



ATscale

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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WEBINAR

Strengthening assistive technology ecosystems for inclusive education

Wednesday 21 January 2026 | 8:00 AM EST

Strengthening Assistive Technology Ecosystems for Inclusive Education

Key insights from the UNICEF–AT Scale policy brief

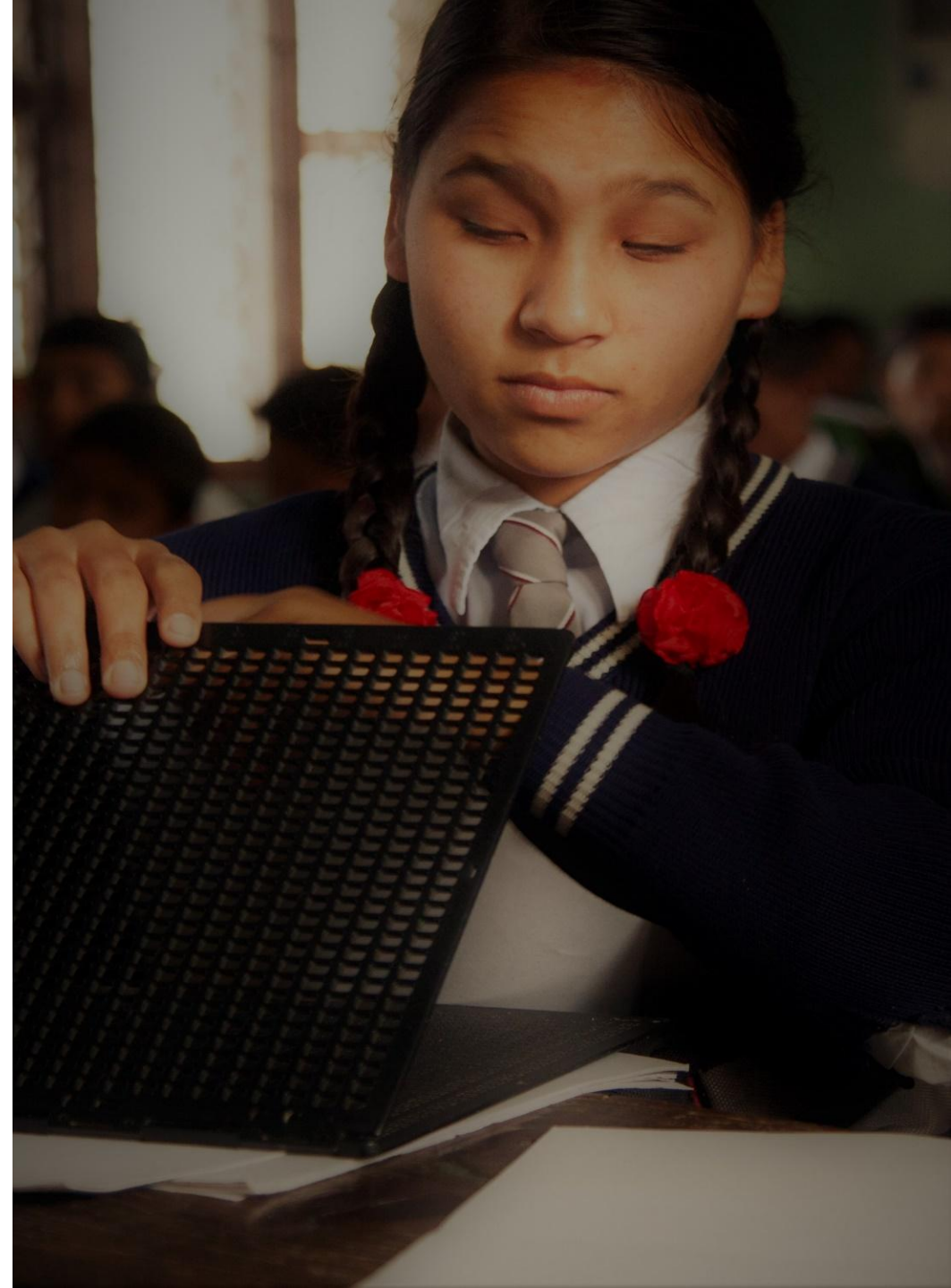
Asma Maladwala, UNICEF



What is inclusive education

CRPD Article 24: Education

- Children with disabilities are learning alongside peers without disabilities at all levels of education
- Reasonable accommodation on an individual basis
- Effective, individualized support measures to enable full participation and quality learning
- *a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers...*



What is assistive technology and who is it for?

