

# Inclusion of persons with disabilities in European Union development cooperation mechanisms

A preliminary study of calls for proposals in  
geographic and thematic instruments

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coordinated by**

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Bridging  the **GAP**

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### **Editor**

Bridging the Gap project: Inclusive Policies and Services for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### **Disclaimer**

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>ACP</b>	African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries
<b>2030 Agenda</b>	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<b>Cotonou Agreement</b>	ACP agreement with the European Union
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSO-LA</b>	Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DCI</b>	Development Cooperation Instrument
<b>DEVCO</b>	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>DPO</b>	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
<b>EDF</b>	European Development Fund
<b>EIDHR</b>	European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU Delegation</b>	European Union Delegation
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>IDDC</b>	International Disability and Development Consortium
<b>MFF</b>	Multiannual Financial Framework
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Right
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>TVET</b>	Technical Vocational and Education Training

# 1. Introduction

The rights of persons with disabilities are recognised in international human rights treaties and laws, as well as in the current most relevant sustainable development frameworks. The European Union (EU) has been a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) since January 2011, making the CRPD the only international human rights' convention ratified by the EU as a regional integration organisation. In addition, as of March 2018, every EU member state has also ratified the CRPD. This implies a legally binding obligation for the EU institutions and EU Member States to implement their policies and programmes in line with the CRPD.

The exclusion of persons with disabilities from all spheres of society is seen to be at the core of their increased risk of poverty preventing them from building sustainable livelihood and fully participating in their respective societies. **Women and girls with disabilities are even more on the side-lines of society as they face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.**

The European Union's implementation of the CRPD is guided by the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which aims "to empower people with disabilities so that they can enjoy their full rights and benefit fully from participating in society and in the European economy"[1]. The Strategy focuses on eliminating barriers and has identified eight areas for action, one being on external action: 'Promote the rights of people with disabilities within the EU external action'.

In 2015 the EU was reviewed by the CRPD committee, which noted the lack of a systematic approach to including persons with disabilities in its external policies and programmes. For the next review of the EU by the CRPD committee in 2021, EU will need to report on progress, or how it has addressed the following issues in its international cooperation:

- Adopting a harmonized policy on disability-inclusive development and establishing a systematic approach to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in all international cooperation policies and programmes,
- Appointing disability focal persons in related institutions,
- Taking the lead in the implementation of a disability-inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

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[1] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:en:PDF>

- Putting in place mechanisms to disaggregate data on disability in order to monitor the rights of persons with disabilities in EU development cooperation,
- Interrupting EU funds being used to perpetuate the segregation of persons with disabilities and re-allocating such funding to initiatives aimed at compliance with the CRPD.

Since the CRPD review in 2015, positive progress has been made. In June 2017, the New European Consensus on Development “Our world, our dignity, our future” was adopted[2]. This new Consensus aligns the European Commission's development policy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sets a common framework for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States. It brings a real policy shift for the disability movement, as persons with disabilities are explicitly included in the New Consensus with a renewed commitment to implement and monitor the CRPD.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) also provides the global community with an opportunity to work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all and address the rights and demands of person with disabilities, in particular women and girls, as a matter of priority. Global organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs), such as International Disability Alliance and its members, including the European Disability Forum, as well as their allies of the International Disability and Development Consortium were successfully advocating and influencing the 2030 Agenda to include persons with disabilities.

The European Union is currently in the process of defining its new budget, the next **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, for the period of 2021 – 2027, which will be crucial for the achievement of the European commitments towards the rights of persons with disabilities in development cooperation.

In this context, Bridging the Gap-II has conducted this **preliminary study in order to provide further evidence on the EU's contribution to the implementation of the CRPD in international cooperation.**

The outcomes of the study should support EU policy-makers and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) technical staff to develop inclusive policies and improve practical application of such policies, including during the budgeting and programming processes.

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[2] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626_en.pdf)

# Bridging the Gap – disability inclusion in development cooperation

**Bridging the Gap** is a project funded by the EU under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) Thematic Programme “Global Public Goods and Challenges”. The project consists of two mutually reinforcing components: Bridging the Gap-I and II. Both components of the project work in synergy aiming to contribute to the socio-economic inclusion, equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in low and middle-income countries through more inclusive and accountable institutions and policies.

The project is a thematic response to the requirement to make development cooperation accessible and inclusive of persons with disabilities. This demand is an obligation for both the EU and Member States as parties to the CRPD and can have a significant impact in improving the social inclusion and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. Most EU partner countries have also signed and/or ratified the CRPD, which means they are also required to progressively realise its implementation.

The **first component** works at the global level and aims to develop indicators and tools to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development in line with the CRPD. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) leads Bridging the Gap-I. The indicators and tools are validated through consultation with experts, UN agencies, civil society, organisations of persons with disabilities, and academia as well as government actors from Ethiopia, Jordan, Moldova, Nepal and Paraguay.

The **second component** focuses on strengthening the capacities of governments, national human rights institutions and organisations of persons with disabilities in five countries: Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan and to mainstream disability in international cooperation. Bridging the Gap-II supports the development, implementation and monitoring of disability inclusive sector policies and services to implement the SDG in a participatory manner ensuring the compliance to CRPD and the participation of organisations of persons with disabilities[3].

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[3] Organisations of persons with disabilities, often known as DPOs, are organisations (and sometimes unofficial groups) comprising a majority of persons with disabilities and their families. They represent the interests and defend the human rights of persons with disabilities through self-representation and advocacy.

## Bridging the Gap I

- Develops tools to promote human rights
- Facilitates the inclusive implementation of the SDGs
- Generation of knowledge and training material

## Bridging the Gap II

- Support the efforts of five partner countries to develop disability-inclusive public policies
- Knowledge management strategy for disability mainstreaming in development cooperation



**Burkina Faso**

**Paraguay**



**Sudan**

**Ecuador**



**AUSTRIAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY**

**Ethiopia**



**IDDC** International Disability  
and Development Consortium

A consortium led by the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP) together with the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation, the Austrian Development Agency, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the European Disability Forum and the International Disability and Development Consortium implements Bridging the Gap-II. The OHCHR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland also contribute to the initiative.

For more information about the project and its achievements, please consult the official webpage [www.bridgingthegap-project.eu](http://www.bridgingthegap-project.eu).

## Scope and objectives of the study

The overall objective of this study is to assess the EU's contribution to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in development cooperation programmes and projects funded by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Development Fund (EDF) during the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework. It will also test a methodology of assessing disability inclusion in international cooperation that could be used for a wider study at a later stage.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To raise awareness and identify opportunities and recommendations that can support the EU and its Member States, civil society and other actors in meeting their obligations under the CRPD,
- To review key development policies and strategies of the EU and their commitments to implementing the CRPD,
- To review the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in call for proposals in regional programmes (Latin America, African/Caribbean/Pacific and Asia/South Asia) and the thematic programme of Non-State Actors and Civil Society between 2014-2018 in the DCI and the EDF,
- To get a better understanding of opportunities and challenges on mainstreaming disability at EU Delegation implementation level.

Contextualisation will be provided through meeting with implementing partners of a selected number of calls for proposals and discuss with EU Delegation staff in four countries covered by the project Bridging the Gap-II: Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan. The European Union and its Member States, civil society organisations and DPOs and other stakeholders can use outcomes and recommendations of the study to better inform the preparation of future EU external action policies and programmes, as well as to influence the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.

## Methodology

The design of the methodology was motivated by previous studies that have looked at disability inclusion in development cooperation[4]. The study is underpinned by a theory of change similar to the study made by NORAD in 2012, a Rights Based Approach to development, to which the EU is strongly committed[5]. Achieving sustainable changes according to a Rights Based Approach to development requires:

- Empowering people (rights holders), particularly the most excluded and powerless (without hope, confidence, access to knowledge, skills, tools, communication channels or legal mechanisms etc.), to enable them to improve their lives, organise and claim their rights as stipulated in national laws and UN conventions, and
- Supporting and demanding that those in power (duty-bearers) respect and respond to these legitimate claims (as outlined in the laws and conventions).

In the two previous studies on disability inclusion, certain pre-conditions were identified to be key conductors for strengthening disability inclusion in development cooperation. These were adapted to the specific context of EU as a regional actor. Five areas were defined and the study looks to each of these areas using the methods and tools described below, taking into account key principles of the CRPD. An analytical framework was developed to support the identification of key informants and study questions to be answered (Annex 1).

The five areas are:

1. Conducive and inclusive development policies, strategies and plans,
2. Inclusive development cooperation processes and DPO consultation mechanisms at EU headquarters,
3. Inclusive development cooperation implementation processes and DPO consultation mechanisms at EU Delegations,

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[4] Wiman, R (2012). "Mainstreaming the Disability Dimension in Development Cooperation Case Finland - Lessons Learned". [www.un.org/disabilities/documents/csocd/csocd50\\_wiman.doc](http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/csocd/csocd50_wiman.doc);  
Nordic Consulting Group (2012). "Mainstreaming disability in the new development paradigm. Evaluation of Norwegian support to promote the rights of persons with disabilities", Norad Evaluation Department, Norway.

[5] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation_en)



4. Staff capacity development on the implementation of the CRPD and disability inclusive development cooperation,

5. Monitoring, evaluation and learning is inclusive of, and participatory to persons with disabilities.

The methods and tools used to gather evidence and information in the study were both quantitative and qualitative:

- Systematic desk review of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in EU international cooperation policies, DCI and EDF instruments and programming documents of the four countries (Annex 2),
- Analysis of disability inclusion in guidelines for calls for proposals during MFF 2014-2020, using a stop-light method, in the following financing instruments[6]:
  - Geographical funding instruments: Latin America and Asia/South Asia (legal basis DCI) and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (legal basis EDF),
  - Thematic programme: Civil Society and Non-State Actors (legal basis DCI).
- Key informant interviews (Annex 3):
  - DG-DEVCO headquarter relevant unit and sectors,
  - EU Delegations, grants implementing partners and organisations of persons with disabilities in Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan,
  - Organisations of persons with disabilities and IDDC members in Brussels
- Field visit to EU Delegations and Bridging the Gap-II implementing partners in Ecuador, Ethiopia and Paraguay and a remote assessment of EU Delegation and partners in Sudan.
- Analysis of calls for proposals and funded projects at EU Delegation in Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan.

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[6] Call for proposal for grants were assessed using EuropeAid website with the time frame from 01/01/2014 – 01/11/2018.

## Implementation challenges

The scope of this preliminary study did not include the entire set of financial mechanisms across the EU and therefore the results should be interpreted with this limitation in mind. The results and recommendations reflect primarily grants disbursed in the frame of call for proposals. Initially, as part of the methodology it was planned to conduct an online questionnaire administered by DEVCO and EEAS among all EU Delegations, which finally was cancelled due to various delays and difficulties in organizing such survey within the expected timeframe. In a future study, this should be addressed to have a better understanding of the EU Delegations work on disability inclusion, identify potential champions as well as good practice and challenges in order to address the issue in a systematic way.

However, information gathered during the country visits and remote assessment resonates with challenges and findings from the desk review and analysis of the calls for proposals. They also reflect information gathered from key informants at DEVCO and from EU implementing partners, so the study outcomes are confident enough to propose some initial recommendations for the EU to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its development cooperation. A larger study, particularly including additional EU Delegations and also budget support financing mechanisms and other financial instruments is recommended to get a better understanding and inform the gaps and challenges identified in this assessment.

Reviewing calls for proposals, Action Documents and corresponding project proposals for disability inclusion is time consuming due to the absence of a marker to identify disability and inclusion and required more time than initially planned. Several project proposals that have been awarded are scanned into DEVCO database, which encumbers quick searches for key words and full documentation has to be read. The recent adoption by OECD of the voluntary **policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities** (hereafter disability inclusion policy marker) should make this easier in a future study.

This study assessed disability inclusion in call for proposals based on a traffic-light system designed specifically for this analysis. Future studies could use the DAC disability inclusion policy marker in grading the level of inclusion, in order to make data and information comparable across different donors.

## 2. Political will and commitment for disability inclusion

The CRPD has now been implemented for more than a decade. Together with the successful advocacy by the disability movement and its allies, this has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the series of disability inclusive global commitments taken recently: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Agenda for Humanity, the Financing for Development and the New Urban Agenda among other international frameworks, strategies and budget commitments. There is currently a conducive policy environment that needs to be translated into operational strategies that show tangible impact on people's life. This was further demonstrated during 2018 Global Disability Summit, where a large number of governments, private sector and civil society signed up for a Charter for Change with commitments to implement the CRPD and the SDGs for persons with disabilities[7].

The European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) is responsible for designing European Union international cooperation and development policy and delivering aid throughout the world. DG DEVCO also coordinates with EU External Action service bringing together external relations and diplomacy with international development cooperation. The EU also operates 141 Delegations and Offices around the world. They manage development and cooperation programmes while representing the EU in host countries.



Celebration of the EU day in Sudan.

[7] As of May 2019, the European Union has not signed the Charter for Change from the Disability Inclusion Summit.

The European Union has been a State Party to the CRPD since 2011. All EU Member States have equally ratified the CRPD. This demonstrates a political and legal commitment to the implementation of the CRPD and the very first report of the EU to the CRPD Committee in 2015 also indicated a will to advance the implementation of the Convention in International Cooperation. Although the EU Disability Strategy (2010-2020) was defined before the adoption of the CRPD, the strategy has a clearly defined action on External Action that commits to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in all EU's external actions.

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**The CRPD Committee recommends that “the European Union adopt a harmonized policy on disability-inclusive development and establish a systematic approach to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in all European Union international cooperation policies and programmes”.**

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A **New EU Consensus for Development** was adopted in 2017, to replace the 2006 Consensus, and was a much-wanted advancement as it suggests a real engagement of the EU to the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its international cooperation. The New Consensus aligns the EU's development policies to the Agenda 2030 and points out that “the EU and its Member States will continue to play a key role in ensuring that no-one is left behind, wherever people live and regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status or other factors. This approach includes addressing the multiple discriminations faced by vulnerable people and marginalised groups”[8]. Moreover, the EU puts a strong emphasis on its international cooperation being framed within a human rights based approach.

In May 2017, the European Commission's secretariat general created the EU multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs to support and advise the European Commission on the implementation of the SDGs. Unfortunately, no representation of organisations of

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[8] Ibid.

persons with disabilities has been included despite an application from European representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities. Including DPOs in this stakeholder platform would reflect the United Nations level stakeholder engagement on the SDGs, which includes persons with disabilities within the major groups system and would and provide better opportunities for mainstreaming disability across EU's international cooperation work[9].

The Working Party on Development Finance Statistics of the OECD approved the introduction of a voluntary policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities (hereafter referred to as the disability inclusion marker) in June 2018 with support of the EU[10]. The marker was added to the Reporting Directives in November 2018. The EU has adopted the disability inclusion marker and already included it in its reporting mechanism, and will disseminate guidance on its use across the finance instruments, grants and budget support as well as other bilateral cooperation mechanisms. Up to the moment of the final draft of this report, not all Member States have adopted the marker.

After the adoption of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in 2015, a number of governments and the disability movement launched the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network. This is a coordination body of bilateral and multilateral donors and agencies, the private sector and foundations joining forces and coordinating to enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international development and humanitarian action. The European Commission joined the GLAD network in 2017.

These policy commitments are commendable and provide excellent opportunities to develop a comprehensive and inclusive implementation strategy for the SDGs and the New Consensus. Existing EU result monitoring frameworks does not yet consistently disaggregate data on disability. Following the CRPD Committees recommendations this was suggested as a priority and it will not be possible to report on equality and ensuring everyone is benefitting from EU's development work, if tools are not put in place to measure this. Today there are well-tested tools to collect and disaggregate data, such as the different tools development by Washington Group on Disability Statistics[11]. Initially this will require investment and capacity development and is an essential next step towards full inclusion.

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[9] <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/personswithdisabilities>

[10] [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT\(2018\)52/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/STAT(2018)52/en/pdf)

[11] <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com>

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**The CRPD Committee recommends that the European Union “...identif[ies] and put[s] in place mechanisms to disaggregate data on disability in order to monitor the rights of persons with disabilities in European Union development programmes”.**

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## **Policy implementation mechanisms**

The European Union is committed to ensuring a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights and the Agenda 2030 reinforces such commitments. The European Commission is implementing these commitments as defined in the 2012 EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy 2012[12] and the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019[13]. Both documents make specific reference to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and non-discrimination on the basis of disability. However, the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan has not taken a cross-cutting approach to disability inclusion or paid attention to accessibility measures (such as participation in elections or access to justice and information), therefore there is a risk that persons with disabilities are not systematically included across all actions in the Plan. One example is the limited attention to the rights of persons with disabilities in the Tool-box on the Rights Based Approach, a staff working document that was developed in 2014 to operationalize the human rights strategy[14].

The EU Gender Action Plan II that aims at transforming the lives of girls and women through EU External Relations in the period 2016-2020 pays attention to multiple discrimination and intersectional barriers and does address disability as one of them[15].

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[12] [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/131181.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/131181.pdf)

[13] [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_and\\_democracy\\_en\\_2.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_action_plan_on_human_rights_and_democracy_en_2.pdf)

[14] Tool-box: A Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights, for EU development cooperation 2014. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/rights-based-approach-encompassing-all-human-rights-eu-development-cooperation-tool-box-commission\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/rights-based-approach-encompassing-all-human-rights-eu-development-cooperation-tool-box-commission_en)

[15] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-gender-action-plan-ii-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-transforming-lives-girls-and-women-0\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-gender-action-plan-ii-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-transforming-lives-girls-and-women-0_en)

However, the Gender Action Plan II does not effectively and systematically address the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

The Plan suggests excellent tools to use for gender mainstreaming and concrete examples of successful experiences, however, there are little examples that includes a disability perspective or which address the intersectionality between gender and disability.

The EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child was published in 2017[16]. These guidelines are accompanied by a child rights toolkit on how to mainstream child rights in development cooperation, co-produced by the EU and UNICEF[17]. Both of these documents provide good examples of mainstreaming the rights of children with disabilities.

An updated guidance note for staff on Disability Inclusive Development Cooperation was issued in 2012 to support staff at headquarter and in Delegations to better mainstream disability and support the implementation of the EU Disability Strategy and the CRPD[18]. The limitation of this document though is that it is neither a policy document nor an action plan and therefore has less weight among other human rights guidelines. During this study, only two of the key informants were aware of this document, which indicates that it might yet have limited use.

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**The CRPD Committee recommends the European Union to “...take the lead in the implementation of disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals”.**

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A more strategic leadership within DEVCO is necessary to enhance and operationalize the policy commitments on disability inclusion. The investments made by the EU on ensuring policy commitments are put in practice could be strengthened and draw from

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[16] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/guidelines-promotion-and-protection-rights-child\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/guidelines-promotion-and-protection-rights-child_en)

[17] <https://www.unicef.org/eu/crtoolkit/>

[18] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/guide-disability-inclusive-development-cooperation-2012\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/guide-disability-inclusive-development-cooperation-2012_en.pdf)



other donors' organisational models. For example, the Australian Aid program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and DFID are investing in disability inclusive development and have progressively strengthened both human resources and technical support to bring their commitments forward (Spotlight 1).

Minorities and groups that are excluded and marginalised are not a homogenous group and results of the study of call for proposals and policy document indicates that where persons with disabilities are implicitly included in vulnerable or discriminated groups, or feature across a wide range of vulnerability criteria, they are often excluded in the implementation. For example, the Human Rights Tool Box which is widely rolled-out across both DEVCO headquarters and the EU Delegations mentions only briefly persons with disabilities, as part of the vulnerability criteria, and it does not provide concrete examples, good practice or some practical guidance on how to ensure the participation and inclusion of women, men and children with disabilities.

## Spotlight 1 - DFAT and DFID investing in disability inclusion

The **Australian Aid program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)** has a section dedicated to ensure the implementation of the second DFAT Disability Strategy (2015-2020). A team of around eight persons works in this section. They also have an externally contracted Help Desk providing disability inclusion support to their other departments and Post Offices in partner countries. To ensure that disability inclusion is effectively implemented, a set of two indicators, which have to be reported upon in their Annual Program Performance Reports and Aid Quality Checks, are being tested[19].

An evaluation of DFAT's progress on made in strengthening disability inclusion in Australian Aid was made in 2018 and showed several positive developments, for example about 40 % of aid investments and 53 % of aid expenditure are disability inclusive for the two disability criteria[20]. The evaluation also highlighted that the leadership of DFAT has made implementing partners programmes more disability inclusive. Another positive outcome is the empowerment of DPOs, where most programmes reviewed had a capacity building component of DPOs, which had been effective. The evaluation also shows that there is room for improvement, particularly ensuring internal work processes are inclusive across the agency and further capacity building of staff. Disability inclusion could be strengthened in some geographical

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[19] Ovington, K (2018). "Development for all: Evaluation of progress made in strengthening disability inclusion in Australian aid". Office of Development Effectiveness, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra. <https://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/strategic-evaluations/Pages/development-for-all-evaluation.aspx>

[20] Ibid.



programmes, particularly in Africa and Middle East and across sectors such as infrastructure, fishery and water and humanitarian assistance.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is also profiling themselves in the field of disability inclusive development. Some commitments were taken with the Disability framework developed in 2014, but the main emphasis on disability inclusion came in 2016, when DFID announced they wanted to become a global leader in this area. Since then more efforts to mainstream disability inclusion across the department have been seen. An evaluation in 2017 of DFID's work on disability inclusion showed a mixed picture of success and challenges[21]. It highlights a strong leadership on filling much needed research gaps on disability and the introduction of a disability marker of all programmes has pushed departments to consider disability inclusion. On the other hand, the evaluation emphasises the need for comprehensive mainstreaming of disability across the department and capacity development of staff, including more technical expertise, with dedicated start-up funding.

DFID organised, in partnership with the International Disability Alliance, the first global disability summit in July 2018 and later on the same year, launched a Disability Inclusion Strategy (2018-2023). A strategic delivery plan defining key deliverables and related actions accompanies this strategy so that DFID can be held to account. DFID also launched two major funding instruments, which aim to promote disability inclusive development. DFID has today reinforced their team working on disability inclusion and around 11 persons are working to ensure the implementation of the funding instruments and the disability inclusion strategy.

The interviews with key informants at headquarters and at the four EU Delegations and the review of some of the aid implementation mechanisms, suggest that overall, a more strategized and systematic effort towards disability inclusion in work processes and procedures across DEVCO could be made, including in the programming and quality support of thematic units and desks.

To better understand the gaps and needs to build a more systematic mainstreaming of disability in internal work processes, a wider study would be required to strengthen the analysis and trends revealed in this study. However, this study already provides useful elements for the European Union to initiate this process.

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[21] <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/report/disability>

## Resources and capacity on disability inclusive development

Progress on commitments to the inclusion of persons with disabilities is apparent in European Union development policies, reinforced by the New Consensus on Development and the Agenda 2030, and the commitment to human rights is high on the political agenda. Data gathered during this preliminary study suggest that internal institutional capacity and implementation mechanisms to ensure inclusion could be reinforced. DEVCO as an overall Directorate-General has one focal person on disability that promotes the inclusion of disability across DEVCO international cooperation work, currently situated within unit B3 Migration and Employment of the thematic Directorate People and Peace. At individual level, there are collaborations between B3 and the Unit B1 Gender Equality, Human Rights and Democratic Governance.

Based on the information gathered during the study, the rights of persons with disabilities require more specific attention and resources to be systematically addressed and integrated in the Rights Based Approach. As mentioned earlier, the review of the Human Rights Action Plan, the Toolbox on Human Rights Based approach and the Gender Action Plan II reflects this gap (weakening in the long run the capacity to address the multiple discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities for example). One explanation can lie in the fact that the position responsible for the CRPD implementation and disability mainstreaming in development cooperation is separated at organisational level from the unit in charge of human rights.

There is a good experience in DEVCO on promoting human rights based approach and gender equality as crosscutting themes for which guidelines and capacity tools have been developed. There is also a dedicated unit working on this, supported by additional technical assistance contracted through framework agreements with external experts, to rolling out the Human Rights Based Approach toolbox and for reviewing Action Documents. A range of these experiences can be used to better build disability inclusive internal mechanisms, as there are similar challenges.

Indeed, an evaluation by the EU of the first Gender Action Plan in 2015 highlighted limitations in gender mainstreaming which are similar to what is seen today with disability mainstreaming. Among the challenges identified was that gender had not been sufficiently addressed as a crosscutting issue throughout programmes, projects and country strategies, as well as in government dialogues[22].

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[22] European Commission. "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020". Joint Staff Working Document.

This was then better addressed in the Gender Action Plan II, which is a good example of why policy implementation mechanisms require regular reviews or evaluations to ensure accountability to political commitments. CONCORD, the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs, conducted a study on the impact of the Gender Action Plan II in 2018 and one of the key findings was the lack of using the Action Plan as a tool for designing and implementing projects as well as interacting on the Plan with external stakeholders[23]. Although there is no direct link here to the issue of disability mainstreaming, it does show some of the difficulties to ensure mainstreaming across internal work processes. The analysis of selected calls for proposals in chapter 3 further indicates some challenges to systematically ensure disability inclusion across the programme cycle.

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**The CRPD Committee recommends the European Union to “...appoint disability focal points in related institutions...”**

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The progress report of the EU Disability Strategy in 2017 mentions the existence of a network of disability focal points across EU Delegations and that focal points are appointed ad hoc at headquarter level when “needed for consultation of action documents or other initiatives”[24]. Information provided by focal points in DEVCO and EEAS though shows that such network appears not yet to have been formalised at EU Delegation level or at headquarter level. Some focal points on human rights would be contacted if DEVCO or EEAS would need specific support or information on disability often on an ad hoc basis.

Among the four EU Delegations included in this study, the Delegation in Paraguay had a designated focal person for disability, however with limited time available to work systematically on disability inclusion. The main responsibility to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are mainstreamed in EU development cooperation relies on one-person function with few resources to promote a systemic change across units, desks, and delegations. There is a disability focal point in the European External Action Service (EEAS) in the division of Human Rights Strategy and Policy Implementation and coordination is maintained between the two focal points at headquarter levels.

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[24] <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16995&langId=en>

Across DEVCO Units B1 and B3 there are regular exchanges in coordinating inputs into policy documents, evaluations, programming or thematic capacity but individual collaboration cannot compensate the lack of structural processes aiming at including the rights of persons with disabilities in the core work done on human rights and gender equality.

The EU has invested over time in raising awareness and capacity among its staff to better implement disability inclusive development. In 2012, a first two-day training was organised by DEVCO in cooperation with International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), followed by a one-day training in 2014 at headquarter level. Staff from both EU Delegations and headquarters was invited to participate, remaining a relatively limited reach. In 2016, after the adoption of the new Gender Action Plan and the Agenda 2030, DEVCO Units B1 and B3 decided to equip staff with skills on how to include gender, child rights and the rights of persons with disabilities more focused on programme identification, formulation and monitoring, developing 2,5-day training curricula. This training was organised annually up to 2018 when there was a decision to again reorient the training. Instead of comprehensive training on gender, children and disability, a general training on the Human Rights Based Approach, where both gender and disability should be included, will be implemented. While this could be a logical approach, there is a risk that disability becomes more of a checklist issue, included across vulnerability criteria, which so far has proven unsuccessful in other European Union development cooperation processes.

### 3. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals

With the aim of better understanding to what extent the rights of persons with disabilities are included in the financial instruments of EU's development aid, this preliminary study selected four programmes within two of the funding instruments, DCI and EDF, during the 2014-2020 Multi Financial Framework period.

A search for disability and related concepts and terminology[25] in the Multiannual Indicative Regional Programmes for Latin America and Asia (2014-2020) shows that none of them refer to the rights of persons with disabilities[26]. Furthermore, the Cotonou agreement, which is the legal base for the EDF and support to African/Caribbean/Pacific countries, which was designed in 2000 did not address disability in its non-discrimination article, and neither did the amendments and revisions up to 2010. However, in 2011, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in developing countries, urging the Member States of the ACP and the EU to adopt various measures to promote their rights[27].

The Multiannual Indicative Programme for CSO-LA 2014-2020 programme refers to persons with disabilities both in the context of describing the challenges of the most marginalised populations and by including disability as one of several cross-cutting issues that should be mainstreamed. Reiterating this challenge already mentioned by addressing a range of crosscutting issues under a mainstreaming paragraph appears to rather dilute the importance of each and every issue. Without disentangling different implications of crosscutting issues mentioned, which range from systemic and legal issues (such as human rights, democracy, and good governance) to rights of specific groups of society (such as children, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities) and thematic areas (such as environmental sustainability including climate change and mitigation), there is a risk of it becoming a shopping list. The analysis of specific calls presented below gives an indication that this approach to mainstreaming disability is not effective.

The study included calls for proposals published from January 2014 until November 2018. All calls that were not within MFF 2014-2020 were discarded.

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[25] The search in the guidelines and log frame for the calls for proposals included the words disability/handicap/pwd/inclusion/accessibility and its equivalent in French, Portuguese and Spanish.

[26] Multiannual Indicative Programme documents are the basis for developing Action Documents and call for proposals.




[27] [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/2011\\_lome/pdf/adopted\\_ap100.954\\_collated\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/2011_lome/pdf/adopted_ap100.954_collated_en.pdf)

The calls for proposal analysis included grants in the:

- Geographical Programme for Latin America, Africa/Caribbean/Pacific and Asia/South Asia, and
- Civil Society Organisations – Local Authorities programme (CSO-LA) as a thematic programme.

A simple assessment grid using a traffic light rating was developed, which allowed for a quick analysis of key areas where persons with disabilities should be referenced and included in the application guidelines in order for a grant to ensure inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities.

## Table 1 - Assessment grid calls for proposals

 <b>RED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No reference to disability in the context analysis, stakeholder analysis, cross-cutting issues, non-discrimination, target group, logical framework indicators.</li><li>• Disability is only mentioned in the evaluation grid as added-value element together with other vulnerability criteria.</li></ul>
 <b>ORANGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reference to disability in stakeholder analysis, as crosscutting issue and/or in non-discrimination section.</li><li>• Added value element in evaluation grid.</li><li>• Women, men and children are not referenced in the target group.</li></ul>
 <b>GREEN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persons with disabilities and their rights are mainstreamed across all relevant aspects of the call (Context analysis, non-discrimination sections, cross-cutting issues, vulnerability criteria, and defined in target group).</li><li>• Not referenced in logical framework.</li></ul>

Out of the 275 calls for proposals analysed, 67% were in red level, 21% were in orange level and 12% were considered to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, in green level. It is also important to highlight that only one of the calls analysed suggested including disaggregation of data on disability and none of the calls referred to accessibility or inclusion.

**Table 2 - Analysis of calls for proposals**

	RED	ORANGE	GREEN	TOTAL
<b>Regional programmes</b>				
Latin America	15	1	3	19
African, Caribbean and Pacific	32	3	8	43
Asia and South Asia	28	8	5	41
<b>Thematic programme</b>				
CSO-LA	110	46	16	172
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>275</b>

The selected funding programmes only represent a minor portion of EU's overall aid budget and a more comprehensive analysis should be undertaken to see if these trends are manifest in other funding instruments and programmes, such as the EIDHR, European Neighbourhood Policy, budget support mechanisms, blending instruments and other bilateral agreements.

## Spotlight 2 - Ensuring disability inclusion throughout the project cycle

All EU calls for proposals for grants, service tenders, or works, as well as budget support are designed using a common process of formulating an Action Document. The template and instructions for designing an Action Document (which can be done by headquarters or EU Delegations) were revised in 2018, so most of the calls analysed in this study are based on the previous version. The previous version of the Action Document had specific instructions to assess crosscutting issues such as gender, HRBA and environment and climate change. The HRBA instructions made specific reference to analyse persons with disabilities' opportunities to participation and equal access to services and referred to the Guidance Note for staff on disability inclusive development cooperation.

In the revised version, used since January 2019, there is no reference to persons with disabilities in the checklist of mainstreaming issues and persons with disabilities are not included in the mainstreaming section in the instruction to the Action Document. However, a reference to persons with disabilities is made under the general principle of leaving no one behind, with a footnote referring to the CRPD. Concerns were expressed by several informants from DEVCO about the new Action Document templates as well as the changes in the review system, as there will be fewer opportunities to feedback on these issues. It will be important to follow-up on how changes to this Action Document will influence the inclusion of persons with disabilities in future calls for proposals and other financing agreements.



## 4. European Union Delegations

Most of the EU delegations are situated in developing countries. They represent EU interests, including through their section on development cooperation. To better understand the way that rights of persons with disabilities are addressed in the implementation of EU development aid, this study includes as a case study four EU Delegations of the countries covered within the project Bridging the Gap-II. The four countries represent a protracted conflict country (Sudan), least developed country (Ethiopia) and upper middle-income country (Ecuador and Paraguay).

### Capacity and resources on disability inclusion

There is no strategic decision at DEVCO to have designated focal points on disability at EU Delegation level, though there have been attempts to create a network of staff interested in the topic. The appointment of Gender Focal points is considered by most informants to have been an important driver of the gender equality issue and could be taken as a good practice to extend to building up capacity on disability inclusion. There are also human rights and democracy focal points in all delegations since 2016, as established in the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan. Among the four EU Delegations included in this study, the Delegation in Paraguay is the only one that had a designated focal person for disability.

Information gathered from interviews with staff in the four EU Delegations indicates a commitment towards disability inclusion and recognition of the CRPD being a guiding document. Feedback from staff and implementing partners, supported by the review of projects granted by calls for proposal presents similar challenges around the practical application of disability inclusion at various stages of the project cycle management. The main difficulties highlighted appear to be linked to a lack of systematic processes and mechanism that ensures that persons with disabilities are included across the key steps of the project cycle. Competing priorities and a need for more practical knowledge or good practice examples on disability inclusion was raised as main reasons for disability being so far dealt more in an ad hoc way, and primarily in sectors of human rights and social development.

While the study interviewed a limited number of Delegation staff, it is important to mention that they reported not to have participated in training on the rights of persons with disabilities or disability inclusive development. Several had done the HRBA training at delegation level, for example in Sudan and Ethiopia but could not give specific

examples of how the rights of persons with disabilities were reflected in the training[28]. The availability of a focal point on disability at DEVCO headquarters was not widely known.

Several staff welcomed training and more support through having access to practical tools and examples of good practice to improve disability inclusion in their work but were also concerned about the increasing burden of reporting. All staff interviewed pointed out that they have limited time for capacity building in general and that training or other capacity building initiative should be delivered at country level or regional level. Some reluctance was felt towards adding new guidelines or action plans, and people preferred capacity building and some practical checklists.

