

Guidance Note on Disability Inclusion

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What does inclusion of persons with disabilities mean?

Disability is an evolving concept. It results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal, as well as environmental barriers that hinder the full and effective participation of persons with impairments in the society on an equal basis with others. A disability is defined as a condition or function judged to be impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual or group. There are many types of disabilities, such as those that affect a person's vision, hearing, thinking, learning, movement, mental health, communicating and social relationships.

It is estimated that 15 % of all people, and 20 % of the poorest are persons with impairments. Phenomena like malnutrition, violence, poverty and lack of healthcare cause disability, thus the number of persons with disabilities is higher in the Global South than in the Global North. Intersection of persons with disabilities with gender, poverty, type of impairment, ethnicity and religious background often leads to multiple discrimination.

Disability in itself does not equal being sick or suffering. Negative attitudes towards disability and persons with disability can be the biggest barrier that prevents persons with disabilities from having a good life. The good news is that attitudes can be changed. In short:

- **impairment + social and physical barriers = disability**
- **impairment + social and physical accessibility = inclusion**

How to advance non-discrimination and inclusion of persons with disabilities in a project?

The human rights approach, which acts as the corner stone of non-discrimination and disability inclusion as a crosscutting objective, aims to ensure that persons with disabilities can have their dignity and contribute to the society they live in. At project level, this means that the civil society organisation (CSO) planning and implementing the project needs to systematically address disability inclusion related risks, assess the impacts and implications of the project on persons with disabilities, seek opportunities to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, as well as include the inclusion as an advocacy theme when approaching decision-makers and other stakeholders.

The minimum standard for non-discrimination of persons with disabilities as a crosscutting objective is to “do no harm”, that is, to make sure the project will not contribute to discrimination or human rights violations against persons with disabilities. In order to make sure no harm is done, a disability analysis should be done and the principles of equality, inclusion and participation should guide all action. The analysis (see item 2 of the step-by-step table below) helps in identifying potential risks of existing inequality

on the planned project, and in planning ways to address them. In addition, it can help to identify opportunities for advancing disability inclusion.

The “do no harm” standard of non-discrimination implies the following:

- Risks for the human rights of persons with disabilities are assessed, avoided and mitigated;
- Barriers for equal participation and inclusion by persons with disabilities are identified and addressed;
- Impacts on persons with disabilities are continuously assessed and monitored;
- Data disaggregation according to disability is systematically collected, analyzed and the gained understanding is made use of in the project implementation.

In addition to adhering to the minimum standard of doing no harm, positive contribution towards disability inclusion is encouraged in projects supported by the Siemenpuu Foundation. **Pathways to disability inclusion entail:**

- Mapping of barriers (in relation to the physical environment, knowledge, communication, information, technology, institutions and attitudes);
- Prevention and removal of the recognised barriers;
- “Nothing about us without us” -meaningful participation of persons with disabilities;
- Collaboration with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs);
- Awareness-raising on rights of persons with disabilities;
- Budgeting for disability inclusion, for instance for reasonable accommodation measures to enable accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- Empowerment of persons with disabilities and support for development of their capacities.

Step-by-step guide to disability inclusion in a project

(Guide by Abilis Foundation)

<i>Planning phase</i>
<p>1. Identification of persons with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with local OPD(s). They will help you to identify persons with disability in local contexts. • Gather data on number of persons with disabilities and disaggregate data (gender, age, religion, ethnicity and type of disability etc. what is relevant in your context).
<p>2. Background analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage local OPD(s) and persons with disabilities in analysis phase. • Identify problems and challenges that affect persons with disabilities; inequalities and discrimination patterns in the area where it occurs, and contextual or systematic violations of rights of persons with disabilities. • Classify data and combine with different discrimination grounds. • Find out the (international) and national agreements regarding disability to justify your intervention.
<p>3. Intervention design (Results Framework including activities, objectives, indicators and targets) + budgeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage OPD(s) and persons with disabilities in planning the relevant activities to promote disability inclusion. • Design disability specific activities in addition to other mainstreaming activities in the results framework. Take multiple discrimination into account when planning activities (for instance: do women with disabilities have realistic possibilities to participate in project activities?). • Typical activities are: raise awareness on disability in communities; sensitize parents; train project staffs and all stakeholders on disability, disability rights and disability inclusion; make reasonable

<p>accommodation modifications; provide assistive devices; provide learning materials and supplies; carry out advocacy work etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set disability specific objectives (outputs and outcomes) and indicators. • Set targets for all indicators (# of persons with disabilities). • Ensure that all indicators in the programme gather disaggregated information (e.g. M/F/PWD). • Budget for disability inclusion. Typical costs are reasonable accommodation modifications, accessible materials, sign language interpreters, assistive devices, transportation costs for persons with disabilities to programme activities. These need special budget allocations.
<p><i>Implementation phase</i></p>
<p>4. Participation in activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate in all programme activities. This might need e.g. accessible adjustments in programme venues, support in transportation, sign language interpreters or giving information in other accessible way. • Involve persons with disabilities to be members of programme committee or staff in implement the activities, i.e. trainers or programme coordinators. Consider setting quotas.
<p><i>Monitoring and evaluation phases</i></p>
<p>5. Monitoring progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather data on persons with disabilities for ALL indicators in programme components and present numbers in monitoring reports and results framework. • Describe progress in disability inclusion in different components (situation, challenges, successes) in the narrative monitoring reports. • Analyse programme progress against multiple discrimination.
<p>6. Evaluating disability inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that persons with disabilities are involved as informants in evaluations. • If possible, involve OPD(s) and persons with disabilities e.g. as consultants in data gathering process and analysing the data in evaluations. • Carry out thematic disability evaluations when relevant. • In addition to regular evaluation questions, add questions on e.g. participation and non-discrimination.

Further reading:

- [Abilis Foundation](#)
- [The Washington Group on Disability Statistics](#) provides tools for data collection
- [Finnish Disability and Development partnership's tool for disability inclusion](#) (pdf)