AT in education

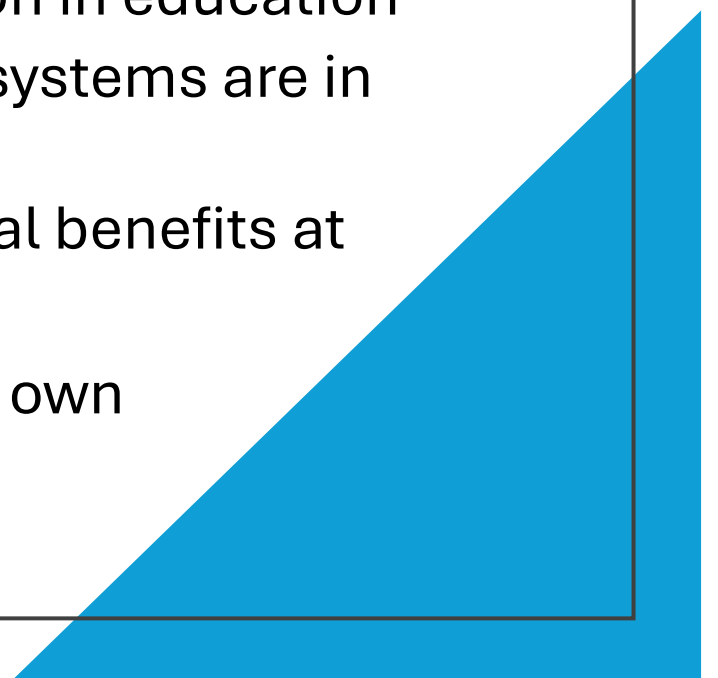
- A right, not an option
- Products, services, and systems that support effective use
- Ranges from low-tech to high-tech, including digital and emerging technologies
- Critical to dismantle barriers in education systems for inclusion

AT users

- Learners with disabilities
- Learners with functional difficulties, whether formally identified or not

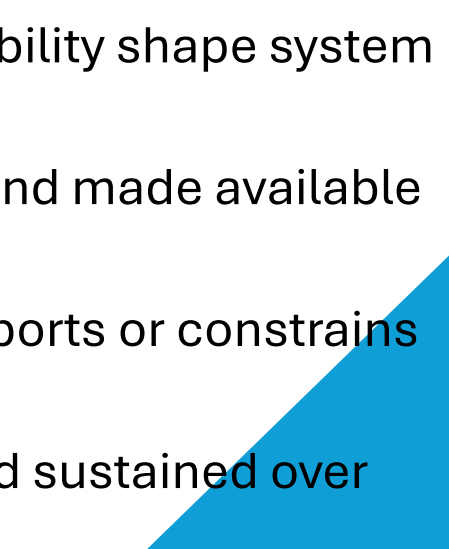
The role of assistive technology in quality inclusive education systems

