ABLE 2023

ABLE is an initiative led by the Office of Innovation and Transformation (OIT). This international initiative focuses on digital accessibility to integrate students with disabilities and open the doors of higher education to everyone.

ZEIN AUB
IPARK

ANNUAL ABLE SUMMIT

ABLE: Accessibility for a Bolder Learning Experience

One of the key instruments of the ABLE initiative is the annual summit that brings together educators, students, technology professionals, policymakers, industry leaders, and global experts to transfer knowledge, build awareness, collaborate, and discuss best practices.

ABLE 2023

Harnessing Tech Innovation for Enhanced Accessibility and Inclusion

Date and Venue: September 14-15, 2023, American University of Beirut, Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

ABLE 2023 SUMMARY

The ABLE Summit 2023 served as a dynamic convergence of thought leaders, decision-makers, experts, and influential figures from around the globe. Together, they delved into ingenious solutions aimed at enhancing accessibility in the realms of education, employment, and public services. This exceptional event provided attendees with a rich array of offerings, including expert lectures, hands-on workshops, networking opportunities, and a captivating assistive technologies exhibition showcasing disability support services.

THEMATIC TRACKS

The **2023 theme** was **"Do It Yourself"** to pilot hands-on actionable experience for the attendees.
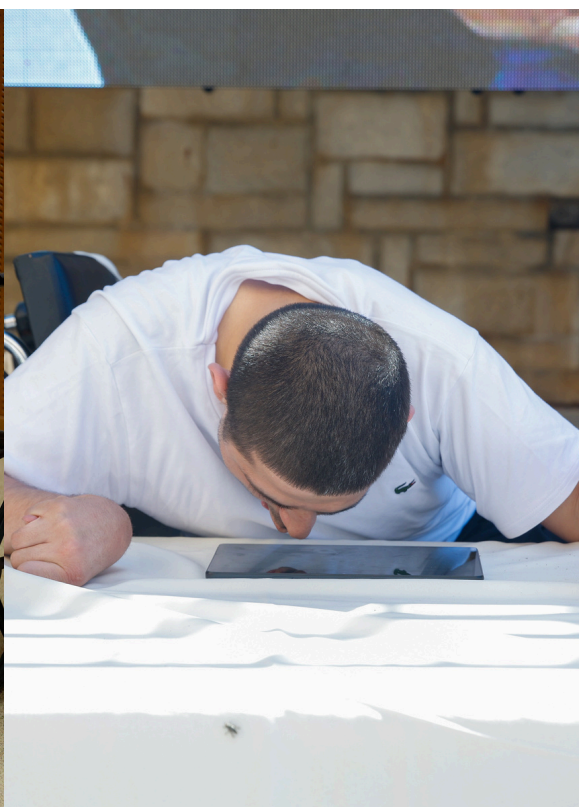
E-ACCESSIBILITY

STUDENT SUCCESS

INDEPENDENT LIVING

SUSTAINABILITY

CREATE-ABILITY

GLOBAL PARICIPATION

Total Registrations
1,250

Global Representation
38 countries

Participants
50% students and a diverse mix of academics, global experts and speakers, NGOs, school/university officials, and ministries

"

A major **impediment** is often in the **mindset** of what is possible and what can be done about it. With our collaboration and **innovation**, our aim is to make this world one where **inclusivity** and **accessibility** are not a privilege, but a norm and the rights of people.

opening speech
DR. FADLO KHOURY

President of the American University of Beirut

ACCESSIBLE EVENT

- Accessible website and communication for the event
- Accessible registration forms with accommodation request options
- English/Arabic translations
- Lebanese and international sign language interpretations
- Live transcription
- Accessible event stage and premises
- Braille printed program
- Color coded cards for inclusive engagement
- Personalized accommodation
- Escort for attendees who require assistance
- Two quiet rooms for emergencies
- Standby ambulance
- Live online streaming

PRESS COVERAGE

Click the below links for post-event press release

[MTV Tv Coverage](#)
[LBCI Tv Coverage](#)
[NourSat Tv Coverage](#)
[Execvutiv Press Release](#)
[MagVision Press Release](#)

LIVE ON YOUTUBE!

