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Disability and Education in Morocco - From Structural Inequalities to Inclusive Horizons

This presentation examines the relationship between disability and education in Morocco, asking: why do so few disabled people reach school — and even fewer, university?

The numbers are striking. About 2.6 million people in Morocco live with a disability (6.8% of the population). Only 1.8% access higher education. 62% are illiterate. These are not the results of individual incapacity — they reflect structural barriers built into the educational system itself.

Drawing on the social model of disability and qualitative fieldwork at Hassan II University in Casablanca, we introduce the concept of the iron ceiling — a hard, early barrier that stops disabled children before their educational journey even begins. Unlike the glass ceiling (which slows career progression), the iron ceiling operates at the very start of life.

The presentation maps three connected issues: (1) the gap between Morocco's legal framework on disability rights and its weak implementation; (2) the specific experience of visually impaired students at university; and (3) the ambivalent role of digital education — a real opportunity for some, but a risk of deeper inequality for others, as shown during the Covid-19 pandemic.