Tools on data collection on persons with disabilities and the promotion of for example the Washington Group questions or the inclusion of indicators in logical framework were limited. Some staff were hesitant to request disability indicators or disaggregation of data in calls for proposals due to the absence of statistics and baseline in the countries. There were a few examples where disability had been considered as a crosscutting theme in calls for proposals or other funding mechanisms, for example the Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET) programme in Sudan funded by the EU Trust Fund for (Spotlight 4).



Training on gender and human rights, organised by DEVCO for EU in Ethiopia with the contribution of Bridging the Gap.

[28] It shall be noticed that in 2018, Bridging the Gap-II was invited to facilitate a disability sensitization session at the EU Delegation in Ethiopia within a wider training on human rights-based approach to programme and project management.

## Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals

In all four countries, a selection of granted proposals was analysed and in the large majority, persons with disabilities were not identified or referenced, nor included as a discriminated group. Some calls referred to persons with disabilities as part of the vulnerable groups of the population. Only rarely were there indicators or means to measure the impact of the projects on women, men and children with disabilities.

Feedback from EU Delegation staff about this lack of disability inclusion in proposals ranged from stating that the actual call did not target persons with disabilities to not being confident in the best way to include disability in calls and evaluation of proposals. There was also reluctance towards adding indicators, or demanding disaggregated data on disability, particularly knowing that it would be difficult for implementing organisations to gather baseline data. A few good examples were identified and illustrate, that while inclusion does require resources and capacity, it is also relatively easy to get started (refer to country reports and spotlights 3, 4 and 5).

### Spotlight 3 - Ethiopia Civil Society Fund progress on disability inclusion

Ethiopia Civil Society Fund II was developed under the EDF 10 but several projects were implemented starting from 2015. The third phase of the fund, under EDF 11 was only getting started at end of 2018, wherefore this study looked just at the previous Civil Society Fund II.

The Action Document for the Civil Society Fund II from 2009 specifically highlighted that “Vulnerable groups, such as children, disabled and elderly are under-represented in the Ethiopian NSA sector. Therefore, the project will try to encourage their participation”. The consecutive call for proposals for Civil Society Fund II in 2012 did not entirely reflect this and the 2015 call for large grants did not specifically address disability inclusion, even if persons with disabilities were mentioned under Lot 2. The Civil Society Fund II awarded proposals that were submitted by DPOs but on the other hand among the 40 projects funded, six were disability inclusive, two were to some extent inclusive while 32 proposals did not mention persons with disabilities. This analysis gives an indication of the challenges of grouping several marginalised groups and themes under a ‘vulnerability criteria’ as it seems that it does not ensure a systematic inclusion of persons with disabilities.

In the build-up for the Civil Society Fund III, there has been a positive shift towards improving the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Action Document approved in 2017 has a systematic referencing to persons with disabilities: from the stakeholder analysis and lessons learned section to cross-cutting issues and is explicitly mentioned in the results section. Moreover, the intervention logic highlights that persons with disabilities' right and entitlements should be promoted. And the most encouraging is that the logical framework for the action requests disaggregation of data on disability. Presuming that the call for proposals guidelines will be equally inclusive, the Civil Society Fund III could be a champion call for the EU to learn and showcase on in the coming years.

## Empowerment of persons with disabilities

Interviews with DPOs during the study in the four countries show a mixed picture about their participation and involvement in the EU development cooperation at delegation level. The EU Delegations usually invite network organisations or larger NGOs for consultations ahead of calls for proposals and when preparing their country plans, being representative of a larger number of civil society organisations. In many countries, for example in Paraguay and Sudan, DPOs are still struggling to become members of these coalitions and networks and they are sometimes not formalised into a national structure. In such situations the diverse representation of persons with disabilities is a challenge, and there is a risk that women with disabilities or people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities are not represented.



DPO meeting in Paraguay.

In Ecuador, the EU Delegation did not yet establish systematic connections with DPOs and so far it seems that no DPO had accessed grants through EU funding.

In Sudan, some DPOs had established a relationship with the EU Delegation and had been invited to information sessions on calls for proposals and the delegation in Ethiopia regularly invites DPOs. A handful of them had also been granted funds. At the same time, in both Sudan and Paraguay, some concerns were raised about the consultation mechanisms, as some of them did not feel represented by the DPOs invited for the consultations. In Paraguay, the DPOs interviewed had the impression that mainly large NGOs were consulted and stressed that these NGOs are not fully representing the voice of persons with disabilities. Overall there were indications of a wish to better understand how EU Delegations organise consultations.

The African Disability Forum further echoed these challenges and highlighted that while it was positive that DPOs were asked by other civil society organisation to participate in projects, it was sometimes felt as tokenistic and they had no means to influence the overall action.

Across the DPOs interviewed in the four countries, a positive image of the EU as a committed donor to disability inclusion came forward, however with suggestions to better mainstream disability across their financing mechanisms. All DPOs interviewed for this study and several of EU's implementing partners (see next chapter), recommended that the EU should request disability indicators and disaggregated data from their implementing partners and enforcement mechanisms in the calls for proposals. As a concrete suggestion, DPOs and NGOs requested that a percentage of the beneficiaries should be women, men and children with disabilities, that the logical framework should make it obligatory to provide disaggregated data on disability, and that consultation has to be made with DPOs during needs assessment and the design of the project proposals.

Another difficulty expressed by a few DPOs was the challenges to access EU funds, including the use of the electronic application system. Their main challenges were not to have sufficient capacities to put together the required resources. Other more internal issues that were highlighted, particularly in Ecuador, Paraguay and Sudan, was the lack of capacity and resources among DPOs to building a representative and effective organisational structure. This means that many small DPOs may not be equipped to apply for EU funds; but more importantly, a lack of resources can also lead to ineffective advocacy and divisions within the movement.

Four DPOs interviewed during the study were granted projects with EU funds. In Sudan, one DPO that was successful in obtaining a grant said they had applied several times and step-by-step learnt how to improve their application.



Another two DPOs submitted in partnership a project to the Civil Society Fund II in Ethiopia and were successful. Whereas they could participate in coordination meetings with other grantees and could benefit from sharing of experiences and capacity development on project management, they also suggested that such meetings could include training on disability inclusion. They further suggested to the EU to make sure that the Technical Assistance Units contracted to manage and support these large grants should include an obligation to incorporate capacity building, not only on project management, but on raising awareness and exchange on specific development themes, such as gender equality, indigenous population and persons with disabilities.



DPO meeting  
in Paraguay.

## Accessibility policies

Without doing a formal accessibility audit of the four EU Delegations, questions were asked about accessibility and observations could be made during the field visits in Ecuador, Ethiopia and Paraguay. The EU Delegation in Paraguay is newly constructed and accessibility was considered so persons with mobility difficulties can visit and enter the premises and the EU Delegation in Ecuador is also accessible for people with physical disabilities. In both Delegations, some improvements could be made to the access and orientation for blind persons. Sudan and Ethiopia delegations are not physically accessible at the moment based on information from staff interviewed.

Providing information in Braille, audio format or ensuring sign language in public events or meetings was not systematic, which will impede equal access to consultation meetings or information about events and grants.

None of the delegations had a policy or plan on improving accessibility, however there was a strong acknowledgment of this being an important and urgent issue that should be taken up by the leadership. Staff strongly acknowledged that as EU Delegations they should show their commitment to operate in line with the CRPD and be accountable. The lack of accessibility in the delegations was also raised during interviews with organisations of persons with disabilities. Some mentioned difficulties to access information provided for the call for proposals or not being able to access civil society consultations. In this aspect, Sudan delegation has made efforts of reaching out to more DPOs (and also other civil society) by organising some consultations online.

## 5. Opportunities and challenges – making EU grants more inclusive

In order to get an appreciation of EU's implementing partners' commitments and approaches to including persons with disabilities in their organisations' policies and projects, 12 organisations that had received EU funds were interviewed[29]. Keeping in mind that these organisations only represents a minor number of organisations receiving EU grants, the study aimed primarily to look for trends among the organisations and provides examples of the challenges and opportunities faced.

What was common among the implementing partners was that majority did not have any policy or strategy on disability and had rarely been requested or incentivised by EU to take disability into account. Where organisations did include persons with disabilities and had a clear approach to improving their work processes it came from internal processes or headquarters directives (such as Plan International Paraguay) or because of existing inclusive approaches to diversity, such as the Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos in Paraguay and Care in Ecuador.

As an interesting example and potential good practice, the German Development Agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), implements various TVET programmes funded by the EU Trust Fund in Sudan. The EU delegation proactively encouraged the inclusion of persons with disabilities, both by clearly highlighting this in the guidance for the funding and in the discussions and exchanges with GIZ in the project inception phases (spotlight 4).

### **Spotlight 4 - EU supporting disability inclusive TVET in collaboration with GIZ in Sudan**

GIZ is implementing a BMZ commissioned programme on improving employment opportunities in Sudan, with a particular focus on TVET. The project is titled 'Vocational Training and Food Security for Refugees and Host Communities in Eastern Sudan' and was in 2017 reinforced with a grant contribution from the EU Trust Fund via the EU Delegation in Sudan.

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[29] Seven partners in Paraguay, three in Ethiopia and two in Sudan. In addition, some public entities were also interviewed, such as SENADIS in Paraguay, and the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources in Ethiopia.



The programme has three main components:

1. Vocational training and introducing new certified training products and curricula in coordination with the Supreme Council on Vocational Training and Apprenticeship that better respond to the specific context.
2. Private sector development through working with different business organisations and unions to connect companies and enterprises with vocational training centre.
3. Employment promotion through supporting and reinforcing employment centres management by Department of Labour. It also includes organising job fairs to match job seekers and enterprises.

During the discussion between GIZ and the EU Delegation in Sudan for the design of the action, the inclusion of persons with disabilities was strongly encouraged by the EU Delegation. GIZ was positive to look at how their programme could become more inclusive and succeeded in integrating a few persons with disabilities in the first graduation of vocational trainees. When analysing the barriers to the low number included, they identified a few key areas where they could improve, such as better targeting of information to persons with disabilities using other channels, looking how to adapt training courses or identifying additional skills development that would better suit the needs of persons with disabilities and continue to develop closer partnerships with DPOs. So far collaboration has been established with the Women with Disabilities Association.

GIZ is currently involved in five other programmes supporting employment and vocational training and has created a working group that will exchange on experiences. In addition, a wider working group with other agencies involved in employment creation and TVET in Sudan is set-up and in both these groups, GIZ plans to bring in exchanges around disability inclusion.

## Disability inclusion among EU's implementing partners

In terms of data and evidence on persons with disabilities most implementing partners could not give information on the impact their projects have on women, men, girls and boys with disabilities. Most did not have mechanisms in place to disaggregate information on beneficiaries, or other project outcomes, on disability and they had so far not been recommended or obliged to do so in the implementation of projects funded by the EU. They could provide data if the projects had a concrete objective on disability. Several organisations mentioned that they did not have the capacity or knowledge on how to mainstream disability or felt that persons with disabilities were not really their target population, or that they did not have sufficient budget to provide the extra activities needed to reach persons with disabilities.

There were some examples where implementing organisations had developed partnerships with DPOs, or organisations working specifically on disability, with positive outcomes such as building capacity and raising awareness of their staff on the rights of persons with disabilities. In a few cases, the partnership was more in the framework of a sub-contract of the DPOs to implement specific actions concerning persons with disabilities.

### Spotlight 5 - Fundación Paraguaya's journey towards disability inclusion

Fundación Paraguaya is an NGO in Paraguay that works on poverty elimination through supporting schools to be self-sustainable and build capacity of families to get out of poverty. Five years ago, the organisation realised that they did not reach all marginalised groups and that particularly persons with disabilities did not access their programmes. Step by step they adapted their Poverty Spotlight, a tool that allows families to be protagonists of their own stories of elimination of poverty, to be accessible to persons with disabilities[30]. In addition to empowering people, the data collected through the Poverty Spotlight has proven to be useful for communities, organisations, companies, projects and governments. By testing ways to adapt their microcredit programmes and simplifying some procedures they now have regular applications also from persons with disabilities. They also trained what they call 'impulsores' that were responsible to raise awareness among their own offices and

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[30] <https://www.povertystoplight.org>

those involved in providing microcredits, on how to ensure inclusion. Internally, Fundación Paraguaya has also put in place specific targets for each office to encourage them to reach and include more persons with disabilities.

Most of the implementing partners met during this study acknowledged that civil society could do better to include and ensure participation of persons with disabilities. Several organisations suggested that the EU could provide more information and share good practice on disability inclusive development. Majority of the partners had participated in training sessions on project cycle management and budget management and they proposed having training on diversity and inclusion, with exchanges on concrete examples of good practice. Several organisations also suggested that the EU should reinforce disability inclusion in its call for proposals and make it obligatory for receiving funding. There were also recommendations coming from DPOs and partners that any funding from the EU, being a signatory to the CRPD, should require that a percentage of the target population of any grant should be persons with disabilities.

## 6. Opportunities to deliver on commitments

The results of this study, while being limited in scale and coverage, suggested various ways that the EU could strengthen its commitment on implementing the CRPD and ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities in its international development cooperation. Improvement has been made in terms of policy commitments but a number of the CRPD Committee recommendations to Article 32 require more efforts and investment.

One of the most challenging finding is the lack of mechanisms that can actually measure and provide evidence that the EU funds used in development cooperation contribute to ensuring persons with disabilities are not left behind. Today, there are no obligations tied to the aid in measuring the progress on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. While the newly adopted voluntary OECD DAC Disability Inclusion marker is an important step in the right direction, more can be done to strengthen systems, mechanisms and staff capacity on disability inclusion.

The trends uncovered in analysing the funding programmes in the instruments of EDF and DCI suggest a gap in mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities in grants, and there are indications that the implementation of some projects might actually excludes persons with disabilities.

As mentioned in the methodology, a wider assessment of EU development cooperation mechanisms would provide a more detailed picture and understanding of disability inclusion, however, the study's outcomes can already provide EU with information and evidence to initiate steps to improve disability inclusion. In the build-up to the next EU budget, provisions related to the draft Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument must be further strengthened to ensure that no European funds are invested externally in creating or exacerbating barriers and segregation of persons with disabilities.

There is today a favourable environment for disability inclusion in international development cooperation. High level commitments to leaving no one behind have been made during summits and forums, EU Member States development agencies are developing specific policies to do better on inclusion, NGOs are increasingly showing commitments to include persons with disabilities, and organisations of persons with disabilities are better organised to hold their governments to account on their commitments to the CRPD. The European Union has also shown important commitments, such as joining the GLAD Network to coordinate with other donors and

agencies to enhance inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation and humanitarian aid and produced a bold and disability inclusive New Consensus on Development. Furthermore, DG ECHO has recently released a guidance note on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations[31].

The European Union as a leading donor worldwide has the possibility to be at the forefront in the implementation of the Agenda 2030. It can step up its efforts to stand by its commitments and principles in the New EU Consensus of Development of “playing a key role in ensuring no-one is left behind” and ensure that all financial mechanisms of the new MFF are aligned with the principles of an inclusive sustainable development.

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**The CRPD Committee recommends that the EU institutions and Member States share the commitment to take into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities in their development cooperation and take stronger measures to ensure their full inclusion in society and their equal participation in the labour market.**

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[31] [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/2019-01\\_disability\\_inclusion\\_guidance\\_note.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/2019-01_disability_inclusion_guidance_note.pdf)

## 7. Priority areas for action

The suggested action areas have been prioritised based on the study outcomes, reinforced by suggestions of EU staff, implementing partners, DPOs, civil society and other key informants, and can support the EU to build a road map or strategy for meeting its obligations to implement the CRPD in line with the recommendations provided by the CRPD Committee.

### Short-term actions

- 1. Provisions related to the draft Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument should be further strengthened to ensure that **no European funds in the upcoming MFF are invested externally in creating or exacerbating barriers and segregation of persons with disabilities.****
- 2. The European Union can step up in the field of **gathering evidence on inclusion of persons with disabilities.**** Well-tested data collection tools are available, such as the Washington Group Questions, which can be used to start gathering evidence and reporting on the SDGs. DEVCO results monitoring should continue to encourage and propose ways to start disaggregating data on disability and measure disability inclusion. The widening of the scope of this study is also recommended to get a more complete picture of disability inclusion across EU external action.
- 3. The OECD DAC disability policy marker should be fully implemented, including across the Member States** and in particular, the 2012 staff guidance note should be updated to disseminate guidance on the new marker.
- 4. All EU institutions, including EU Delegations should be **fully accessible to persons with disabilities** or define an accessibility plan to become so. **Inclusive and accessible consultation mechanisms** with all civil society groups, including DPOs, can be put in place. Organisations of persons with disabilities should have equal access to organisational capacity building grants that promote the strengthening of civil society.**
- 5. Identify “Champion EU Delegations”.** The acknowledgement and commitments expressed by the EU delegations to increase their capacity and systematic approach to disability inclusion can be harnessed by making visible good practice of EU Delegations.

## Longer-term actions

- 6. DG-DEVCO can strengthen its global leadership on disability-inclusive development** by assigning this responsibility to a Directors level. Disability inclusive strategies and plans for implementing the SDGs have to be developed and disability inclusion ensured.
- 7. The development of a post-2020 EU disability strategy should maintain the external action as one priority area. To ensure the implementation, a disability-inclusion action plan could be developed.** This action plan should have a set of measurable goals and indicators with adequate resources for implementation. The development of the strategy and action plan should be made in close consultation with other EU Member States, organisations of persons with disabilities and wider civil society.
- 8. Investment should be made in strengthening the technical capacity on disability inclusion across DEVCO units and desks,** particularly by reinforcing B1 so that efficient mainstreaming on human rights of all groups can be ensured across DEVCO work processes and procedures. One concrete action could be to replicate the gender helpdesk and create a disability inclusion helpdesk. A network of disability focal points should be formed.
- 9. Existing action plans on gender equality and human rights should be revised to well reflect disability-inclusion,** in close consultation with organisations of persons with disabilities and wider civil society
- 10. Improve the inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities and inclusion in EU capacity development programmes.** Ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities is included across existing thematic and sectoral training and capacity development programmes, while providing specific capacity development on disability inclusion, including at EU Delegations. DEVCO should work closely with international and national organisations of persons with disabilities and other disability inclusion focused NGOs around capacity development.