Click the below links to watch

[Day 1 Recap](#)

[Day 2 Recap](#)

[Day 1 - Full](#)

[Day 2 - Full](#)

ABLE SUMMIT 2023 IN NUMBERS

2 DAYS OF
knowledge, inclusivity, advocacy, and fun activities

600 attendees on site
680 viewers online
38 countries
15 international speakers
18 main sessions
21 exhibitors
56 Partners and Sponsors
11 DIY workshops
9 showcase demos
8 CreatAbility activities
7 competition winners
3 ministries' representation.

31 RENOWN SPEAKERS

- **Fadlo Khuri** - AUB
- **Yousif Asfour** - AUB
- **Maha Zouwayhed** - AUB
- **Humberto Insolera** - European Disability Forum
- **Myles Pillings** - British Assistive Technology Association
- **Jeremy Seda** - North Idaho College
- **Toufic Sbeiti** - Canada Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
- **Adam Spencer** - AbleDocs Inc.
- **Samer Sfeir** - Proabled
- **Chris Gaulin** - #a11yTO Organizer
- **Denis Boudreau** - Inklusiv Communication
- **Sylvana Lakkis** - LPHU
- **Christopher Patnoe** - Google, EMEA
- **Mohamed Mansouri** - IBSAR Association
- **Mohammad Kilani** - Mind Rockets
- **Mariette Awad** - AUB
- **Siddhant Shah** - Access For All
- **May Talhouk** - AUB Libraries
- **Ali Sharaf** - AUB ABLE Club
- **Amer Makarem** - Youth Association for the Blind
- **Abraham Abdallah** - National Council on Disability in Lebanon
- **Lamis Akouch** - AUB
- **Abeer Obeid** - AUB
- **Chad Chelius** -Chax Training and Consulting
- **Christa Peters** - #a11yTO Organizer
- **Jad Daniels** - AUB
- **Tarek Bacha** - TA MENA & Gulf
- **Christan Seda** - Buck Knives
- **Zeina El Helou** - Fhi 360
- **Charbel Karam**
- **Bachar Abdel Samad** - Accessibility Expert

HUMBERTO INSOLERA

Executive Committee Member - European Disability Forum

Session Title:

Latest Initiatives at EU to Achieve Full Inclusion

Click Here To Watch
Time stamp: 52:00

MYLES PILLING

Assistive Technologist & Council Member of BATA - British Assistive Technologist Association

Session Title:

The Power of AT

Click Here To Watch
Time stamp: 1:18:10

JEREMY SEDA

IT Accessibility Coordinator - North Idaho College

Session Title:

Collaborative Mind Map of Accessibility in Higher Ed in Lebanon

Click Here To Watch

Time stamp: 2:25:25

TOUFIC SBEITI

Ottawa Activist & Assistant Director - Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Session Title:

Web Accessibility Myths Buster

Click Here To Watch

Time stamp: 2:54:53

ADAM SPENCER

President and CEO (GLOBAL) - AbledDocs

Session Title:

Accessibility Sustainability

Click Here to Watch
Time stamp: 3:30:24

SPEAKER

SAMER SFEIR

Managing Director - ProAbled

Session Title:

Activating Disability Inclusion in Universities and Schools

Click Here To Watch
Time stamp: 5:11:11

CHRIS GAULIN

Accessibility Advocate - a11yTO / GAAD Foundation

Session Title:

The Entrepreneurial Path for PWDs

Click Here To Watch

Time stamp: 5:25:12

DENIS BOUDREAU

Founder and Chief Inclusion Officer - Inklusiv Communication

Session Title:

A Roadmap to Leadership Inclusion: 15 Keys to a Diverse and Empowered Workplace

Click Here To Watch

Time stamp: 5:49:00

CHRISTOPHER PATNOE

Head of Accessibility and Disability Inclusion, EMEA - Google

Session Title:

Inclusive Innovation

Click Here To Watch
Time stamp: 59:34:00

MOHAMED MANSOURI

President of IBSAR Association - IBSAR Association for the Culture and Leisure of Persons With Visual Impairements

