



# ABLE SUMMIT 2019 BOOKLET

#ABLE Summit

Issue Date: March 2020



Office of Information  
Technology

Office of Student  
Affairs



# ABLE

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ACCESSIBILITY FOR  
**A BOLDER LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

# Abstract

The ABLE initiative (Accessibility for a Bolder Learning Experience) triggered its ripple effect through the 1<sup>st</sup> ABLE Summit on April 11 and 12, 2019.

The purpose of this booklet is to highlight the ABLE Summit 2019 activities, topics discussed, insights and outcomes.

This paper will represent the 1<sup>st</sup> documentation of ABLE's series towards an inclusive digital tomorrow aimed at sharing the experience and the knowledge acquired through the experts brought into this collaboration and capacity building platform.



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# Introduction

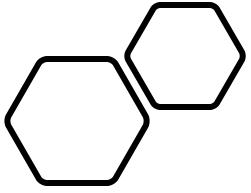
ABLE (Accessibility for a Bolder Learning Experience), is an initiative brought by the Office of Information Technology (IT) in collaboration with the Student Affairs Accessible Education Office (AEO) at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

ABLE aims at increasing the retention and success rates of students with disabilities and to support their readiness for life after university by developing and deploying accessibility to campus-wide IT resources.

ABLE scope covers: Assistive Technologies (AT), learning content, services, resources, policies, IT facilities and learning spaces, collaboration platforms and inclusive IT support.

Today, ABLE is achieving progress on several fronts and is now stretching the boundaries, connecting the dots, strengthening the means of implementation and vitalizing global partnership.





# The SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

Date: April 11 and 12 2019

Place: The American University of Beirut (AUB)





The background image shows a large conference hall during the ABE Summit 2019. The stage features a blue backdrop with the AUB logo and text. Several people are on stage, including a speaker at a podium and a panel of five seated individuals. The audience, seen from behind, is seated in rows of chairs, facing the stage. A large screen on the right displays a close-up of hands. The scene is lit with stage lights, and a camera on a tripod is visible in the foreground.

What is the ABE Summit 2019?

It is the 1st of its kind event in Lebanon and the region shedding light on **Digital Accessibility in Higher Education**.

A national level event, with expert speakers from global leading organizations in the industry, brought together to **boost awareness, charge collective momentum** and to **trigger related initiatives**.

The summit includes expert talks, collaborative sessions, workshops, an exhibition for Assistive Technology (AT) and a networking platform.

The summit objectives:

- Trigger a high impact **awareness** wave
- Foster a **knowledge-share** hub and bring together **expertise and experiences**
- Attract related **affiliations** and know-how
- Energize the industry **networking** and trigger **collaborations**
- Connect and **elevate the impact** of the current individual accessibility **initiatives**
- Sketch the **roadmap to Digital Accessibility in Higher Education**.



## Who Does ABLE Serve?

This platform is set to bring together all stakeholders to build capacity and to share innovations, best practices, implementation strategies, research and education in assistive technology (AT) and accessibility. This forum is intended for:

- Students with special needs and their parents
- Educators and academicians
- Special Education schools and institutions
- Universities' and educational institutions' administrators
- Therapists and medical professionals that work with PWDs
- Policy Makers, officials and specialists
- Employers that accommodate special needs
- NGOs that support special needs
- Industry leaders, specialized organizations and Assistive Technology (AT) providers
- Technology professionals, innovators, AT experts, digital content creators, instructional designers, web designers and developers
- Accessibility professionals and advocates



# Participants in the 1<sup>st</sup> Summit:

15 countries

164 Organization

- 59 NGOs
- 20 Universities

335 Professionals

- 90 Technology professionals, designers and AT experts
- 83 Educators
- 74 Students
- 33 University officials
- 24 Accessibility professional or advocate
- 20 Student or alumni with special needs
- 11 Policy Makers



# ABLE SUMMIT 2019 PROGRAM



## Plenary Sessions

- Innovative Policies Contributing to Accessible Education: European Experience
- Access to Education: the Height of the Hurdles
- Building a Digitally Accessible Organizations