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## Annex 1 - Analytical framework

Preconditions to be ensured or created	Conducive and Inclusive Policies and plan	Inclusive Development Cooperation mechanisms at EU HQ level	EU Delegation implementation mechanisms	Learning and capacity development on implementation of the CRPD	Feedback system is inclusive of persons with disabilities
Elements to assess	EU Development Policies and Strategies	DCI and EDF budget instruments Sectoral and thematic guidelines Action Documents and Quality support group Call for proposals	Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIP) Action Documents Call for proposals Contracts and monitoring	Training programmes Capacity4Dev Sharing of good practice	Monitoring and evaluation Data disaggregation within SDG monitoring
<p><b>Inclusion and political will</b></p> <p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Systematic analysis of key policies</li> <li>- Systematic scanning of DCI and EDF call for proposals</li> <li>- Interview with DEVCO leadership</li> </ul>	<p>Persons with disabilities are adequately and systematically included in development policies, strategies and plans</p> <p>There is political commitment to inclusion</p>	<p>Persons with disabilities are adequately and systematically included in development strategies and plans and implementation mechanisms</p> <p>Existence and role of disability focal persons</p>	<p>Persons with disabilities are adequately and systematically included in MIPs</p> <p>EU Delegations are accessible</p> <p>Consultation mechanisms with civil society are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities</p>	<p>Guidance on disability inclusion</p> <p>Disability Focal persons at HQ and EU Delegations</p> <p>Training opportunities on disability inclusive development</p> <p>Mainstreaming of disability in human rights and sector capacity development programmes</p>	<p>Data disaggregation is inclusive of disability</p>
<p><b>Participation and partnership</b></p> <p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interview with DPO representatives at EU and country levels</li> <li>- Interviews with IDDC members</li> </ul>	<p>Mechanisms of consultation with civil society for policy and strategy development</p>	<p>Consultation with DPOs at EU level – mechanisms in place</p> <p>Accessibility criteria built in procurement, infrastructure, information, political participation</p>	<p>Partnership with DPOs (type, frequency, representation)</p> <p>Consultation mechanisms with civil society at EUD level</p> <p>Accessibility of consultation mechanisms</p>	<p>DEVCO works in partnership with DPOs for capacity building on disability mainstreaming and the disability inclusive development</p>	<p>Involvement of DPOs in monitoring and evaluations</p>

<p>at EU and country level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interview with DEVCO Disability and Gender focal points</li> <li>- Interview with EEAS disability focal point</li> </ul>			<p>(information, physical access, reasonable accommodation etc.)</p>	<p>Learning and capacity development on the implementation of the CRPD</p>	<p>Feedback system is inclusive of persons with disabilities</p>
<p><b>Gender</b></p> <p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Systematic analysis of policies and plans</li> <li>- Interview with Gender focal persons in DEVCO and EU Delegation</li> <li>- Semi-structured questionnaires include gender specific questions</li> </ul>	<p>Policies and plans pay attention to intersectionalities of discrimination (i.e. gender and disability)</p>	<p>Gender focal points</p> <p>Representation of women with disabilities in consultation mechanisms</p> <p>Including women with disabilities in DPO interviews</p>	<p>DEVCO Gender unit includes disability in policies, guidelines and training?</p> <p>RBA capacity building is inclusive of the rights of women and girls with disabilities?</p>	<p>Training programmes</p> <p>Capacity4Dev</p> <p>Sharing of good practice</p>	<p>Gender inequalities are reflected in outcomes</p>
<p><b>Empowerment</b></p> <p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Screening of programmes and projects contracts and proposals at country level (Ethiopia and Paraguay)</li> <li>- Interviews with DPOs</li> </ul>	<p>EU development policies and plans are addressing empowerment of rights holders (including women, men and children with disabilities)</p>	<p>Support to civil society is inclusive of building capacity of DPOs</p> <p>Programmes for public service improvement is inclusive of disability</p> <p>Budget support in key sectors is inclusive of disability (education, employment, infrastructure, health, etc.)</p> <p>Funding is not used to perpetuate segregation of persons with disabilities</p>		<p>Capacity building and learning on the implementation is inclusive of DPOs representation and persons with disabilities are systematically considered as rights holders (and not in a charitable way)</p>	<p>Data disaggregation on disability demonstrates empowerment of persons with disabilities (increasing access to education, livelihood and access to other services)</p> <p>Indicators are used to demonstrate increased capacities of DPOs as part of strengthened civil society</p>

<p><b>Dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence</b></p> <p>Tools:  - Screening of programmes and projects contracts and proposals at country level  - Systematic analysis of policies and plans  - Interviews with DPOs at EU and country level</p>	<p>EU policies and plans are not discriminating against persons with disabilities or contradict the dignity and freedom of choice and independence (e.g. does not promote segregation in education or living arrangements, support services, respect legal capacity etc.)</p> <p>EU policies and plans promote dignity of all persons with disabilities, particularly</p>	<p>Intentional or unintentional barriers or actions contradicting principles of CRPD? (e.g. progression towards inclusive education is the norm and funds are not used to finance segregated education or residential care)</p>	<p>Intentional or unintentional barriers or actions contradicting principles of CRPD?  Progression towards inclusive education is the norm and funds are not used to finance segregated education or residential care</p>		<p>EU's evaluations, monitoring shows improved equality of women, men and children with disabilities</p>
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## Annex 2 - Review of EU policies and strategies

Name of document	Disability inclusive	Comments
EU Consensus for Development (2006-2016)	No	Only one reference to disability linked to combat exclusion and discrimination
New EU Consensus for Development (2017)	Yes	Make specific reference to persons with disabilities to which EU should pay specific attention and vigorously promote and protect their rights. There is also reference to persons with disabilities in the principles of leaving no one behind, and a specific paragraph (31) mentioning their challenges as a marginalized group
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020	Can be reinforced	Disability is mentioned as a aggravating discrimination when it intersects with gender. There is no mentioning to women or girls with disabilities in the proposed actions or indicators
Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019) "Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda"	Yes, but can be reinforced	EU's obligation to the CRPD as a signatory party is mentioned. Rights of persons with disabilities are also specifically described under the non-discrimination point. Persons with disabilities should be included also in other areas of action, such as gender actions, human rights defenders and role of DPOs in the CSO movement.
ROM – Handbook Results Oriented Monitoring	No	There is no reference to persons with disabilities
HRBA Toolbox A Rights based Approach, encompassing all human rights for EU Development Cooperation 2014	Does make reference but can be reinforced	Reference to persons with disabilities is made twice throughout the toolbox. 1. CRPD as a core HR instrument. 2. Disability mentioned among a range of marginalized groups under third working principles of non-discrimination and access: "... All persons are entitled to equal access without discrimination of any kind on the basis of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, language, religion or other opinion, origin, disability, birth or other status to public services, opportunities, justice and security..."

EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (2016)	Yes	The rights of children with disabilities cut across the whole document and it encourages EU and its partners to disaggregate data on children with disabilities
Multi-Indicative Programme for thematic programme CSO-LA 2014-2020	Yes	The document makes several references to persons with disabilities, including as a cross-cutting issue and in the main objective
Multi-indicative Programme Latin America 2014-2020	Yes, but can be reinforced	The document refers to disability in the challenges described and is included as a crosscutting issue to be mainstreamed (among several other issues)
Multi-Indicative Programme Asia/South Asia 2014-2020	No	There is no reference to disability
Cotonou Agreement (2010) and its revised versions and amendments	No	There is no reference to disability. A resolution on the rights of persons with disabilities was adopted by EU and ACP member states in 2011 with recommendations to promote the rights of persons with disabilities
Multiannual Indicative Programme 2014-2020 Paraguay	No	There is no reference to disability
National Indicative Plan Ethiopia 2014-2020	No	Persons with disabilities only referenced in Health intervention as being more vulnerable
Short Term Strategy 2016/17 for the implementation of a special support measure in favour of the people of the Republic of Sudan	No	

## Annex 3 List of key informants

### European Commission

DG DEVCO Unit B3. Migration, Employment  
DG DEVCO Unit B1. Gender equality, Human rights and Democratic governance  
DG DEVCO Unit 04. – Evaluation and Results  
DG DEVCO Unit D2. Eastern Africa, Horn of Africa  
DG DEVCO International Aid Cooperation EU Emergency Trust Fund  
DG DEVCO Unit G1. Latin America and Caribbean  
DG Employment Unit C3. Disability and Inclusion  
European External Action Service. DMD Global 1. Human Rights

### International Civil Society Organisations

CBM  
EU Cord network  
Humanity & Inclusion  
IDDC  
Light for the World

### Regional organisations of persons with disabilities

African Disability Forum  
European Disability Forum

### ECUADOR

#### EU Delegation

Social protection section

#### EU implementing partners

Agencia Española de Cooperación al Desarrollo (Bridging the Gap-II implementing agency)  
UN High Commissioner for Refugees  
CARE  
GIZ  
Grupo Faro

#### Organisations of persons with disabilities and EU implementing partners

Federación Nacional de Organismos No Gubernamentales para la Discapacidad -  
Federación Nacional de Ecuatorianos con Discapacidad Física  
Federación Ecuatoriana Pro Atención a la Persona con Deficiencia Mental  
National Council on Disability Equality



## **ETHIOPIA**

### **EU Delegation**

Development and Cooperation section

Project managers

### **EU implementing partners**

World Bank Ethiopia

Gender and Social Development Taskforce for PSNP, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources

Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) for Ethiopia-EU Civil Society Fund II

Network of the Visually Impaired and the Blind

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Small Irrigation Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources

Rural Job Creation and Food Security Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources

### **Organisations of persons with disabilities and EU implementing partners**

Network of the Visually Impaired and the Blind

Ethiopian National Disability Action Network

## **PARAGUAY**

### **EU Delegation**

Development and Cooperation section

Project Managers

### **EU implementing partners and DPOs**

Agencia Española de Cooperación al Desarrollo (Bridging the Gap-II implementing agency)

Fundación Paraguaya

Secretaria Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de las Personas con Discapacidad (SENADIS)

Plan International Paraguay

Semillas por la democracia

Paragial y Yakaruedas (DPO)

Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura

Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)

Fundación Alda

Asociación Santa Lucia (member of Comisión Nacional de Discapacidad - CONADIS)

Fundación Saraki

Fundación Teleton (DPO)

## **SUDAN**

### **EU Delegation**

Development and Cooperation section

Project managers

### **EU implementing partners**

GIZ Vocational training and food security

GIZ Vocational training and employment initiative Darfur

UN Industrial Development organisation (UNIDO)

Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – Khartoum office (Bridging the Gap-II implementing agency)

### **Discussion group with DPOs**

Sudanese National Union for the Deaf vice Secretary and the Women Department secretary

Sudanese Union for Physical Disability

Physical disability challenges Organisation

Sudanese Autism Organisation

Intellectual Disability Union state of Khartoum

Technical consultant NCPD

Khartoum University Graduates with Disability association and Sudanese National Union for the Blind

# Ecuador

# 1. Introduction

European Union Delegation (EU Delegation) to Ecuador's strategy is laid out in the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2017[1], which has been extended up to 2020. The strategic areas of policy dialogue set in this Programme are i) economic diversification, ii) boosting and diversifying trade, iii) poverty, inequality and exclusion, iv) inclusive growth and stability, v) democracy and human rights and vi) regional integration, international key role.

The programme was allocated a total budget of €67 million and the Government of Ecuador and the EU together decided to focus this joint work on two priority sectors (plus 5% of the budget dedicated to support measure activities). Persons with disabilities are not mentioned specifically in any of these two sectors, which do consider "vulnerable groups" and "minorities", and specifically women and indigenous people.

- Support to sustainable and inclusive growth at local level (€53.6 m): "Interventions in this sector will contribute to increase sustainable economic growth at local level, through strengthening public institutions and local organizations and fostering sustainable economic diversification and opportunities for decent work in selected provinces."
- Fostering sustainable trade (€10 m): Interventions in this sector will aim at further fostering the conditions for inclusive and sustainable growth and poverty reduction (including SME development, the reduction of the informal sector and a larger share of formal versus total employment), and at preparing Ecuadorian citizens and businesses for making the most of the opportunities offered by a possible, future Multi-Party Trade Agreement between the EU and Ecuador.
- Since 2017, Ecuador's public sector follows the National Development Plan 'Toda Una Vida' (2017-2021)[2]. The plan has three main thematic focuses:
  1. Life-long Rights For All (Derechos Para Todos Durante Toda La Vida),
  2. Economy at the Service of Society (Economía al Servicio de la Sociedad),
  3. More Society, Greater State (Más Sociedad, Mejor Estado).

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[1] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multi-annual-indicative-programme-mip-2014-2017-ecuador\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multi-annual-indicative-programme-mip-2014-2017-ecuador_en)

[2] <https://www.planificacion.gob.ec/plan-nacional-de-desarrollo-2017-2021-toda-una-vida>

This National Development Plan explicitly mentions persons with disabilities. It states that recognizing people's full rights entails recognizing the diversity of others, including persons with disabilities, as equals. In this same direction, in the section Ecuador 2030, it says "(The State) will stimulate citizen empowerment, national identity, and the diverse identities, together with their respective life projects, under the guarantee that everyone has the same rights - regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national or ethnic origin, disability, health status or other distinction that leaves room to discrimination". The inclusion of persons with disabilities in these and other sections of the National Development Plan can be attributed to the design process of the Plan, which included consultation with diverse groups, including persons with disabilities, through the National Council for Equality.

Ecuador is a middle-income country, with a per capita income of 6.200 USD. It is in the 89th place of 188 nations in the Human Development Index (HDI). Since 1990 up to 2015, the HDI of Ecuador increased by 15%.

## Situation of persons with disabilities

In 1992, Ecuador approved the Law on Disabilities, and created the National Council on Disability Equality (Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Dicapacidades - CONADIS) with the responsibility of designing laws, supervising their implementation, investigating and defending the rights of persons with disabilities[3]. In 2001, the Organization of United Nations granted Ecuador with the Franklin Delano Roosevelt prize for its work for and with persons with disabilities, being the first country in Latin America to receive such prize. Seven years later, in 2008, Ecuador ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). And in 2017 it approved new by-laws of the Organic Law on Disabilities, which defines person with disabilities as she/he who, due to physical, mental, sensorial or intellectual impairments, has permanent restrictions to perform normal daily activities, with at least 30% of disability, which must be formally established by the public health authority[4].

The first version of the National Agenda for Disability Equality (Agenda Nacional para la Igualdad de Discapacidades) was created for the period 2013- 2017. At the time of this report, the CONADIS is working under the framework of the National Agenda for Disability Equality, 2017-2021[5]. It establishes 12 strategic areas of work:

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[3] <https://www.consejodiscapacidades.gob.ec/>

[4] [http://progressservices.com.ec/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Decreto\\_194.pdf](http://progressservices.com.ec/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Decreto_194.pdf)

[5] <https://www.consejodiscapacidades.gob.ec/agenda-nacional-para-la-igualdad-de-dicapacidades-2017-2021/>

1. Disability Prevention and Health,
2. Education and Life-long Capacity Building,
3. Integral Protection and Social Security,
4. Accessibility, Mobility and Housing,
5. Access to Justice and Life Free of Violence,
6. Work and Employment,
7. Access to Information, Technological Development and Innovation,
8. Participation,
9. Risk Situations and Humanitarian Emergencies,
10. Accessible Tourism, Art, Culture and Sports,
11. Awareness,
12. Inclusive Communication.

Ecuador submitted its first State report to the CRPD Committee in 2014, which was reviewed in 2017[6] and the second report was recently submitted in 2019. The Committee welcomed the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Ecuador's Constitution, several laws, as well as the increased budget allocation for persons with disabilities. However, its first concern was the "definition and understanding of disability that are based on a medical approach". The Committee recommended reviewing of "the Organic Act on Disabilities with a view to harmonizing it with the general principles and specific provisions in the Convention, particularly in matters relating to non-discrimination and full transition to a human rights-based model."

According to the statistics shared by CONADIS and updated on June 2nd 2019, there are 461,687 registered persons with disabilities[7], 56.18% male and 43.82% female. This represents, according to official estimations of Ecuadorian population[8], that 2.67% of Ecuadorians have a disability. Almost half of the disabilities are physical (46.6%), followed by intellectual disabilities (22.38%), hearing and visual (14.13% and 11.81% respectively), and psychosocial (5.08%). Of the total registered persons with disabilities, only 14% are officially active in the labor market, and of these more than are persons with physical disabilities.

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[6] <https://www.consejodiscapacidades.gob.ec/estadisticas-de-discapacidad/>

[7] <http://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/proyecciones-poblacionales/>

[8] <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/192/02/PDF/G1419202.pdf?OpenElement>

## Objective of the country assessment

This country assessment, together with the other country assessments undertaken under the same framework, are aiming to get an initial understanding of how EU Delegations contribute to the implementation of the CRPD and promote disability inclusion across their implementing partners of projects granted through call for proposals.