Click Here To Watch
Time stamp: 2:20:00

Session Title:
Independence as a Measure of Citizenship for Persons With Disabilities

SIDDHANT SHAH

Access Consultant - Access For ALL

Session Title:

Making Visual Arts Accessible for Visually Impaired

Click Here To Watch

Time stamp: 3:32:32

WORKSHOPS DAY 1

INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- Samer Sfeir - Managing Director - ProAbled

CREATING INCLUSIVE ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Lamis Akouch - Instructional designer -AUB

ACCESSIBLE AUTHORING

- Abeer Obeid - Senior Instructional Designer - AUB

CREATING ACCESSIBLE PDFS FROM MICROSOFT WORD

- Chad Chelius - Director of Training Solutions and Principal - Chax Training and Consulting

PRACTICAL ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

- Myles Pilling - Assistive Technologist & Council Member of BATA - British Assistive Technologist Association

WORKSHOPS DAY 2

USABILITY FOR LOW VISION USERS

- Christa Peters - Organizer - a11yTO

K-12 STUDENT SUCCESS AND READINESS

- Christan Seda - Credit Manager - Buck Knives

DIGITAL TOOL FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND AI

- Tarek Bacha - Microsoft certified Trainer - TA MENA & Gulf

MAKE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESSIBLE

- Siddhant Shah - Disability Expert - Access For ALL

INCLUSIVE DESIGN GUIDELINES AND TIPS FOR DIGITAL CONTENT

- Jad Daniel - IT service Desk Manager - American University of Beirut

DESIGNING ROLE-BASED ACCESSIBILITY TRAINING WITH THE ARRM FRAMEWORK

- Denis Boudreau - Founder and Chief Inclusion Officer - Inklusiv Communication

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Amplifying Voices: How Technology Fosters Civil Rights Participation for Persons with Disabilities

Click Here to Watch

timestamp: 6:23:00

Moderator: *Zeina El Helou - USAID Lebanon Civic Action Accelerator Program - Senior elections Advisor*
Advisor Panelists:
Sylvana Lakkis - President, LUPD
Charbel Karam - Director of Business Development and Marketing - B.O.T.
Bachar AbdelSamad - Accessibility Expert

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Student Journey

Click Here to Watch

Timestamp: 5:04:00

Moderator: *Jeremy Seda - IT Accessibility Coordinator - North Idaho College*

Advisor Panelists:

May Talhouk: Artist & Restoration & Conservation Specialist - AUB

Ali Sharaf: Accessibility Advocate & ABLE Club

Tia Manoukian - AUB Student

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

National Strategy for Accessibility

Moderator:
Maha Zouwayhed - *Accessibility Advocate and Innovation Support Professional - AUB*
Advisor Panelists:
Amer Makarem President - *Youth Association for the Blind*
Abraham Abdallah - *Executive Board Member of the National Council on Disability in Lebanon*

WATCH HERE

TIMESTAMP: 5:41:48

DEBATE

Artificial Intelligence for Disability

Moderator: Chris Gaulin - Accessibility Advocate - a11yTO / GAAD Foundation

——————————————————

Jeremy Seda - IT Accessibility Coordinator - North Idaho College
Mohammad Kilani - Co-Founder - Mind Rockets
Mariette Awad - Associate Professor in ECE and Director Human Machine Lab - AUB

WATCH HERE

Timestamp: 2:51:00

Panel Discussions
KEY TAKEAWAYS

01

Amplifying Voices: How Technology Fosters Civil Rights Participation for Persons with Disabilities

The panel emphasized the critical need for accessible voting methods and opportunities for civic participation to uphold integrity and equality, using the most recent municipal elections as a case study.

02

Fireside Chat AI for Accessibility

The panel critically evaluated AI's potential to enhance accessibility, balanced against its drawbacks, such as algorithmic biases and the risk of neglecting traditional accessibility measures in favor of AI solutions. They highlighted the necessity for a nuanced approach that maximizes AI's benefits while addressing its shortcomings to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive support system.

