is a disability issue, but actually many issues, you know, the issues at the affect young people equally will apply to disabled people in many different ways, particularly independent living is a very key area and actually making sure that young people are supported in that as much as anything else. It's also really important. Finally‑‑‑

RICHARD: It's on the forum page.

JONATHAN: And also young people in Australia, that's my overview.

RICHARD: I was just saying the European Disability Forum, one of their great victories was, they have had conferences for the last 30 years. Long before the European Union adopted inclusive education as an overarching policy they were pushing for it as their number one demand. In a way that's where the youth have led the whole of the European Union in that direction, so it shows the power of it.

JONATHAN: Yeah, as you say, it's certainly been a long time pushing, a lot of this has been developed over several years and generations as you say. Then actually just also to finish off on Australia, similarly, youth‑led organisations and campaigns in civil society groups have amplified those voices of Australian young people with disabilities, such as women with disabilities Australia in recent years, so there is a lot of work going on at Commonwealth level and CCYDN is very pleased to be working alongside number of these organisations in order to bring this greater change, but it is good to see that there is a lot being done. Obviously there is a lot at the needs to be done and a lot of issues at the need to be sorted, so it's good to see number of initiatives like this taking place.

RICHARD: Okay. Next slide is up.

JONATHAN: Yeah. Just a short slide there about advocacy not just getting to the table with a new sets of interests but changing the size and configuration of the table to accommodate a new set of actors. It's not just fitting disabled young people into what is already there, but actually seeing what disabled people wants and need and to support them to do that and to change the conversation as well, to recognise that. So that's, you know, those are really the key points there and just talking about what is currently been going on. So, thank you very much for that and I think Parmi, did you want to take, take on now for the next steps.

PARMI: There are some questions that I think Richard I think we're probably going to send over to the audience. I mean, unless, I think to be honest, yeah, I'm just, there are some questions, the questions that we would like you to yeah, definitely send across is, you know and yet again these questions are also in your course book. It's so important about, you know, getting to know, do let us know about what, you know, in your country how are disabled youth being involved in advocacy and in the disability rights movement? It's so important, you know, to make sure that, you know, that youth are being connected with other youth activists as well so that we can all work together. It's also very important, I think, in terms of disabled women's voices as well, definitely question 5 in your country how are disabled youth involved in advocacy and in the disability movement? This final question for this session today was to look at and the question to yourselves is, if you are disabled young person how are you being supported in disability rights advocacy and how are you being included to participate and represent on the issues at the matter to you and your peers? We would love to have your answers in response to all the questions. Thank you for those that have responded today and I think we are, are we, that's our final slide as I understand it Richard.

RICHARD: You are on the final slide, just while I'm putting that up, I would say that, I think, that last question raised some important issues. I think with our 85 member organisations, I think we could be putting much more pressure on all of them to set up their own youth sections, so I, we should, we should have some further follow‑up on this Parmi.

PARMI: Definitely, definitely, also as we said, the fact that it's really kind of recognising the efforts to date that I think Jonathan has actually highlighted, that's what young people have said, when they have made efforts to set up networks and forums, too work with them, do connect with them, do recognise them as allies as well. I think all of us in the advocacy area know h how much work goes into it, lots of hours. It just makes sense that, you know, we build upon the efforts that already exist. So certainly in terms of this, do get in touch with the Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network and also with DPOs that have got people involved, get them to connect. It's all about how we can sector together and share those experiences and really kind of strengthen that voice. I think what young people ‑‑ so, it is, it's really acknowledging, I think this is the final slide that really is, is pertinent in what has like been shared today as well, this is about demonstrating and recognising and appreciating that there is, showing that there is, there is an effective and meaningful disabled children and young people's participation in society is being recognised. I really applaud all the youth, youth that are involved in the disability advocacy work and I'm very honoured to be part of the Commonwealth disability model that they are doing and the young people that are running their own youth‑led DPOs as well, you know, phenomena until work has been happening and you can see that from Global Disability Children and Young People and COVID 19 statement, surely it's about "Nothing About Us Without Us" and it's so important to recognise those efforts in everything, support those efforts and build upon those existing efforts, there is quite a lot that still needs to be done in the sector.

GEMMA: Can I just ask that you read the slides out, sorry I don't know that it was read and people that were visually impaired.

PARMI: Yes, certainly, certainly.

RICHARD: I'll read them out, I've got it up on mine, I've closed it. So the two ‑‑ which ones do you mean, the questions?

GEMMA: Particularly that last slide.

RICHARD: The last slide.

GEMMA: I don't think you actually read it out.

RICHARD: Meaningful children and young people's participation in society requires to ensure that they are aware of their rights to express themselves, engage and participate in decision‑making processes on matters at the affect them and encouraging them to exercise their rights as active citizens to bring about positive change. The second one was, enabling disabled children and young people as rights elders, social actors, advocates to express their views and opinions to be taken seriously and be included in decisions, actions, planning at local, national, regional, and international level, disabled children and young people role in the disability movement is critical and will impact positively for the future of disability youth, human rights movement while ensuring they can have a better future.

       So, thank you, both. Parmi and Jonathan for a really thoughtful presentation today. I'd like to thank everyone for tuning in and remind you that the inclusive education presentation and course book go up tonight. There is some, lots of activities there and a lot of what we talked about today was inclusive education, so it's a good bridge to the next module and we will be looking next Friday for two sets of 90 minutes at lots of practice about making inclusion happen, and what the barriers are. So it's all part of one seamless whole and so thank you very much, and I will be, we will get in touch to see how we can also take this forward outside of this training. So thank you very much.

PARMI: That's wonderful.

RICHARD: Thank you everybody for participating, thanks to the signers, captioners, to Gemma and everybody else. So goodbye and thank you.

PARMI: Thank you.