## Methodology

The methodology applied in getting a picture of the EU Delegation to Paraguay support for the rights of persons with disabilities reflects the overall methodology of the study. First, a desk review has been undertaken to understand the Ecuador's context for persons with disabilities. This has included the revision of existing laws for people with disabilities, the current National Development Plan, Ecuador's CRPD reports, and official statistics. In addition, the EU Delegation Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) and main country development plans were analyzed to verify if persons with disabilities were explicitly included. A number of EU granted project proposals were also assessed to understand if and how disability inclusion was understood and designed by implementing partners.

Second, key informant interviews[9] were held in Brussels and in Ecuador with desk officer, EU Delegation staff, partners and DPOs, to obtain firsthand knowledge on the opportunities and challenges to include persons with disabilities in the EU Delegation's work.

Institutional event to present the advances of Bridging the Gap project in Ecuador. Held in Quito on 13 March 2019.



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[9] Ecuador desk in DG DEVCO, Ecuadorian EU Delegation (staff in charge of social matters), implementing organizations (AECID, UNHCR, CARE, GIZ, Grupo Faro), DPOs (FENODIS, FENEDIF, FEPAPDEM) and CONADIS.



## 2. Disability inclusion

### EU Delegation commitment to disability inclusion

The EU Delegation in Ecuador is guided by the MIP 2014-2017, which has been extended until 2020[10]. The conversation with the Cooperation Officer at the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development in Brussels clarified that this might be the last MIP for Ecuador, given that bilateral cooperation might end if Ecuador is reclassified thanks to its economic growth. The current MIP is thus based on the National Plan Buen Vivir (2013-2017), from the previous government, which did not include persons with disabilities. Additionally, the strategic dialogue was revised after the 2016 earthquake, to provide budget support to the Ecuadorian government, to improve economic performance and productive recovery of the impacted areas. Persons with disabilities were not considered as specific groups to be included in these new areas of work, as it was believed that supporting the general economic and productive landscape would benefit all the population in general.

Information gathered from the Delegation shows that staff is committed to promote gender equality, and inclusion of vulnerable groups, but there is no explicit work on and with persons with disabilities.

### Capacities and resources for disability inclusion

The Ecuador desk in DG DEVCO considered that inclusion of persons with disabilities should be encouraged in social projects and programs, where it can be considered a 'natural fit'. However there was limited awareness about existing tools that could be applied to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in projects, such as the Guidance Note for EU Staff on Disability Inclusive Development Cooperation[11] (designed to support staff at headquarter and in Delegations to

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[10] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multi-annual-indicative-programme-mip-2014-2017-ecuador\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multi-annual-indicative-programme-mip-2014-2017-ecuador_en)

[11] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/disability-inclusive-development-cooperation-guidance-note-eu-staff\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/disability-inclusive-development-cooperation-guidance-note-eu-staff_en)

better mainstream disability and support the implementation of the EU Disability Strategy and the CRPD). There was also limited knowledge about the use of the newly adopted OECD Disability Inclusion Marker[12] (a voluntary policy marker on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities). These resources were neither extensively used in the EU Delegation in Ecuador.

There is no specifically designated focal point for disability at the EU Delegation in Ecuador. There is one person in charge of social protection and gender equality but with limited time and possibilities to dedicate on disability inclusion. It was mentioned that, in order to guarantee that persons with disabilities are included in call for proposals and projects, an expert must support the EU Delegation office for a sustained period of time. This expert, who would provide know-how to the staff, would work with all members of the office, to avoid considering disability inclusion as a responsibility only of the person in charge of social development areas.

Furthermore, the staff interviewed at the Delegation was not aware of the existence of a disability focal point at DEVCO headquarter. Given that most projects (which are part of this analysis) are focused on human rights and gender, it was suggested by EU Delegation staff that the focal points on Human Rights and Gender in Brussels mention disabilities in their visits and exchanges with the Delegation. This would send the important message that the inclusion of persons with disabilities must be taken into account when working across these sectors.

The EU Delegation had limited consultation with civil society organisations working with persons with disabilities and DPOs ahead of calls for proposals in the EIDHR and CSO-LA. In the design of the roadmap for their current lines of work, two representatives of DPOs of the blind were consulted, but the final document was not shared in a universal access design format.

Visit of the Ecuadorian organisations of persons with disabilities to Madrid in November 2018.



[12] [http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC/STAT\(2018\)39/REV1&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC/STAT(2018)39/REV1&docLanguage=En)

## Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals

Persons with disabilities are not mentioned in the three calls for proposals targeting grants (CSO-LA and EIDHR) for Ecuador between 2014-2018. Nevertheless, the proposal evaluation grid, which stipulates the maximum points a proposal can obtain for each type of criteria being evaluated, includes the 'needs of persons with disabilities' in the section on 'Relevance Of The Activities Proposed through the following question, "does the proposal include specific added value elements, such as environmental issues, promotion of gender equality, equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities and rights of indigenous populations, innovations and best practices, groups in remote areas, and integral consideration of the problematics specified in the objectives of the call for proposals"? The evaluation grid is used in all call for proposals. Although persons with disabilities are included, it is from a needs perspective, instead of a human rights perspective and only as an added value element, not as a cross-cutting obligation.

In one of the calls analyzed, the guide for applicants did explicitly mention persons with disabilities in one of its priority actions, as part of vulnerable populations. It specifically mentioned, "it will be taken into account the inclusion of gender perspective and of vulnerable groups (such as indigenous populations, people from minority ethnicities, people with disabilities, the youth, people in human mobility situations, LGTBI, etc.) in the proposals". However, this did not translate into the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the proposals finally awarded. One awarded project did mention "most vulnerable and poor groups", and it proposed capacity building to civil society organisations to increase their awareness and impact "on gender equality, equal opportunities, rights of minorities, indigenous people and immigration". In the same way, other contracts awarded in these three call for proposals included vulnerable populations, minorities, families and groups at risk. It could be inferred that persons with disabilities are considered within this wording, but it is not guaranteed.

Discussions with organisations implementing EU grants reflected this finding. These organisations do not have persons with disabilities explicitly in their mission, nor the sufficient knowledge on inclusion, and as a result, they largely miss to reflect disability inclusion in the design of projects.

However, in some cases the project ends up including persons with disabilities because they are part of the target community. For example, CARE worked with persons with disabilities in the project *Mujeres Con Voz*, a project on violence against

women. This inclusion of persons with disabilities came from CARE's internal mandate on inclusion, not because they considered it an incentive or obligation coming from the EU call for proposal. The project started with conversations with municipal advisory councils, which include people with disabilities. As a result, the events organized within the project were celebrated in accessible venues, and the policy for violence prevention (one of the final products of the project) included women and girls with disabilities. One of the challenges though that CARE raised was difficulties in finding a strong partner to work on gender violence and disability. The organisations and the women with disabilities that were part of the project had little knowledge on gender violence and the different forms it can take. In fact, the participating women with disabilities did not talk about their experiences inside their organisations. And women and girls with intellectual disabilities did not participate.

None of the organisations interviewed for the study had been requested or encouraged by EU grant mechanisms to provide data disaggregated for disability in their programmes or other inclusion indicators. For example, CARE only realized that they did not have indicators to show their work with persons with disabilities during the conversation for this study.

## Empowerment of persons with disabilities

The Ecuador government is commitment to disability inclusion. The Plan Toda Una Vida, 2017-2021 explicitly mentions persons with disabilities. It also considers persons with disabilities as equal rights holders, while before there was an assistance approach. Furthermore, persons with disabilities are part of the "priority groups", which are established by law. And there is a law in place that states that organisations with more than 25 employees to ensure that 4% of the staff are persons with disabilities.

However, there are diverse opinions on the impact of the work that is being done with and for persons with disabilities by the government. The organizational structure makes it complicated for some DPOs to work independently and voice their real thoughts. The same person that chair CONADIS directs one of the biggest federations of DPOs. In addition, CONADIS and all national federations work in the same building. This is seen as both positive (for coordination purposes) and restrictive (feeling of a supervision from CONADIS).

Moreover, it was mentioned in several meetings that public services for persons with disabilities and their families has geographical limited reach. Big cities might have access to these "brigadas" (public staff working for persons with disabilities and their

families), but distant regions are not covered.

This is further weakened by current public budget constraints. Some of these constraints could also be behind the low official figures of the prevalence of persons with disabilities in Ecuador. While CONADIS considers that the official low statistics are a reflection of public investment and improvement in public health prevention, it might also underestimate the real figures.

Obtaining a disability certificate can be a challenge, particularly in rural areas, and it is only provided to those that have a 30% estimated limitation in daily function. The certificate ensures people can access benefits, such as subsidies in the cost of water and electricity, and tax reductions, among others. Some organisations interviewed during the study (DPOs and implementing organisations) consider that official statistics undercount the real prevalence of persons with disabilities (WHO figures states that around 15% of the population have a disability).

There are also people who prefer not to register as having a disability to avoid being marginalized. It is also important to mention that lower prevalence and registration of persons with disabilities reduces public budget spent on benefits for persons with disabilities, and in a certain way can improve public indicators on disability inclusion.

## Accessibility policies

The EU Delegation in Ecuador is accessible for people with limited mobility through the parking, but most common areas are not accessible. There is so far no accessibility policy or plan in place, and according to staff there is room for improvement when it comes to accessibility of information and consultation mechanisms.

International Forum on Experiences of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Education. Held in Quito on 7 June 2019.



### 3. EU implementing partners

During the assessment of EU Delegation in Ecuador, representatives of three DPOs were interviewed together with five organisations that either were currently receiving EU funds or had received funds previously.

#### Organisations' policies and strategies

AECID is the implementing partner of Bridging the Gap in Ecuador and has clear objectives of working with and for persons with disabilities. This has been reflected in its new strategic working framework (Marco de Asociación País Ecuador-España 2019-2020)[13]. This document establishes four strategic sectors and sub-sectors of work, the third one being "Gender and Social Inclusion". This sub-sector comprises inclusive education for boys and girls with disabilities and economic rights of persons with disabilities. It entails five specific indicators and establishes an estimated budget to work on the rights of persons with disabilities. So far they have not received proposals from DPOs or from other organisations, which include disabilities as part of their projects, but AECID expects that this new framework will increase its work with people with disabilities and the corresponding organisations, beyond the implementation of Bridging the Gap-II.

CARE also includes persons with disabilities in their projects when they are part of the beneficiary community (in other words, CARE usually does not design projects with persons with disabilities in mind, but it adapts the project during implementation when needed to include persons with disabilities), and when there is an explicit demand from local authorities. This openness and awareness come from CARE's organisational values, which include diversity. In this sense, besides the project on gender violence, *Mujeres con voz*, CARE worked with boys and girls with disabilities in a project on cultural strengthening. With the objective of making local culture visible, CARE worked with educational centers to create inclusive activities around local music, language, arts, etc., making sure students with disabilities participated. Local DPOs were not ready (in terms of knowledge, human and other resources), to participate in an international funded project, and most of the knowledge and initiative came from CARE. The projects do not have a specific budget line to cover the additional costs that it can entail to include persons with disabilities in general projects (such as accessibility), and this limits the reach of action on disabilities.

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[13] <https://aecid-ecuador.ec/aecidenecuador/map-2019-2022/>



GIZ provides a good example where it includes 4% of the staff being persons with disabilities, in line with Ecuadorian law. GIZ also has persons with disabilities among its priority groups. Although they do understand that persons with disabilities must be part of cooperation projects, the team prioritizes other groups of people who are less covered by public interventions. Plus, they do not have clear guidelines on how to measure different topics being mainstreamed in projects.

The organisations that were receiving EU grants that so far have not mainstreamed disability raised challenges such awareness, knowledge, and budget constraints. They also considered that DPOs did not have the expertise to work beyond the specific services they might offer to their members and lacked general knowledge on development concepts and frameworks, such as for example the SDGs. This results in organisations not consulting or involving DPOs. All consulted organisations though welcomed capacity building and guidance on how mainstream disability in project cycle management, and support to understand which organisations are actively working with persons with disabilities, where and with what expertise, to spot potential future partners for projects. Yet, none of the implementing partner organisations had been requested by donors to mainstream disability.

## Opportunities and challenges for disability inclusion

Implementing organisations have different approaches to including persons with disabilities in their projects. Some organizations consider that, given their lack of know-how, it is preferable not to act than to do potential harm. Other organisations are open to include persons with disabilities in projects, if the nature of the activities and the composition of the beneficiary community justify so. In these cases, these “non-expert” organisations work directly with the individuals, not with DPOs Or, in the case of AECID, they partner with Spanish DPOs, which then can look for a local partner for the project.

One of the recurrent challenges mentioned in the interviews for this study was to find DPOs with sufficient capacity in project management or thematic areas to partner with. There are also not DPOs present in all areas of project implementation. As a suggestion to improve on this, organisations suggested to organize opportunities for DPOs and other organisations with experience working with European funds to get to know and learn from each other. At the same time, the EU Delegation would explain the type of projects/call for proposals it works with and how to present project proposals.

UNHCR shared its experience in the North Frontier, which exemplifies these opportunities and challenges in projects funded by both EU and other donors for support to migrant population. For the project not funded by the EU, UNHCR did not consider disability in the design phase. However, it soon realized that a considerable percentage of people trying to enter Ecuador through the north frontier had disabilities. Therefore, UNHCR decided to talk with frontier public staff to ask for special treatment for migrants with disabilities. However, the migration policy in Ecuador was getting stricter, and disabilities were not considered a condition to provide a person with special treatment to enter Ecuadorian territory. Staff at the frontier asked for official documentation proving that migrants had a disability, even when it was a physical evident one. UNHCR is working case by case advocating for these migrants with disabilities and their companions when necessary. If they are successful and the person is granted asylum, UNHCR has difficulties finding local DPOs to which direct persons with disabilities. In this sense, in a later interview for this analysis, when a national DPO in Quito was asked about migrants with disabilities, they said they only worked with Ecuadorians, and that they did not know any organization working with foreigners. They said that higher authorities were the ones entitled to talk about public policy, and they did not continue the conversation. However, a smaller DPO with less connections with the government, when asked about opportunities to support UNHCR, they said they were open and interested to collaborate.

Regarding European funding in the north frontier on early alert, UNHCR mentioned that disabilities were not part of the call for proposals, and that none of the four implementing organisations are considering so far including people with disabilities. The office of the Ombudsman is in charge of the general project and although it does have a unit for disabilities, it is not that active. UNHCR, after its experience with the other project in the area, would like to include persons with disabilities in this EU funded project, but it does not have the experience or knowledge on how to include it in the design and management of cooperation projects. They would value having guidelines and training on the subject.



## 4. Organisations of persons with disabilities

In Ecuador the main DPOs are organised in federations. These federations are often impairment based DPOs (physical, blindness, intellectual disabilities, etc.). They are all based in Quito, with members across the territory, and their headquarters are all located in the same building, together with CONADIS. In different conversations with these federations and with CONADIS, it was mentioned that DPOs had very few opportunities of working together in a project. Each organisation concentrates in their own expertise. This is also reflected Bridging the Gap-II project. Even though many of them work with AECID in inclusive education, they do it individually and not as a coordinated group. This lack of experience working among DPOs extends to lack of experience working with other organisations (when asked about partnering with other development organisations to present together projects for call for proposals).

### Participation to EU programming and planning

There has been limited consultation with DPOs in EU programming and planning up to now. The interviews with the Delegation suggest that the limited focus on disability as well as not yet considering disability inclusion as a cross-cutting issue might be the reason. Interviews with CONADIS and DPOs resonated with this in that most DPOs interviewed were not aware about potential EU funding. Their participation in Bridging the Gap-II project for instance was proposed directly by AECID to each DPO. One DPO expressed its feeling that most DPOs are not used to “risking” working outside their expertise. In other words, they only look for funds that explicitly target persons with disabilities. Therefore, so far no DPO contacted for this study had considered general EU funds as a funding opportunities.

There were diverse responses when asked about future opportunities to partner with other organisations to present project proposals to EU funding. While some DPOs expressed some reluctance, expressing doubts about trust and being sidelined by bigger organisations, other DPOs were keen on collaborating and advocating other NGOs to improve disability inclusion. In either case, it was always mentioned the need for the EU Delegation to share more openly (via email, subscription alerts etc.) which opportunities are open, which ones are specific for Ecuador and which ones are international, and in any case, to mention explicitly persons with disabilities as a target group in project documents. Having clear guidelines and obtaining training on how to present a proposal was also requested by several organisations.

## 5. Conclusion

While being limited in its scope, the analysis of the EU Delegation to Ecuador's contribution to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in funding mechanisms presents both opportunities and challenges.

Call for proposals across any sector should more explicitly include persons with disabilities as target population from needs assessment to ensuring outcomes can be measured and disaggregated for disability. When working on human rights and strengthening civil society organizations, persons with disabilities and their organisations should be included. This will ensure alignment with Ecuador's new National Development Plan 'Toda una Vida', which explicitly mentions persons with disabilities, it is a period of potential opportunities to strengthen disability inclusion in call for proposals and other European mechanisms. This is also one of the main requests from DPOs and other civil society organisations, the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities in the various funding mechanisms of the EU and if possible, with a specific budget set aside for accessibility activities (in Ecuador, the offer of accessible material is very scarce, and therefore, very expensive).