03

Student Journey

In this panel, Jeremy Seda, Ali Sharaf, May Talhouk, and Tia Manoukian shared insights from their personal journey as students with disabilities or learning difficulties, highlighting some of the tools or people who were instrumental in empowering them.

04

National Strategy for Accessibility

The panel analyzed the imperatives driving Lebanon's national accessibility strategy, focusing on its strategic objectives to dismantle physical, digital, and social barriers for people with disabilities. Priorities include policy overhaul, infrastructural adjustments, and elevating accessibility awareness, aiming at holistic societal participation and improved life quality for affected individuals.

MOHAMMAD LOUAI KHOURCHID

Mohammad currently works at Whish Money as a Data Processing Clerk. His first job was at a call center, where he had to change his display name to 'Nour' because of his feminine voice. He never lost hope and advocates for equal opportunities.

SUCCESS STORIES

Panel Moderator: Jessy Tanous

KHALED HALLAK

Khaled started working in data entry five years ago and faced difficulties in communicating with his colleagues because of his hearing disability. He was provided with an amplifier and this helped him focus more on his tasks and capabilities instead of on his limitations.
He now works in Data Management at an NGO.

MOHAMMAD NACCACHE

**Mohammad worked in a call center five years ago.
Using voice-over accessibility technology really helped him in doing his job.**

SUCCESS STORIES

Panel Moderator: Jessy Tanous

RANA KIWAN

**Rana has a degree in Translation, an English Teaching Diploma and an MBA, and is now studying Computer Science.
She has worked in multiple public and private organizations and also delivers Disability Equality Training.**

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

ABLE Advisory Board Notes and Recommendations

Click Here to Watch

timestamp: 6:46:00

Moderator: **Yousif Asfour -** *Cheif Innovation and Transformation Officer - AUB*

Advisor Panelists:

Myles Pilling - Assistive Technologist & Council Member of BATA - British Assistive Technologist Association

Humberto Insolera - Executive Committee Member - European Disability Forum

Jeremy Seda - IT Accessibility Coordinator - North Idaho College

Chris Gaulin - Accessibility Advocate - a11yTO / GAAD Foundation

Jennsion Asuncion (online)- GAAD Cofounder and Head of Accessibility Engineering Evangelism - LinkedIn

ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Key Takeaways: What Will Stay With You Post-Summit?