## Leading Practices and Trends

- Three Fundamentals for Improving Digital Accessibility and Inclusion
- International Standards for Digital Accessibility
- Reflection on the Impact of Techno-pedagogical Innovations
- Make Everything 1% better
- "People with Iron Will" at the Workplace

## Innovation and Assistive Technologies

- Towards a More ABLE Society Using Assistive Technology
- The Inclusive Classroom
- Innovations for Non-visual Computer Access - My ICT Journey
- How innovation can ensure student engagement with Assistive Technology
- Challenges and Opportunities of Building Infrastructure For Massive Open Online Education Resources
- Overcoming Challenges With Assistive Technology (Access to information, Social Media, and Services)

## Governmental Engagement

- Ministry of Education and Higher Education
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Minister of State for Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth (Representing the Prime Minister)

## 4 Digital Accessibility Tracks - Collaborative Sessions

- 1.Special Student Success
- 2.Governance and Regulations
- 3.E-Accessibility
- 4.Independent Living



## Invited Speakers:

- **Dr. Humberto Insolera**, *Executive Committee, European Disability Forum EDF*
- **Sam Koplewicz**, *Former Harvard Human Rights Fellow*
- **Yousif Asfour**, *Chief of Information Technology (CIO), AUB*
- **Jennison Asuncion**, *Co-Founder, Global Accessibility Awareness Day, Engineering Manager - Accessibility LinkedIn*
- **Shadi Abou-Zahra**, *Web Accessibility Strategy & Technology Specialist, W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)*
- **Jeremy Seda**, *IT Accessibility Coordinator, North Idaho College NIC*
- **Myles Pilling**, *Council Member and Director, BATA*
- **Eyyuphan Keskin**, *Learning Solutions Manager, Microsoft*
- **Dr. Fredrick Larson**, *CTO and Founder, Readspeaker*
- **Patrick McGrath**, *Education Technology Specialist, TextHelp*
- **Dr. Soha Maad**, *Founder and Manager, IGROW EEIG*
- **Malek Zuaiter**, *Business Development Executive, MindRockets*
- **Souha Bourjeily**, *Corporate Communications and CSR Manager, Alfa*





*Ralph Kostantine,  
Computer Science Student, NDU*



*Dr. Bassam Farah, PhD Business,  
PhD Psychology  
Professor, Olayan School of Business, AUB*



*Lama Joudieh, Bachelor's Degree in in Fine and  
Studio Arts , Head designer and Curator  
Paintbuckethea*



*Anthony Nahoul, B.S. In Computer Science  
Manager, A.M.N International for Software Development*



*Elias Kassab, Bachelor's Degree in Business  
Administration Contact Center Data Support  
Supervisor, Alfa*



*Rima Kaddoura, Master's of Public Health  
Research Assistant at the Department of Emergency  
Medicine, AUBMC*

6 Success Stories sharing the journey through higher education to success and how assistive technology as well as digital accessibility is helping them overcome barriers

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6 Discussion Panels: brought to the table multiple stakeholders in themed collaborations covering key issues and highlighting possible solutions





Panelists	Title
Mr. Akram Chehayeb	Minister of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)
Richard Kouyoumdjian	Minister of Social Affairs (MOSA)
Georges Xanthopoulos	Head of Accessibility & Mobility Program, Arcenciel Member of the National Committee for People with Disability
Dr. Talal Nezameddin	Dean of Student Affairs, AUB
Amer Makarem	Local Coordinator of Inclusive Public-School Model Project Manager at the Youth Association of the blind (YAB)
Nadine Ismail	Head of the Early Intervention Program The Learning Center for the Deaf (LCD)

# Status and Challenges in Higher Education in Lebanon

*Moderated by Dr. Yousif Asfour, CIO – AUB*

Replay: <https://youtu.be/JvS6d9Tlag8>

## TOPIC

Status and Challenges in Higher Education in Lebanon



## INSIGHTS

- Lack of awareness and assistive technology
- Lack of financial support to create an inclusive educational environment