Once the call for proposal documents are written with persons with disabilities in mind, the dissemination of opportunities could be more user friendly. DPOs do depend on external funding, but did not consider EU projects because they did not explicitly mentioned persons with disabilities, nor do they really know where to start looking for open opportunities. Being able to subscribe to alerts, or having direct contact with the EU delegation were suggested by most DPOs in order to consider applying to future call for proposals.

Furthermore, DPOs and other implementing partners of EU funded projects suggested to organise events or workshops to improving networking and building partnerships. This could be combined as well with information and training on EU funding mechanisms and writing successful project applications for call for proposals. Mainstream NGOs were positive towards learning more about disability inclusion and about disability inclusion throughout the project management cycle. In this sense, AECID has recently published a guidebook on disabilities and cooperation project[14], which might be socialized in Ecuador during 2019 given the interests and needs identified in this study.

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[14] [http://www.aecid.es/Centro-Documentacion/Documentos/Publicaciones%20AECID/180627\\_guia\\_discapacidad\\_def.pdf](http://www.aecid.es/Centro-Documentacion/Documentos/Publicaciones%20AECID/180627_guia_discapacidad_def.pdf)

# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>AECID</b>	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation)
<b>CONADIS</b>	Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de las Discapacidades
<b>CRPD</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSO-LA</b>	Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EIDHR</b>	European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU Delegation</b>	European Union Delegation
<b>DPO</b>	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
<b>MIP</b>	Multiannual Indicative Programme

# Ethiopia

# 1. Introduction

Ethiopia is one of the EU's important partners on the African continent, active in regional peace and security as well as on thematic international debates such as climate change. In 2016, the partnership was further enhanced when the Joint Declaration towards an EU-Ethiopia Strategic Engagement was signed. This commits both sides to an annual Ministerial Meeting and six sectoral dialogues: Governance and Human Rights; Regional Peace and Security; Countering Terrorism and Violent Radicalization; Migration; Social and Economic Development, Investment and Trade; and Climate Change and Environmental Cooperation. In this engagement the two sides also affirm their commitment to the fundamental principles of sustainable development, democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law; regional cooperation and integration.

The National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020 in Ethiopia is aligned to the broad objectives of Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) and the Climate Resilient and Green Economy (CRGE) strategy, as well as the specific objectives of sector plans in the focal areas of cooperation. The cooperation is built around three focal sectors:

1. Sustainable agriculture and food security,
2. Health, and
3. Roads (phasing out) and energy (phasing in).

The indicative allocation to Ethiopia was estimated to EUR 745 million in programmable funds, subdivided as follows:

Focal Sector 1: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security	EUR 252.4 million 33.9%
Focal Sector 2: Health	EUR 200.0 million 26.8%
Focal sector 3: Roads and transition to energy	EUR 230.0 million 30.9%
Cross-cutting: Civil Society and synergetic governance	EUR 52.0 million 7.0%
Cross-cutting: Support measures	EUR 10.6 million 1.4%

## Situation of persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities in Ethiopia are among the poorest segment of society. An estimated ninety-five per cent (95%) live in poverty[1]. Their right to health, education, livelihood and employment and to equal participation in society is severely restricted due to persistent negative attitudes, stereotypes and misconceptions about disability and inaccessible infrastructure. The fact that persons with disabilities in Ethiopia are still perceived by society from a welfare perspective and unproductive is a serious barrier to their participation and contribution to their communities.

Ethiopia lacks accurate and reliable data on disability. The last population census from 2007 refers to a disability prevalence of 1.17%[2]. This however is likely to be a severe underestimate and a number that is merely reflecting the type of questions on disability included in the census. The World Disability Report (2011) that generally quotes a global disability prevalence of 15% refers to the prevalence in Ethiopia being 17.6%[3]. People active in the field of disability all agree that the prevalence of disability in Ethiopia is higher than what was reported in the census.

There are very few disability specific services available while the mainstreaming and accessibility of services and infrastructure are only at its early stage and unsystematic. This applies to all sectors, including education, health, employment, entrepreneurship, social protection, transportation, housing etc. There is no synchronized support system for persons with severe disabilities, which leave these individuals at the sole responsibility of their family and often unable to even leave their houses. For those who look for jobs, the usual alternatives are sheltered work or handicraft works and petty trade, all with very minimal income levels that are not enough to sustain a decent living standard.

In the rural areas of Ethiopia, some persons with disabilities can still be found locked inside the homes, due to families fearing stigma and exclusion from the society. Stereotyping, attitudinal and customary barriers are more visible in the rural setting and a labour intensive life style further contributes to the exclusion of disabled community members. The rural areas are further often characterized by challenging or inaccessible geography (topography), lack of basic or any support services. In addition most disability NGOs and the specialized agencies

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[1] National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities (2012-2021), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Addis Ababa, 2012.

[2] The World Report on Disability, published jointly by the World Bank and WHO (2011).

[3] WHO and the World Bank (2011). World Report on Disability, WHO, World Bank, 2011.

are concentrated in urban areas. As a result persons with disabilities in rural areas and in particular in impoverished communities, encounter severe socio-economic hardship.

In the urban setting on the other hand, a slight improvement in the participation of persons with disabilities in daily life activities can be witnessed. The urban environment provides for selected disability services such as physical aids and appliances and access to education (although often in specialised schools).

It is therefore evident that important shortcomings still exist in terms of disability inclusion in socio-economic development and access to basic services. There is also a critical lack of accessible infrastructure and transportation, both in rural and urban areas[4].



Community meeting  
to introduce Bridging the Gap.  
Held on 4 April 2018 at Halisho Kebele  
in Erer District of Somali region.

[4] Humanity & Inclusion, Ethiopia Country Brief on Disability Inclusion (Accessed Online –January 2019).

## Legal and policy framework

Ethiopia ratified the CRPD in 2010, three years after signing. The country submitted its initial report to the CRPD Committee in early 2013. In its concluding observations in 2016, the CRPD Committee noted with appreciation the adoption of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2012-2021, although several concerns and recommendations were raised. In particular, the Committee showed concern about “[the fact] that consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations is not systematically carried out in the development of all policies and laws, training and awareness raising across all sectors, and that restrictions to foreign donor funding of disability rights hinder the liberty of association of persons with disabilities”.

Article-specific recommendations were also raised. Concerning article 32, referring to International Cooperation, the Committee highlighted the need for “disability rights [to] be mainstreamed in the national implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals [...] in close cooperation and involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities”.

Ethiopia has also made commitments in relation to ensuring women’s and girls’ rights through ratification of a number of regional and international provisions. These include among others, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Ethiopia made commendable progress towards reaching most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by achieving six out of the eight goals. The country also endorsed the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) integrating these to the national priorities in the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II 2016 - 2020). The Voluntary National Review from 2017 indicates a conducive environment and strong national commitment. It also includes an early performance trend on the key principle of “Leaving no-one behind” referring among others to affirmative action undertaken to support persons with disabilities. For Ethiopia to excel once more with attaining the SDGs, it is crucial that the implementation of disability inclusion is enforced across sectors. This requires commitment, the establishment of clear indicators and an effective monitoring and evaluation system to collect data and evaluate progress. Without this the efforts will remain fragmented.

At federal level, although the Ethiopian constitution (1995) does not mention person



with disabilities specifically, it requires the government to “care for and rehabilitate” those who need special care and to create employment for the poor and unemployed (Article 41) and it requires the government to progressively increase allocations to this end.

Ethiopia’s second five year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II 2016 - 2020) includes persons with disabilities under the chapter of cross-cutting sectors and the sub-chapter of social welfare and labour affairs. The aim of the sub-sector is to ensure equal benefits for persons with disabilities and elderly people in the social and economic sectors through increasing the knowledge base and through expanding social security services. The increase of psycho-social counselling, orthopaedic appliances and rehabilitation services are mentioned specifically[5].

Overall, in the past decade Ethiopia has taken significant steps to improve the legal and policy framework pertaining to disability as described above. However, action needs to be taken in translating these provisions and the emerging awareness into an inclusive society. Some initial steps for implementing inclusion has been taken in several sectors, such as in advancing inclusive education and skills training, but the implementation gap in general is substantial across all sectors.



Disability Equality Training for the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) staff in Ethiopia, organised by Bridging the Gap. Held on 11 December 2018 in Addis Abeba.

[5] Federal Democratic republic of Ethiopia, National Planning Commission. Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) (2015/2016-2019/2020), Addis Ababa, 2016.

## Bridging the Gap II in Ethiopia

Bridging the Gap II (BtG-II) Programme is coordinated by FIIAPP – Spanish Cooperation and implemented by the Austrian Development Agency in Ethiopia. It focuses on promoting disability inclusion in the livelihood sector, linking in particular to livelihood interventions that are aiming to improve resilience and social protection programmes. The geographical focus of the project is Amhara and Somali National Regional States and the Federal level in Ethiopia[6].

The rapidly changing climate, due to global warming has made Ethiopia very vulnerable to its effects. According to the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction, Ethiopia has a high exposure to hazard risks, and due to multiple factors, including dependence on rain-fed agriculture, low economic development, deforestation, land degradation, and larger and denser human settlements, the country is vulnerable to natural hazards[7]. Ethiopia is cited as one of the countries in the world with a high level of risk; being 39th in hazard and exposure, 11th in vulnerability and 26th in lacking the coping capacity from disaster risks[8].

Persons with disabilities are often more at risk to the consequences of climate change, such as droughts, flooding, deforestation, migration etc. The effects can negatively impact their quality of life and narrow down their ability to adapt, reduce their livelihood opportunities and lower their resilience[9]. Taking the increased vulnerabilities to livelihood related shocks and limited potentials for reliance, the BtG-II programme in Ethiopia has started to support initiatives and partners working in food security, resilience building and emergency relief in various parts of the country.

The following initiatives are being targeted:

- The Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) implemented by the government and funded through a consortium of donors,
- Water for Food Security, Women's Empowerment and Environmental Protection programme implemented by CARE Ethiopia,

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[7] Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR), Country Context: Ethiopia –Hazard Risk (Online: Last Accessed, January 2019). <https://www.gfdr.org/index.php/en/ethiopia>.

8] [http://www.inform-index.org/Portals/0/Inform/2016/country\\_profiles/ETH.pdf](http://www.inform-index.org/Portals/0/Inform/2016/country_profiles/ETH.pdf).

[9] CBM. Disability and Climate Change: Understanding Vulnerability and Building Resilience in a Changing World. 2012.

- Resilience building and creation of economic opportunities in Ethiopia (RESET PLUS) implemented by the EU through a consortium of civil society actors, and
- Support to livelihood of drought affected households and resilience building of vulnerable groups in the Somali region, implemented by UNDP, FAO and UNICEF.

Organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) and their umbrella organisations are partners in the project both at federal level and in the Amhara and Somali regions. They are supported by capacity development to building their confidence to collaborate with the government and wider civil society sector to advance inclusion in livelihood and social protection.

## Aim of the Ethiopia country report

This report aims to get an initial overview of how the EU Delegation and development actors contribute to the implementation of the CRPD and promote disability inclusion across their implementing partners of projects granted through call for proposals in Ethiopia.

## Methodology

The methodology applied in getting a general picture of the EU Delegation to Ethiopia in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities reflects the overall methodology of the study. A desk review of EU Delegation MIP and other key documents, such as national development plans, relevant disability policies, strategic and programme documents was made, and complemented with primary data collected through key informant interviews with EU Delegation representatives, EU implementing partners and DPOs.

A number of granted project proposals were also assessed to understand if and how disability inclusion was understood and implemented by partners.

## 2. Disability inclusion

### EU Delegation commitment to disability inclusion

On 22 January 2011 the EU became party to the CRPD and all EU member states have today ratified the convention. The EU as part of its commitment to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities outside the EU, provides support to civil society, including those representing persons with disabilities. The [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#) includes a component on external action and the implementation of Article 32 on International Cooperation. This was not reflected in the Ethiopia National Indicative Programme (NIP 2014-2020), which further does not have a specific reference to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The [NIP 2014-2020](#), as earlier described targeted sectors of sustainable agriculture and food security, mainly targeting vulnerable population groups, as well as improving national health systems and its access, roads infrastructure, and to increase access to and diversify of, the energy mix. It also finances actions in favour of civil society and strengthening democratic governance. No explicit mentioning to the rights of persons with disabilities or mechanisms of mainstreaming disability has been made.

### Capacity and resources for disability inclusion

The EU Delegation in Addis Ababa has not yet been identified a focal point for disability inclusion. The interview with some of the staff suggests that the awareness and practical application of disability inclusion could be reinforced. It was mentioned that disability inclusive development has not been addressed as a capacity development area for delegation staff, even though some aspects were included in the Rights Based Approach workshop taking place end of 2018. The EU Delegation mentioned that more technical guidelines and exchange on good practice would be useful in advancing the topic. The staff met was not fully up to date about the EU [Guidance Note on Disability Inclusion In Development Cooperation](#), developed for its staff in 2012.

## Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals

This preliminary study analysed calls for proposal within EDF 11 in Ethiopia for grants and services contracts. Only three of 17 did consistently include persons with disabilities while most either did not mention this group at all or it only appeared as an added value element in the evaluation grid.

Looking more into specific financing mechanisms, the programmes taken into consideration are: The Civil Society Fund II[10] and the [Productive Safety Net Programme \(2015-2020\)](#).

The inclusion of persons with disabilities had been identified as a weakness during the first round of projects of the Civil Society Fund (CSF) and EU had indicated its intent to encourage the participation of this group through grant operation and no-grant capacity building activities[11]. However, the commission's financing proposal or the operational document that specified how the CSF II be implemented (known as "Action Document for CSF II in Ethiopia –2009) did not outline clear commitments to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities through project activities, or indicators. Therefore, it appears as if the design and implement interventions for the benefit of persons with disabilities and their organisations was left at the discretion of the applicants.

The Civil Society Fund II funded eight projects in total (across two grants call for proposals) that included to some extent persons with disabilities. As per the information collected from some of the implementing partners, the information sessions prior to the call for application did not specifically raise the importance of disability inclusion.

The CSF II implemented in Ethiopia had a general focus on strengthening the capacities of civil society to participate in governance and policy. In the guidance for the calls for proposal in 2012[12] persons with disabilities were

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[10] At the time of the study, the EDF 11 Civil Society Fund III had not yet been organised, so it was decided and agreed with the EUD to look at the previous CSF, which was implemented during 2013-2018.

[11] European Commission. Action Fiche for CSF II in Ethiopia (2009).

[12] European Commission. Civil Society Fund II. Call for large grants 2012 [EuropeAid/133-781/L/ACT/ET](#).

mentioned as one group across several marginalised groups but only listed in one example of potential activity to implement. In the 2015 call for proposal, disability was mentioned in the non-discrimination section[13].

During the call for proposals, CSF II paid attention to the promotion of human right dialogue, governance, gender equality, Non-State Actors participation, and prevention of gender-based violence and addressing the vulnerable segment of the society. Even if the CSF II second call did highlight disability as a non-discriminatory item, it required concrete measures for ensuring disability mainstreaming across the project activities, such as requesting disability inclusive indicators and disaggregation of data on disability.

Furthermore, CSF II did not encourage or describe ways that the Technical Assistance Unit, contracted to support the implementation, could better promote and ensure better disability mainstreaming. In the interview with the Technical Assistance Unit of CSF II they reflected that CSF II tried to assess the proposals against their relevance to addressing the needs of all vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. The EU Delegation did award proposals that were submitted by DPOs but very few of the projects finally awarded were inclusive. Among 40 projects awarded that this study could assess, six did address persons with disability as an inclusive issue, and two of them to a certain extent while 32 proposals did not mention persons with disabilities.

The multi-donor programme Productive Safety Net Programme 2015-2020, with a EU contribution of \$130 million[14], provides around 7.5 million vulnerable people with reliable assistance each year (in the form of cash transfer or food) in return for participation in public works. As an additional mechanism called “Direct Support”, certain groups of beneficiaries receive unconditional cash transfers. Among these groups are persons with disabilities. Besides collectively mentioning persons with disabilities along with other groups of community members who are “unable to contribute public labour due to health, age, pregnancy and other demographic conditions” (which is actually reflecting prejudice and lack of knowledge on the capacities of persons with disabilities), disability is not appearing as a cross-cutting issue and no data is requested on their participation. For instance, as indicated in the financing document for the PSNP IV, gender was declared to be a priority social accountability issue and the programme put specific mechanism in place, such as women will be given reduced workload by 50% and engagement of women in light

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[13] European Commission. Civil Society Fund II. Call for large Grants 2015. EuropeAid/150250/DD/ACT/ET.

[14] World Bank, ET Productive Safety Nets Project 4 (PSNP 4) (2015-2020) – Financing Plan.

works[15].

However, disability inclusion was not addressed in any of the result areas and specific activities described in the EDF's financing of the PSNP, which can explain the gap in the implementation.

## Empowerment of persons with disabilities

The EU Delegation supports the strengthening of capacities of civil society actors in Ethiopia as earlier mentioned, primarily through the CSF II. One application from DPOs was awarded during the entire CSF II (selected in 2015), the Network of Visually Impaired and the Blind (NOVIB) and the Ethiopian National Disability Action Network (ENDAN) submitted a joint proposal. They mentioned that the grant was used to enhance their technical and financial capacity to engage in promoting disability inclusive development practice in key socio-economic sectors. They also used the funding to engage with the government executive organs, elected council members and non-state actors at different levels in order to address the awareness related gaps that perpetuate exclusion of persons with disabilities. As reflected in the project documents, the grant targeted the empowerment of persons with disabilities and maximized their participation in socio-economic development as well as increased the capacities of the duty bearers to mainstream disability inclusive development.