- **The connections, the energy, the motivation, the passion which shows up every year, and the craving for more!**
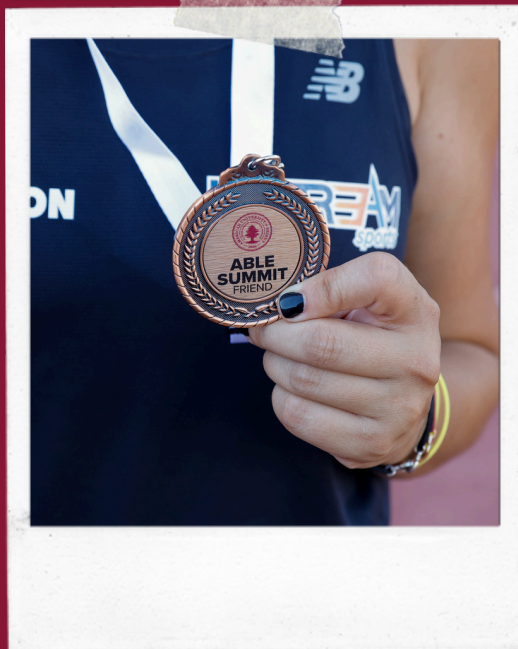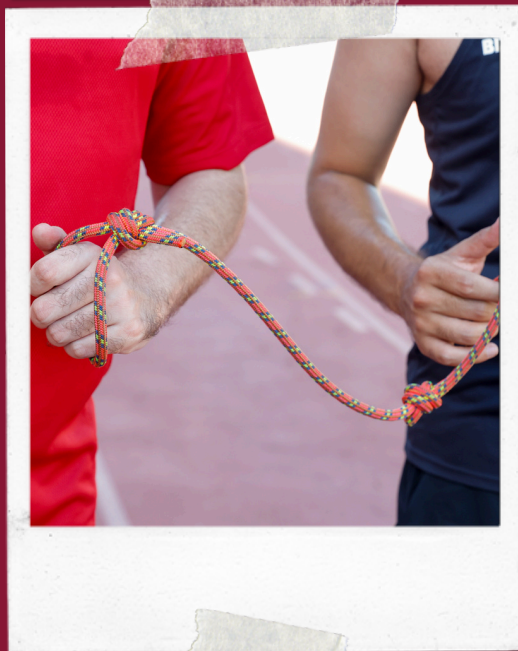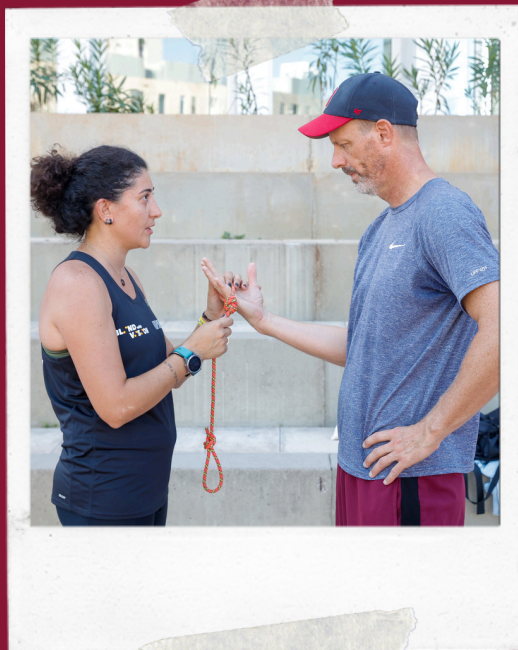
2 Post-Summit Real Life Action Recommendations

- **Spread the word about the summit and accessibility**
- **'Be the Person you wish you had at the start of your journey'**
- **A 1% difference is a difference**
- **Implement National and university Scale revamp plan**
- **Design a special Arabic font that could go into Microsoft Products**

3 Audience Recommendations

- **Inclusion is a plug-in that fits everywhere: it is important to have students from all fields in the university participate in the event, such as architecture, landscape, graphic design, and all the rest**
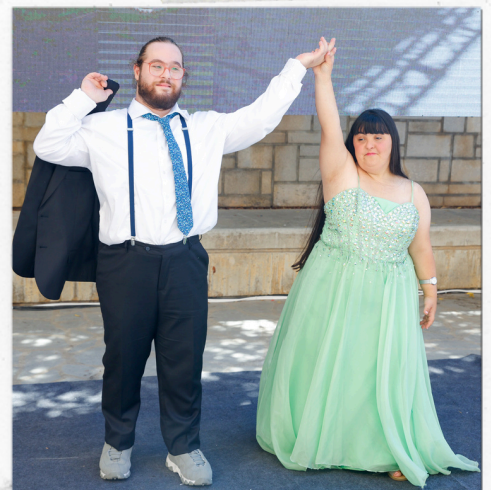- **Not having talks and workshops in Parallel**

CREATE-ABILITY

Blind Race

Blind Football

CREATE-ABILITY

Blind Chess by Cybertech

Fashion Show by AIM Academy

21 Exhibitors

Lebanese Psychological Association

جمعية رعاية اليتيم
ORPHAN WELFARE SOCIETY
SAIDA صيدا

home Mobility
Making Life Easier

fhi 360
THE SCIENCE OF
IMPROVING LIVES

GRAD ME

tablet academy

begco
Hearing Center

المنتدى لحقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة

NAWFAL CLINICS

AUDICO
Hearing Center
مركز اوديكو للسمع

mindrockets inc

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OPTIQUE & VISION

NEXTSTEP

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AWADA VISION

Cybertech

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everyone, everywhere.

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mindrockets

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SOLUTIONS

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everyone, everywhere.

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AIM
ASSESS-IDENTIFY-MASTER

COMMUNITY
Partners