## OUTCOMES

- Take advantage of new innovations to design/develop solution for everyone including PWDs (people with disabilities)
- Curricula and delivery methods need to change to meet the needs of students with special needs



# The Specially-Abled Student Journey

*Moderated by Dr. Talal Nezameddin  
Dean of Student Affairs - AUB*

Replay: <https://youtu.be/9uJal6WaOe4>

## TOPIC

- The Specially-Abled Student Journey: from admission to graduation

## INSIGHTS

- PWDs face lot of physical, psychological and educational difficulties in universities that are not properly equipped to accommodate them
- The university resources require capacity building to provide needed accommodation and support the success of students with special needs

## OUTCOMES

- The most important factor is the emotional, physical and technical support that the university offer to students with special needs
- Every institute, especially universities, needs to have an accessible education office that facilitates the students' journey at list as a first step

Panelists	Title
Josephine Khoueiry	Inclusion Responsible, LSB
Tonie Mikhael	LSBD Graduate - Law Student
Paul Abi Eshak	Education & Awareness Manager, Arcenciel
Carole Haber	Manager, Testing Programs, AMIDEAST
Stephanie Srou	Clinical Psychologist, SKILD
Amer Makarem	Manager at Youth Association of the Blind (YAB)
Nadine Ghalayini	Accessibility Coordinator, AUB
Johnny El-Khoury Gebrael	NDU Alumnus
Marianne Hakim	NDU Graduate and founding member FALA





Panelists	Title
Aline Karam	Chief Communications Affairs, Alfa
Joe Rahal	Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Founder of Joe Rahal Foundation
Shadi Abou-Zahra	Web Accessibility Strategy and Technology Specialist W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)
Jennison Asuncion	Co-Founder, Global Accessibility Awareness Day Engineering Manager- Accessibility LinkedIn
Yasmina El Khoury Raphael	Head of Business Environment and Innovation, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
Remy Elias	Wellness Outreach Officer, ABA Therapist at AUB

## Institutional Policies, Challenges and Priorities

*Moderated by Sylvana Lakkis, Chairperson,  
Arab Regional Office, Lebanese Physical  
Handicapped Union (LPHU)*

Replay: <https://youtu.be/RW3-zYWZYuM>

### TOPIC

Institutional Policies, Challenges and Priorities

### INSIGHTS

- The importance of leadership at any college/university in communicating support for accessibility
- Despite all challenges, institutions need to start with smaller changes to set up an accessible location

### OUTCOMES

- Raise awareness and get institutions to adopt inclusion guidelines
- Setting accessibility policies and procedures will foster building an inclusive environment for students
- Ratify the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

# Policies and Governmental Programs

*Moderated by: Dr. Hasan Youness, Strategic Advisor of Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL)*

Panelists	Title
H.E. MP Nadim Gemayel	Chairman of the ICT Committee, Lebanese Parliament
H.E. MP Nicolas Sehnaoui	Chairman, UK-Lebanon Tech Hub Former Minister of Telecom
H.E. MP. Dr. Inaya Ezzeddine	Minister of State for Administrative Reform, Lebanese
Angela Zettler	Disability Focal Point Inclusive Social Development Section/Social Development Division United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia



## TOPIC

- Policies and Governmental Programs

## INSIGHTS

- There isn't a central entity to govern all PWDs affairs
- Existing laws for inclusion are not being applied fully
- Lebanese Government lack sync across ministries in digitization and data
- Lebanese law doesn't distinguish between the different types of disabilities (physical and psychological) which makes it complicated for organizations to set adaption rules for each type

## OUTCOMES

- Obligatory legislations need to be applied to implement inclusion guidelines
- Accessibility and integration should be considered in the governmental digitization plan
- Digital Accessibility must be a roadmap with defined priorities and milestones to push the government, with the help of international experts, to take a series of practical and pragmatic decisions