The European Union Delegation succeeded in negotiation with the Government of Ethiopia to waive restrictions prohibiting CSOs to work on human rights and governance issues (including advocacy, policy dialogue, human rights promotion). The recipients of the CSF II thus were able to get special arrangements to use the grant to work on the promotion of the rights, including rights of persons with disabilities.

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[15] European Commission 82015. Action Document for the Support to the Productive Safety Net Programme IV of Ethiopia.



## 3. EU implementing partners

### Organisations' policies and strategies

The Government of Ethiopia, besides ratifying the CRPD, has devised institutional and strategic mechanisms to implement its commitment with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) as the mandated institution. The government has attempted to remove guidelines, provisions, terminologies and definitions that manifest some sort of contradiction with the CRPD in various sectors[16]. According to a report by MoLSA in 2016, it was noted that Ethiopia has reviewed proclamations on employment, building and construction, the Criminal Law, as well as the National Social Protection Policy as regards to the obligations of the CRPD. It also made a labour proclamation amendment that makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate based on disability in recruitment and promotion. This amendment gives the right to persons with disabilities to compete on an equal basis with others and helps them in increasing employment opportunities.

MoLSA being the leading government agency for the implementation of the CRPD, has also made efforts towards including persons with disabilities in the social protection programmes, including that of the PSNP (such as providing direct supports to persons with disabilities as previously mentioned). Besides, Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) has mentioned "the establishment of social protection system where persons with disabilities will be equally participating and benefiting from the overall development interventions of the country"[17].

Interviews conducted with the two DPOs implementing CSF II granted project logically had adequate policies, strategies and practically demonstrated commitments towards disability inclusion. Both implementing partners also provide capacity development support and networking opportunities to a wide range of CSOs and DPOs that work with persons with disabilities.

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[16] Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2016). "Supplementary information on the UNCRPD initial report of Ethiopia to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".

[17] Government of Ethiopia/Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2016). "Supplementary information on the UNCRPD initial report of Ethiopia to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".



## Opportunities and challenges for disability inclusion

There are attempts being made to include disability, in interventions undertaken by EU implementing partners. For example, PSNP's Social Development Taskforce, which is composed of various implementing partners of the programme, has explicitly stated that persons with physical and intellectual disabilities will unconditionally access the benefits (cash or food)[18]. This is reflected in the implementation manual for the programme as well as other technical guidelines and reference documents (such as in the PSNP's Result Based Management Guideline, Gender Mainstreaming Guideline, Technical Committees and Taskforces Management Guideline etc.). Except for the unconditional transfer provided to persons with disabilities, disability inclusion is not widely addressed in the programme.

As per the reviews made and interviews conducted, the issue of accessibility has not been considered so far in the PSNP, even though the programme involve infrastructure development with the aim of building sustainable community assets and increase access to social services in the targeted communities.

As a good example the project titled "Engaging the Justice Sector for Good Governance", executed by Ethiopia Young Lawyers Association and implemented in seven regions (sub-national administrations) included persons with disabilities across its actions. The project provided capacity development support through citizenship participation and awareness creation, trainings, research, policy dialogue and advocacy regarding access to legal information and legal aid in which persons with disabilities were among the key targets. The project has also created synergies with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Addis Ababa as well as the Ministry of Justice (recently changed its name to the Federal Attorney General) with the aim of enhancing legal aid assistance to different groups of the community and their institutions, particularly the vulnerable ones, among which persons with disabilities are included.

As per the information obtained from the two DPOs, which received grant from the CSF II, the fund has helped them to implement activities in the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, including accessibility. Even if infrastructure development was not part of its support, CSF II directly impacted the works of DPOs to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, including the issue of accessibility in public service centres (schools and health facilities etc.). NOVIB and ENDAN also indicated that

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[18] Ethiopia's PSNP. Terms of Reference for the Social Development Taskforce.

they did assessments on disability inclusiveness in the education sector, the employment/labour market and physical infrastructure design and regulation standards. The outcomes were used as a basis for advocacy and influencing efforts towards improving infrastructural accessibility in key public service provision centres. On the other hand, they also indicated the shortage of financial and technical resources to gauge small-scale projects implemented successfully, and this has made the coverage of programme limited compared to the prevalence of the problem.

Challenges on how to improve disability inclusion among EU implementing partners in Ethiopia are several. There is a need to reinforce the commitments and put in place accountability mechanisms among the donors and the partners, to tackle negative perception and attitude towards people with disabilities in the society, provide support to implementing the legislative, policy and strategic provisions for persons with disabilities and strengthen evidence-based decision making.



Training on disability data for CARE, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and Tala and Jandab municipalities' staff. Held in Gondar, Amhara region, from 4 to 6 December 2018.

## 4. Organisations of persons with disabilities

### Participation to EU programming and planning

There are practices in place at the EU Delegation to promote the participation of DPOs in consultations and programmatic implementation, specifically shown in the CSF II. The DPOs who accessed funds were able to take part in consultative workshops and meetings with all other implementing partners and the government regarding disability inclusion and rights of persons with disabilities.

There were no specific engagements with DPOs at the design of the CSF II fund, but a session was arranged by the EU Delegation to provide clarifications for potential applicants during the call for proposals.

A major obstacle to the meaningful and effective participation of DPOs in dialogue with the EU Delegation is with undoubtedly represented by the lack of capacity of the Ethiopian organisations. As acknowledged by Bridging the Gap II, consultation with DPOs indicates that there are significant shortcomings in terms of organizational capacity, technical knowledge as well as lack of resources in general.

CSOs which received funds from the EU through the CSF II reflected that there were partnerships among the various CSOs grantees through consultative meetings to review the implementation of projects and sharing and dissemination of information and practices. There were no specific exchanges though around cross-cutting issues, such as disability inclusion, gender, or thematic issues such as climate change.

In general terms, it can be claimed that the EU in Ethiopia has been active in funding disability-specific projects through NGOs and DPOs and initiated in the forthcoming CSF III action document, more commitment to mainstreaming disability, which hopefully will be reflected across its cooperation and among implementing partners in Ethiopia[19].

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[19] Venäläinen, R. and Tadele, A. Baseline Assessment of Development Partners and CSOs on disability Inclusion – Final Report. 2018.

## Annex I: List of Documents Referred

European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe

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National Indicative Programme for Ethiopia (2014-2020)

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[European Commission, European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe, COM\(2010\) 636 final, 15 Nov. 2010](#)

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Engaging the Justice Sector for Good Governance: Enhancing Justice Sector Stakeholders Capacity on Rights Information, Legal Aid, Resource Center and Legislative (Project Document)

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EU CSF II Action Fiche for Ethiopia (2009)

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[EU CSF II Grant Application Dossier \(2015\)](#)

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PSNP, Gender, Social Development and Nutrition Mainstreaming Training Guide (2015)

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PSNP, Terms of Reference for the Social Development Task Force

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EU and Government of Ethiopia, National Indicative Plan (2014-2020) for Ethiopia

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MoLSA, Supplementary information on the UNCRPD initial report of Ethiopia to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2016)

# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>ADA</b>	Austrian Development Agency
<b>BtG-II</b>	Bridging the Gap II
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSF</b>	Civil Society Fund
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>ENDAN</b>	Ethiopian National Disability Action Network
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU Delegation</b>	European Union Delegation
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>DPO</b>	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
<b>MFF</b>	Multi-Annual Financial Framework
<b>MoALR</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Resources
<b>MoLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>NIP</b>	Ethiopian National Indicative Programme
<b>NSA</b>	Non-State Actors
<b>NOVIB</b>	Network of Visually Impaired and the Blind
<b>PSNP</b>	Productive Safety Nets Programme
<b>TAU</b>	Technical Assistance Unit
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

# Paraguay

# 1. Introduction

European Union Delegation (EU Delegation) to Paraguay's strategy is laid out in the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2014-2020[1]. The overall strategic objective of the EU in its relation with Paraguay is to “contribute to its social, economic and institutional development, to promote regional integration on the South American continent and to develop partnerships with the country for bilateral and global issues of common interest”.

The programme was allocated a total budget of €168 million and the Government of Paraguay and the EU together decided to focus this joint work on four priority sectors, in line with the National Development Plan 2030 Paraguay.

- **Education** (€85 m): Programmes will be focused on improving access to and the quality of education in order to strengthen human capital and reduce inequality and poverty.
- **Development of the private sector** (€20 m): Improve the business climate so that it is favourable to trade and investments, enhance the capabilities of organisations to prepare and execute policies, and improve the private sector's involvement in policy design.
- **Social protection** (€48 m): A Paraguay that is stable and socially inclusive. Programmes in this sector will focus on the design and implementation of policies that promote a fairer distribution of wealth, increase social cohesion and reduce poverty.
- **Democracy, participation and strengthening institutions** (€10 m): Strengthen democratic institutions in Paraguay by means of, among other initiative, implementing recommendations made by the 2013 EU election observation mission.

Paraguay developed the Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Paraguay 2030 (National Development Plan Paraguay 2030) in 2014 and even though it was developed ahead of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals; the plan has been adjusted to reflect the SDGs. The plan has three key strategic objectives:

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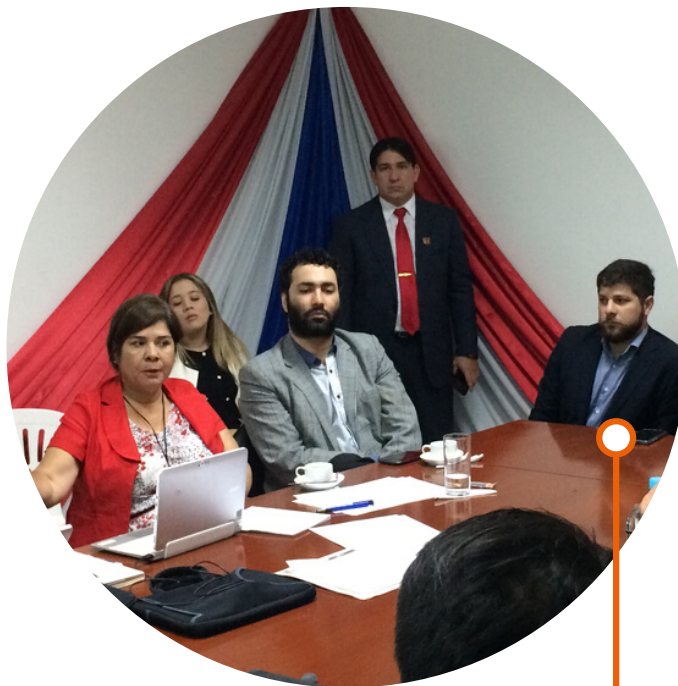
[1] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multi-annual-indicative-programm-mip-2014-2020-paraguay\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multi-annual-indicative-programm-mip-2014-2020-paraguay_en)

1. Poverty reduction and social development,
2. Inclusive economic growth,
3. Integration of Paraguay in the world.

Each strategic objective integrates four transversal approaches:

1. Equal opportunities,
2. Efficient and transparent governance,
3. Territorial ordering and development,
4. Environmental sustainability.

Paraguay has experienced a decade of quite robust economic growth, averaging 4,5% annually. However, the improvement in the Human Development Index have been moderate, though extreme poverty decreased from 18% in 2011 to 10% in 2013. Despite this, inequalities in income distribution remain high, which indicates that the poorest part of the population have not proportionally benefited from this economic growth.



Meeting among SENADIS, AECID Paraguay, Paraguayan Government representatives and CONADIS-Civil Society. Held in Asunción on 2 March 2018.



## Situation of persons with disabilities

According to the baseline assessment made by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) in the frame of Bridging the Gap-II, Paraguay is increasingly committed to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Paraguay ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008, and in 2012, the government created the National Secretariat for Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities, (Secretaria Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de las Personas con Discapacidad – SENADIS), with the aim to improve the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities into public policy. SENADIS has the mission of guaranteeing equal opportunities, social inclusion, respect for human rights, accessibility and social participation of persons with disabilities - with a view to improving their quality of life and consequently that of their families and the environment.

Paraguay submitted its first State report to the CRPD Committee in 2011, which was reviewed in 2013[2]. Several concluding recommendations were made across most articles, which indicates that the country is doing much progress but that more efforts are needed, particularly around accessibility, non-discrimination and access to education, health and employment. In 2015, the report of the Special Rapporteur on Paraguay further confirmed these progresses and challenges[3].

Paraguay does not yet have demographic or administrative information on persons with disabilities, disaggregated by age, gender, or other parameters. Although the 2012 National Population and Housing Census incorporated the list of questions from the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, the low overall coverage achieved by the census has impeded the use and dissemination of its results. There is also a great shortage of information on disability in administrative records.

A National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2015-2030 was adopted in 2015, which designed inline with the CRPD and the international recommendations on Human Rights that Paraguay has ratified. It is also in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and articulates the Paraguay 2030 National Plan for Development, under which the Paraguayan Executive Branch coordinates sectoral actions with different governmental institutions, as well as with the various levels of government, civil society, private sector, and Legislative and Judicial Powers.

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[2] [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PRY&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PRY&Lang=EN)

[3] <http://acnudh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/G1643745.pdf>

## Objective of the country assessment

The three country snapshots in the overall study are aiming to get an initial understanding of how EU Delegations contribute to the implementation of the CRPD and promote disability inclusion across their implementing partners of projects granted through call for proposals.

## Methodology

The methodology applied in getting a picture of the EU Delegation to Paraguay in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities reflects the overall methodology of the study. A desk review of EU Delegation MIP and main country development plans were made, and complemented by a review of the disability policies and relevant CRPD reports. A number of call for proposals from EU were selected to have been made to collect secondary qualitative data, which was complemented with primary data collected through key informant interviews with Delegation staff, implementing partners and DPOs.

A number of granted project proposals were also assessed to understand if and how disability inclusion was understood and designed by implementing partners.



First National Meeting  
of Bridging the Gap.  
Held in Encarnación on  
26-27 October 2018.

## 2. Disability inclusion

### EU Delegation commitment to disability inclusion

The EU Delegation in Paraguay is guided by the MIP 2014-2020, which defines the strategic collaboration with the government of Paraguay. There is a strong commitment to both economic growth and to support the public sector, primarily in education and social protection. In parallel, the Delegation also provides support to civil society and governance through the CSO-LA and EIDHR programmes. A human rights based approach should underpin the implementation of the MIP.

The MIP 2014-2020 does not make specific reference to the rights of persons with disabilities; it refers to vulnerable groups or the most vulnerable but does not disentangle some of the diversity of the needs and requirements of these groups. Information gathered from the Delegation show that staff is committed to promote disability inclusion and provides support to a few large NGO disability service providers, particularly during the previous DCI programming. In the previous MIP there were specific calls for capacity building and improving services for persons with disabilities, while the on-going MIP focus more on governance and youth. There is room for strengthening and making disability inclusion more systematic across all programmes and funding mechanisms in order to reflect a twin-track approach and better ensure persons with disabilities benefit from the Delegation cooperation programmes.

The Delegation is supporting the Paraguay government in the education sector through budget support to improve access to primary and secondary education and to reduce inequalities in access and increase completion of education. The support has also a component to enhancing quality of education and strengthening the overall education system. While the focus on inequalities is key for inclusive education, there are limited findings that show how the Delegation promotes a disability inclusive education system to ensure access to education for children with disabilities. There are estimations that only 36% of children with disabilities between 6 and 18 years of age go to school in Paraguay, in comparison with 82% of children without disabilities[4]. At the moment the Delegation does not request the government to

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[4] Secretaría Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de las Personas con Discapacidad (SENADIS). Resumen del documento: Aproximación a la realidad de las personas con discapacidad, 2014, Asunción.

disaggregate data on disability or develop other inclusive education indicators due to limited baseline data and disability indicators which makes it challenging to introduce this in addition to more basic education data that the country is already collecting. Reports from civil society in 2018 highlight the lack of data on children with disabilities access and inclusion into school an important obstacle to improve educational outcomes for this group. Fundación Saraki estimates that more than 85% of children with disabilities in school age did not attend any school in 2012[5].

## Capacities and resources for disability inclusion

The EU Delegation is coordinating with Bridging the Gap-I and II in Paraguay and there is a focal point on disability since several years back with experience and knowledge on disability. The EU Delegation consults with civil society ahead of calls for proposals in the EIDHR and CSO-LA, and includes organisations that works with persons with disabilities but could strengthen their consultations and relationship with of persons with disabilities (DPOs).

There is an interest among the EU Delegation staff to build internal capacity on disability inclusive development but there are competing priorities and limited resources to realise this. Until now the roll out of the Human Rights Based Approach capacity building Staff would prefer training that is accessible in country and adapted to their specific situation and challenges as a small delegation and welcome support from Bridging the Gap-II project.

## Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals

Among the six calls for proposals targeting grants (CSO-LA and EIDHR) accessed for Paraguay between 2014-2018, one call was specifically designed to promote the participation and access of marginalised and discriminated populations (including persons with disabilities) to the 2018 national elections. Another CSO-LA call in 2018

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[5] CRPD Committee evaluation on Paraguay alternative report. Situation of persons with disabilities in Paraguay 2013/2017. Submitted by Fundación Saraki. [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PRY&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=PRY&Lang=EN)

analysis, and description of target group or in the indicators or suggested data disaggregation in the logical framework.