AT can remove barriers and enable inclusive education

- Enables access, participation, and communication in education
 - Supports learning, teaching, and inclusion when systems are in place
 - Can contribute to longer term economic and social benefits at individual and societal levels
 - Necessary for many learners, but not sufficient on its own
 - Impact depends on **system-level supports**
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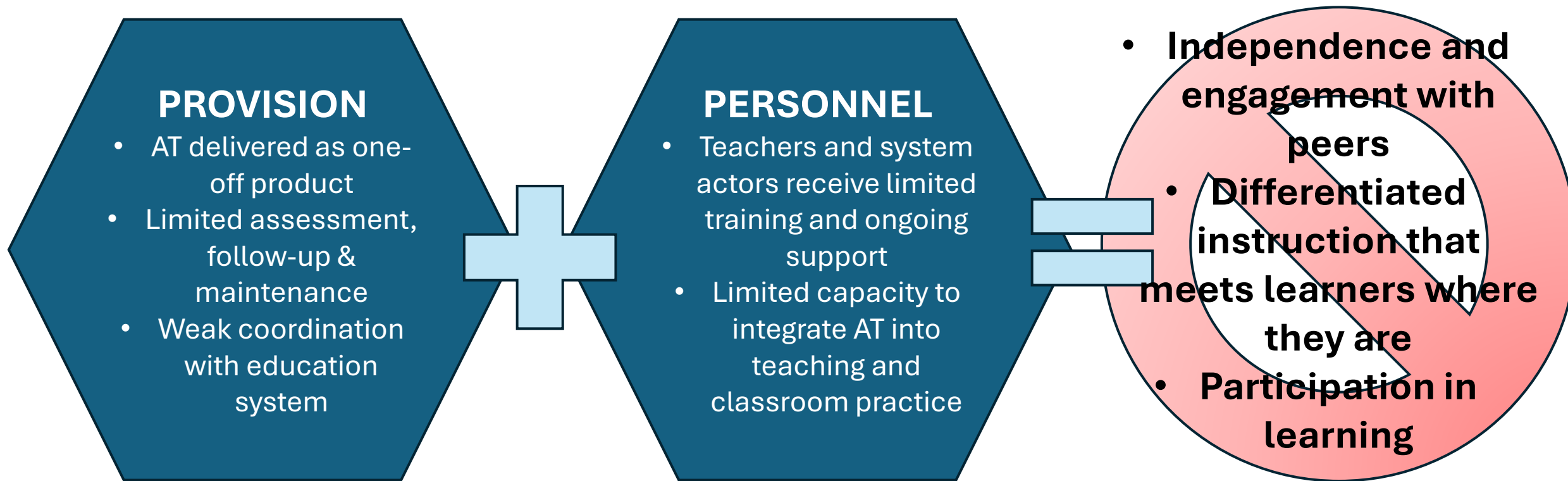
The 5Ps: Where AT ecosystems break down

The 5Ps framework groups systemic factors that shape access to and effective use of assistive technology in education systems

- **People:** How learners, families, and users experience access, affordability, information, and inclusion.
 - **Policy:** How governance, financing, coordination, and accountability shape system responses.
 - **Products:** How assistive technologies are selected, regulated, and made available within systems.
 - **Personnel:** How human capacity within education systems supports or constrains effective use.
 - **Provision:** How assistive technology is delivered, supported, and sustained over time.
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How this impedes inclusive education

Access and effective use break down when...



Barriers interact – failure in one area undermines the others

Policy & programmatic recommendations

Governments	Ministries of Education	Donors & Development Partners	NGOs, OPDs & Communities
Develop and finance a cross-sectoral national AT strategy	Embed assistive technology across education systems (policies, standards, budgets)	Integrate assistive technology in education investments	Promote rights-based social and behavioral change
Strengthen regulation, procurement and capacity	Ensure teacher capacity	Support country-led policy development and implementation	Facilitate peer support and user participation
Invest in inclusive infrastructure and integrated services	Create accessible and data-informed learning environments	Promote inclusion and accountability	Monitor progress and advocate for accountability
Include assistive technology in emergency preparedness	Foster innovation and collaboration		

What needs to change at system level

Strengthening assistive technology ecosystems for inclusive education requires:

- A shift from one-off provision of devices to assistive technology as a ***supported service***
 - Transitioning from fragmented, sector-specific action to ***coordinated, cross-sector ecosystems***
 - ***Integration*** of assistive technology in education system planning, financing, and accountability
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