Panelists	Title
Wissam Moubarak	Vice President for Human Resources, Indevco
Paola Kurdy	Human Resources Director, Alfa
Elie Rahbany	Acting Store Leader, Alfa
Abdallah Sakka	Quality Assurance Manager, Pepsi
Dr. Bassam Farah	Professor, OSB

## Inclusive Employment - Strategies Towards Accommodating Equal Opportunities for All Needs

*Moderated by: Sergio Moukarzel, Consultant, ProAbled*

### TOPIC

Inclusive Employment - Strategies Towards Accommodating Equal Opportunities for All Needs

### INSIGHTS

- Panelists shared their experiences at workplace either as PWDs or company managers
- Accommodation doesn't necessarily mean cost, while it is a worthy investment

### OUTCOMES

- Spread awareness about accessibility among team members by providing tips and techniques to interact with PWDs
- Employers are responsible for making the workplace is accessible for all

# Roadmap to Digital Accessibility in Higher Education in Lebanon

## *The Summit Closing Session*

*Moderated by: Rami Farran, Director of IT Academic Services, AUB*

Replay: <https://youtu.be/PR3CjqzfFuU>



Panelists	Title
Fadi Yarak	Director General of Education Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE)
Dr. Yousif Asfour	CIO, AUB
Dr. Fawzi Baroud	CIO,NDU
Camille Abu Naser	CIO,LAU
Dr. Hasan Youness	Strategic Advisor, Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL)
Hiam Fakhoury	Director of Rights and Access Program at the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA)
Sergio Moukarzel	Consultant, ProAbled
Hoda Moukannes	Representative of the Lebanese University

### TOPIC

- Roadmap to Digital Accessibility in Higher Education in Lebanon

### INSIGHTS

- Universities are missing experts in inclusion and accessibility to spread awareness and set frameworks for implementation
- E-learning accreditation needs to be revisited since online education is a main accessibility tool

### OUTCOMES

- Collaboration between universities, government and NGOs in Lebanon is a must to govern and empower accessibility integration and to make it feasible by joining efforts. The first step in this journey is building awareness and human capacity





## 19 Workshops and Collaborative Sessions

- **Inclusive Education Concept, Structure and Practice**  
Dr. Basma Frangieh and Dr. Robert White  
*T.I.E.S (Together for Inclusive Educational Systems)*

- [Download Slides](#)

- **Microsoft – Office 365 Accessibility**  
Aly Harakeh Microsoft MEA Education GTM Lead  
*Microsoft*

- Replay session: <https://youtu.be/hdppevOxsvs>

- **Building a Technology Action Plan for Accessibility**  
Jamie Ball Regional Manager  
*TextHelp*

- Replay session: <https://youtu.be/nu13L7usQwU>

- **Disability & Accessibility in Simple Words**  
Spiro Haber Business Development Manager  
*ReadSpeaker*

- Replay session: [https://youtu.be/bES5TYg5\\_-g](https://youtu.be/bES5TYg5_-g)

- **Using Alternative Means of Recording**  
Myles Pilling Director  
*British Assistive Technology Association (BATA)*

- [Download Slides](#)

- Replay session: <https://youtu.be/EYhrq-4Ld3E>







- **Building Accessible Web User Experience, IT Academic Services**  
Rami Farran Director- IT Academic Services  
*AUB*
- **How to Make Design Thinking More Inclusive**  
Marie Trudelle, Inclusion Strategist & Visual Impairment Specialist  
*Empowerment Through Integration*
- **Accessible Authoring**  
Ibrahim Chaaban Microsoft Trainer, Chief Technology Officer (CTO)  
*EIT*  
Replay: <https://youtu.be/quWmtDJMT78>
- **Organizational Readiness - Inclusion at the Workplace**  
Sergio Moukarzel Consultant  
*ProAbled*  
Replay: <https://youtu.be/O2VWe7UlstU>

- **Inclusive Education Concept, Structure and Practice**  
Dr. Basma Frangieh and Dr. Robert White  
*T.I.E.S (Together for Inclusive Educational Systems)*

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- **Microsoft – Office 365 Accessibility**  
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- **Using Alternative Means of Recording**  
Myles Pilling Director  
*British Assistive Technology Association (BATA)*

- [Download Slides](#)

- [Replay session: https://youtu.be/EYhrq-4Ld3E](https://youtu.be/EYhrq-4Ld3E)





- **Inclusive Public-School Model Project**  
Hilda Khoury, Director of DOPS  
(Counseling and Guidance Department at Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE))
- **Inclusion Manual**  
Paul Abi Eshak, Education & Awareness Manager  
*Arcenciel*
  - **Replay:** <https://youtu.be/GRScK4BGBY8>
- **ADA Compliance**  
Jeremy Seda IT Accessibility Coordinator  
*North Idaho College (NIC)*
  - [Download Slides](#)
  - **Replay:** <https://youtu.be/Djnc9MQ3Gkc>
- **Integrating Sign Language Avatar Interpreters into Organizations**  
Mahmoud Darawsheh, CEO and Founder  
*MindRockets*
  - [Download Slides](#)
  - **Replay:** <https://youtu.be/33kOo6Vzu0E>
- **Capti : Visualizing through Infographics**  
Mira El Koussa, Research & Infographic Design  
*Levtude*
  - **Replay:** <https://youtu.be/s4juCNdGRls>
- **How Digital Transformation lays the foundations for Digital Accessibility**  
Sara Dbeisy, Senior Account Manager  
*BMB*
  - **Replay:** <https://youtu.be/9Tfel4O9Jxg>





- **The Dynamic Saw**

Jeremy Seda  
IT Accessibility Coordinator  
*North Idaho College (NIC)*

Jennison Asuncion  
Co-Founder, *Global Accessibility Awareness Day*  
Engineering Manager- *Accessibility LinkedIn*

- [Download Slides](#)
- [Replay: https://youtu.be/k7OVWFF07UM](#)



- **Introduction to Web Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**

Shadi Abou-Zahra  
Web Accessibility Strategy and Technology Specialist  
*W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)*

- [Download Slides](#)
- [Replay: https://youtu.be/6xS07XDQCR4](#)



- **Hearing Assistive Technologies - Accessible Educational Settings**

Sama AlKhreisha, Medical Audiology Sciences  
Tatiana Al-Hajj, Medical Audiology Sciences  
Jason J. Hamden Medical Audiology Sciences Department  
*AUBMC*

- [Download Slides](#)

- **Standards, Integration & Universal Design**

Imran Aziz  
*Oracle*

- [Replay: https://youtu.be/XoNheVsbRmY](#)



# The Assistive Technology Exhibition

12 Exhibitors:

- Oracle - Wide Streams
- Laserfiche - BMB
- Microsoft
- MindRockets
- ReadSpeaker
- Lama Joudieh - AUB Alumnus
- Accessibility Web Engine (AWE) - AUB FAS
- AB-E – Speech to Braille Printer - AUB FEA
- Mappable - AUB FAS
- Texthelp
- Apple - Adkom
- CyberTech S.A.L.





# ABLE Networking Platform



ACCESSIBILITY FOR A BOLD  
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

## CONNECT AREA

CONNECT WITH  
PROFESSIONAL PEERS  
AND EXPERTS

Through the ABLE connect application,  
attendees can meet them here at ABLE

- ABLE deployed an online application to connect attendees and book meetings
- On premise a connect facility was set for networking meetings

For the ABLE Summit 2020, the networking platform can be found at the following link: <https://aub.edu.lb/able/app/>





# ABLE 2019 Outcomes



Helped connect special needs students with administration to support enrollment



Led the first Lebanese participation in the Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) 2019



Fostered 3 innovative students' projects (Automated Braille-Encoder, Mappable (campus accessibility navigation guide), Accessibility Web Engine (AWE)).



Started REACH (Research for Education Accessibility Challenges), a collaboration with AUB's Department of Education, ABLE and T.I.E.S that focuses on inclusive education practices and tools.



Started collaboration with AUB's Human Resources department in cooperation with the NGO ProAble to conduct inclusive employment training in addition to inclusive recruitment cooperation.



Partnered with the Office of Communications to elevate communications accessibility and spread awareness starting with accessible design tips and e-mail accessibility



Established the ABLE Advisory Board (leaders from leading global organizations)



Established the ABLE students club to support accessibility projects and inclusion activities including peer support



Launched technical and non-technical training activities for multiple user groups

# Next Steps



- Establish AUB Accessibility Steering Committee (cross functional)
- Set a plan to ensure full accessibility of key digital services (Student Information System (SIS), Learning Management System (LMS), online services, Websites, etc.)
- Train the IT support staff on inclusive IT support and commonly used assistive solutions
- Remedy all online content including AUB website, LMS (Moodle) and SIS (Banner)
- Insert an inclusive employment model in the Human Resources management courses/curriculum (in progress)
- Inserting a web accessibility model in the Computer Science curriculum (in progress)
- Avail braille printing in the libraries and central computer labs (in progress)
- Offer training and online accessibility courses through CEC (Continuing Education Center)
- Library content remedy (remedy unreadable PDF)
- Establish an Undergraduate Preparation Program (UPP) for special needs to start in Fall 2020-2021 in collaboration with a specialized NGO SMILES (in progress)
- Established a certificate program at CEC to prepare PWDs for independent living to start in Fall 2020-2021 in collaboration with a specialized NGO SMILES (in progress)
- Pilot full learning content digital accessibility at a designated faculty
- Awareness sessions and training for the university executive key members (in progress)
- Establish a center for Accessibility Development (research and capacity building) in partnership with industry leaders
- Fundraising to support digital inclusion and enterprise accessibility (web content remedy and assistive technology)
- Establish a collaboration chain for quality and knowledge dissemination with specialized NGOs, MEHE and MOSA
- Web Accessibility training via the IT and Engineering syndicates
- Accessible Authoring and inclusive design training at AUB and other public entities such as MOSA and MEHE



# ABLE Summit 2019 Partners and Friends



# ABLE

ACCESSIBILITY FOR A BOLDER  
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

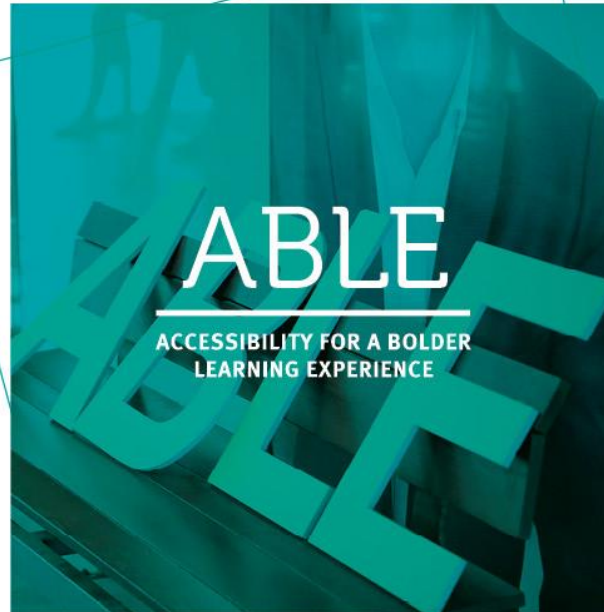


To be continued in

## The ABLE SUMMIT 2020

<https://aub.edu.lb/able>

Exceptionally in year 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the summit is rescheduled from April 2 and 3 to be on September 24 and 25, 2020



## SAVE THE NEW DATE!

**SEPTEMBER 24–25, 2020**

OSB MAAMARI AUDITORIUM, AUB

**DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION**  
SUMMIT 2020



for more information and registration  
visit: [www.aub.edu.lb/able](https://www.aub.edu.lb/able)





# ABLE Contacts

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Rami Farran, Academic IT Services Director

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