Discussions with organisations implementing EU grants reflected this finding but also showed various initiatives towards improving disability inclusion. These were not driven by requirements of donors though but internal strategic commitments. For example, Plan International Paraguay, that has implemented EU grants, recently initiated a process of mainstreaming disability in its programmes as a result of an international strategy review, which highlighted the lack of participation of children and youth with disabilities. One example that further encouraged them in this direction was a recent contract with AECID on vocational training. AECID had requested them to ensure the inclusion of youth with disabilities. None of the organisations interviewed for the study had been requested or encouraged by EU grant mechanisms to provide disaggregated information on the access of persons with disabilities to their programmes or other inclusion indicators.

This was further echoed by organisations working with persons with disabilities and DPOs. While some of the organisations were consulted ahead of the calls for proposals issued by the EU Delegation and did receive grants, they all would like to see that EU funding mechanisms better reflect the rights of persons with disabilities. The DPOs consulted in the study further highlighted that the requirements to obtain funds from the EU were often difficult to meet.

## **Empowerment of persons with disabilities**

There are several positive developments in Paraguay in the disability sector, such as the adoption of the National Disability Plan 2015-2020. What DPOs and other civil society tell however is the lack of translating policies into concrete actions and improvement in service delivery level. To ensure accountability of policy implementation, there is a need for empowered persons with disabilities represented by well-organised DPOs, rights holders that can claim their rights towards decision makers. While there are a few strong organisations that work for the rights of persons with disabilities, the voice and representation of persons with disabilities themselves, particularly at local level remains limited. So far, the EU grants for CSO-LA as well as EIDHR are not accessible to most collectives of DPOs; they do not have sufficient organisational capacity to implement such large grants.

Some of the bigger civil society organisations work closely with, and also employ persons with disabilities, such as Fundación Saraki, who is also a strong voice when it comes to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly those with

intellectual disabilities. There is also a National Commission on Disability (Comisión Nacional de Discapacidad – CONADIS), which group together organisations of, and for persons with disabilities and key government ministries, to improve the participation of persons with disabilities in public policy development and implementation. According to information gathered from DPOs consulted in this study, CONADIS could work more on ensuring inclusion of diverse DPOs and also build mechanisms to strengthen capacities of self-representation at local levels.

## Accessibility policies

The EU Delegation in Paraguay is situated in a newly constructed building that has a good physical access to its offices. There is so far no accessibility policy or plan in place, and according to staff there is room for improvement when it comes to accessibility of information and consultation mechanisms.

Among some of the DPOs consulted, their main difficulty to access the EU Delegation is mostly due to transportation challenges in the city. They also mentioned not being aware or knowing how to access information about events or call for proposals being issued by the delegation.

Workshop 'Guidelines for inclusive cooperation', organised in collaboration of AECID and the European Union delegation in Paraguay. Held in Asunción on 2 and 3 July 2019.





## 3. EU implementing partners

During the assessment of EU Delegation in Paraguay, representatives of three DPOs were interviewed together with eight organisations who either were currently receiving EU funds or had received funds previously.

### Organisations' policies and strategies

Among the eight organisations that had received funds through EU grants, four mentioned to have policy that included persons with disabilities, Fundación Paraguaya, Fundación Sarakí, Plan International and AECID. The other four had not developed any explicit tools or strategies on disability inclusion; however they did occasionally have specific activities that would target persons with disabilities.

The Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (OEI) just recently published a guide on equity in education in Ibero-America, which comprehensively addresses inclusive education, including for children with disabilities[6]. The OEI also provides technical Assistance to the Ministry of Education in Paraguay supported by EU funds, and they have a few actions linked to inclusive education.

The organisations that so far had not mainstreamed disability raised challenges such as budget constraints, project based income, and lack of human resources or being prepared to work on this issue. They all welcomed capacity building and could foresee to develop partnership with DPOs, acknowledging that DPOs need more organisational capacities and support to overcome internal difficulties and divisions. None of the implementing partner organisations had been requested by donors to mainstream disability. Some organisations considered that other civil society organisations, with more disability specific services, were better placed to provide support to persons with disabilities.

### Opportunities and challenges for disability inclusion

The study showed a few good examples of civil society working towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Both Plan International and Fundación Paraguaya

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[6] <https://www.oei.es/uploads/files/news/Education/1213/guia-inclusiva-ingles-5.pdf>

presented institutional changes to systematically ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their programmes and projects. AECID, through encouraging Plan International to ensure that a certain percentage of the vocational training students should be young people with disabilities, shows that there is both willingness and resources available to learn and improve.

Fundación Paraguaya works on poverty elimination through supporting schools to be self-sustainable and build capacity of families to get out of poverty. Five years ago, the organisation realised that they did not reach all marginalised groups and that particularly persons with disabilities did not access their programmes. Step by step they adapted their Poverty Stoplight, a tool that allows families to be protagonists of their own stories of elimination of poverty, to be accessible to persons with disabilities[7]. In addition to empowering people, the data collected through the Poverty Stoplight has proven to be useful for communities, organisations, companies, projects and governments. By testing ways to adapt their microcredit programmes and simplifying some procedures they now have regular applications also from persons with disabilities. They also trained what they call 'impulsores' that were responsible to raise awareness among their own offices and those involved in providing microcredits, on how to ensure inclusion. Internally, Fundación Paraguaya has also put in place specific targets for each office to encourage them to reach and include more persons with disabilities.

AECID, though its technical office in Asunción, is the implementing partner of Bridging the Gap-II in Paraguay. AECID has recently included disability in its fifth plan on development cooperation 2018-2020 and the head of cooperation in Paraguay is committed to promote disability inclusion in the new bilateral agreement with the government. The implementation of the EU funded Bridging the Gap project has had a positive effect on the technical office where several of the staff has engaged in capacity building through online training offered by AECID. The commitment is further reflected in that some of the grants to civil society encourages disability inclusion (see earlier on Plan International) and in a closer relationship with DPOs.

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[7] <https://www.povertystoplight.org>



## 4. Organisations of persons with disabilities

There are various NGOs that are working for the rights of persons with disabilities in Paraguay, or who are disability service providers. Self-representative organisations of persons with disabilities are, particularly outside of the capital, struggling to build a unified voice. Information from discussions with DPOs suggests a need for long-term capacity development to support these DPOs. Particularly at local level there seems to be very limited self-representation and an absence of programmes and funds implemented for this purpose. The civil society and EIDHR grants provided by the EU are not accessible for these collectives and DPOs at this stage. Another type of mechanisms and funding, perhaps initially managed by other civil society organisations or human rights network could be developed in close coordination with SENADIS and CONADIS.

### Participation to EU programming and planning

Organisations working for the rights of persons with disabilities and disability service providers reported to be invited to consultations together with the wider civil society at the EU Delegation in the planning of new calls for proposal. The EU Delegation has the intention to consult with as much diversity of civil society as possible and therefore invites larger civil society networks or organisations that can represent smaller organisations to be more efficient. There is a risk though when it comes to persons with disabilities as they might be less formally organised, particularly women with disabilities or people from more marginalised collectives, such as deaf persons or those with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities. This was raised in discussion with the DPOs, and they recommended the EU Delegation to pay more attention and wider promotion of information to reach also DPOs that might not access consultations.

Competition for scarce funding among DPOs as well as among wider NGOs sector can exclude those smaller organisations that are not as visible or that do not have resources to take part in meetings organised in the capital. Persons with disabilities face additional barriers in terms of transportation costs, accompaniment and above all organisational capacities to succeed in obtaining funds from the EU. Other funding mechanisms and/or capacity development resources could be developed in order to support DPOs to be empowered and equal participants in the development of an inclusive society in Paraguay.

## 5. Conclusion

While being limited in its scope, the analysis of the EU Delegation to Paraguay's contribution to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in funding mechanisms has both opportunities and challenges. The analysis suggests that a more systematic approach to disability inclusion could be applied, in order to encourage and support implementing partners to better mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities. There is a good momentum in Paraguay, but limited capacity and organisation of DPOs is a concern that should be addressed among the donor community in coordination with SENADIS and CONADIS. Evidence show that when DPOs are organised and have the capacity to claim their rights and start holding the government to account, wider systemic changes can happen. This require the EU to look at ways of empowering DPOs across their funding mechanisms and ensure that all funding streams address disability inclusion.

There were strong recommendations from most organisations included in the study that all relevant EU funding should require disaggregation of data on women, men and children with disabilities and that persons with disabilities should equally benefit from all projects and funding provided by all development donors. There should also be better monitoring of disability inclusion among both donors and organisation receiving funds, with transparent reporting on progress.

# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>AECID</b>	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation)
<b>CONADIS</b>	Comisión Nacional de Discapacidad
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSO-LA</b>	Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EIDHR</b>	European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU Delegation</b>	European Union Delegation
<b>DPO</b>	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
<b>MIP</b>	Multiannual Indicative Programme
<b>SENADIS</b>	Secretaria Nacional por los Derechos Humanos de las Personas con Discapacidad

# Sudan

# 1. Introduction

Since South Sudan declared its independence on July 2011, Sudan was faced with an important political and economic impact. Big parts of its territory and oil revenues were lost, valuing up to 75% of the revenues. The split between the countries also created high tension and a number of outstanding issues such as border demarcation, disputed territories and economic arrangements, and compensations remain to be solved. Since 2013, the EU has started to tackle more of the internal issues in Sudan, and developed a policy that reflects more of the national political, security and socio-economic challenges, and its position within the region and beyond in terms of migration.

A Special Measure to support the people of Sudan (for an amount of €100 million) was adopted by the European Commission in April 2016. The measure is channelled through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and is accompanied by the Short Term Strategy, which provides the first roadmap of EU support to the people of Sudan since 2011[1].

EU Delegation in Sudan built the short-term strategy in coordination with other EU Member States and “focuses on areas where either the EU or Member States or both are considered to have a comparative advantage, which crucially include addressing some of the underlying governance and conflict issues”.

Three sectors have been identified for the strategy:

- Support to basic services (education and health),
- Support to livelihoods and food security,
- Support to civil society, local governance and peace building.

The Special Measure prioritizes populations who are destitute, deprived of livelihoods and socio-economic opportunities, and at risk of being pushed into irregular migration and displacement and/or being abused by human traffickers and smugglers.

Due to non-ratification of the revisions of the Cotonou Agreement dated 2005 and 2010, Sudan lost access to programmable bilateral funding under the 10th and 11th European Development Fund (EDF). However, it can still benefit from EDF financing

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[1] [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/ad-decision1-sudan-support-measure-2016\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/ad-decision1-sudan-support-measure-2016_en.pdf)

originating either from the reserve of the 11th EDF or from regional indicative programmes. Sudan is also a beneficiary of funding from the EU's Food Security and Non-State Actors Programmes, the Global Public Goods and Challenges programmes, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. Sudan also benefits from funding under the African Peace Facility.

The country is undermined by poverty and inequality: according to data of the 2014-15 National Baseline Household Budget Survey conducted by Sudan's Central Bureau of Statistics, Sudan has a poverty rate of 36.1% with heavy regional disparities, between urban and rural areas, between nomadic and sedentary communities. Almost 1 in 4 persons in Sudan live in extreme poverty[2]. Agriculture and livestock play important roles in the economy of the country: it is estimated that agriculture contributes 35-40% of the Gross Domestic Product, with livestock accounting for 50% of the production.

Conflict and insecurity remain engrained in Darfur, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile with important impact on the population, such as displacement, restricted humanitarian access, sexual and gender-based violence and peace is very fragile in the East. Some common causes of the conflicts and violence are political and socio-economic exclusion by a central elite, exploitation of extractive resources, and inter-communal clashes caused by competition over land and other natural resources exacerbated by environmental and climatic factors. The very recent uprising and protests among the population and the fall of the government is a result of these challenges. These difficulties and challenges equally affects persons with disabilities, who might be at a higher risk during violence and displacements and also suffer from additional discrimination due to stigma and lack of access to basic services.



Bridging the Gap's launch in Sudan. Held in Khartoum on 27 February 2018.

[2] African Development Bank Group, Statistics Department. Summary Results of the 2014-2015 National Baseline Household Budget Survey, June 2018. Available at: [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Brief-Sudan\\_Poverty\\_Profile\\_2014-2015\\_-\\_Key\\_Findings.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Brief-Sudan_Poverty_Profile_2014-2015_-_Key_Findings.pdf)

## Situation of persons with disabilities

The most reliable data on the prevalence and situation of persons with disabilities can be found in the 2008 population census, which says that 5% of the population has some kind of disability. This figure appears to be relatively low if comparing to the estimation provided by the World Disability report of 15% of the global population having disability.

According to the 2008 census data, 52.2% of persons with disabilities were male and 47.8% is female. The proportion of persons with disabilities was higher in rural areas (66.7%) than in urban areas (26.3%) and the percentage of persons with disabilities among the nomadic communities is 7%. Taking in consideration the distribution of persons with disabilities by States, South Darfur had the highest rate of persons with disabilities (9.5%), followed by North Kordofan (9.1%) and Al Gezira (8,5%)[3].

A study implemented by Action on Disability and Development (ADD) International and Ahafd University for Women in 2013 indicates that persons with disabilities have important difficulties to access education and employment compared to their peers. The study indicated that over 50% of the working age population of persons with disabilities are unemployed and 42% stated they did not have any regular income. 77% of the population in the study had less than secondary level of education. Around 10% of persons with disabilities were illiterate[4].

Sudan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2009 and submitted its first State report to the CRPD Committee in 2013. This was then re-issued because of technical reasons in 2017 and reviewed by the CRPD Committee in 2018. Sudan adopted the Persons with Disabilities Act in 2017 and the Children's Act in 2010 and established the National Council for Disabilities in 2009, further on being restructured in 2010. Sudan also amended a number of laws to be aligned to the CRPD. All these are showing some degree on commitments by the Sudanese government but much remains to be translated into practice, and in the daily life of persons with disabilities, access to basic services remain a huge obstacle.

Some of the concluding recommendations from the CRPD Committee in 2018 concern the importance of ensuring that the new disability legislation covers all groups of disabilities, including those with psychosocial disabilities that are currently

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[3] Central Bureau of Statistics and Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation. 5th Sudan population and housing census, 2008.

[4] Eltayeb, S. and Khalifa, D.S. Socio-economic Status of People with Disabilities in Sudan. ADD International and Ahfad University for Women. 2013.

excluded. Discrimination of persons with disabilities should also be introduced in the law, including monitoring and sanctions mechanisms. Another key concern with resulting observation is the need to improve protection of the rights of women and girls with disabilities across all areas of life, including right to sexual and reproductive health, education, and decent job. Overall the CRPD committee encouraged the Sudanese government to make progress in both laws and policies to ensure equal access of persons with disabilities to basic services as well as protection of refugees and displaced persons with disabilities[5].

## Objective of the country assessment

The three country snapshots in the overall study are aiming to get an initial understanding of how EU Delegations contribute to the implementation of the CRPD and promote disability inclusion across their implementing partners of projects granted through call for proposals.

## Methodology

The methodology applied in the assessment of the EU Delegation to Sudan's work on including persons with disabilities in their development work reflects the overall methodology of the study, with the difference that due to the security situation, the in-country visit had to be cancelled. This delayed the country assessment and resulted in fewer interviews and consecutively the outcome has to be interpreted with some caution as the scope of discussions and feedback from implementing partners and DPOs were much reduced. Interviews with EU Delegation representatives and a few their EU implementing partners were made over phone and Skype calls, and the Italian Agency for International Cooperation organised a focus group discussion with representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs). A desk review of EU special support measures and corresponding strategy and other documents, a review of the disability policies and relevant CRPD reports together with other relevant studies and documentation complemented the key informant interviews.

EIDHR and CSO-LA call for proposals together with 15 of granted project proposals were also assessed to understand if and how disability inclusion was understood and addressed by EU implementing partners.

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[5] [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=SDN&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=SDN&Lang=EN)



## 2. Disability inclusion

### EU Delegation commitment to disability inclusion

The EU Delegation in Sudan is as mentioned earlier guided by the Special Measure and Short term Strategy through a centralised cooperation (the Delegation does not channel any funds to the Sudanese Government). The European Commission manages all the grants and contracts directly at the Delegation level via simplified procedures or often direct management of grants to partners. Sudan also has access to the Civil Society and Local Authorities (CSO-LA) and EIDHR funding mechanism. The EU Delegation supports the civil society in Sudan, which remains rather weak and is still often perceived as an obstacle by the government.

The Special Measure and Short term Strategy does not make specific reference to the rights of persons with disabilities, with the exception of mentioning children with disabilities among the most vulnerable groups with higher risk of drop out from school or even accessing education. Information gathered from the Delegation though show that staff is committed to promote disability inclusion and there is a willingness to invest more in both learning and understanding which approaches can be used to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their work. While there is no designated focal person on disability, it falls under the portfolio of human rights and governance programme and the delegation do fund directly some actions of DPOs, such as the Sudanese Unions of Physically Disabled. The feedback from the interviews with Delegation staff suggest that a systematic disability inclusion across the different programmes, funding processes and tools and can be reinforced to make sure that persons with disabilities equally benefit from the Delegation cooperation programmes.

### Capacities and resources for disability inclusion

The EU Delegation is coordinating with Bridging the Gap-II and the Italian Agency for International Cooperation and there are exchanges around the projects funded by the Delegation on access to employment and vocational training. The EU Delegation consults with civil society ahead of calls for proposals in the EIDHR and CSO-LA and

does make efforts to reach out to organisations of persons with disabilities but admits that they might not always be successful. There is an acknowledgment that DPOs are still weak and they face additional difficulties to get to meetings because of costs and transportation barriers. Despite this, so far the Delegation has not put in place reasonable accommodation measures to improve more participation by DPOs.

There is an interest among the EU Delegation staff to build internal capacity on disability inclusive development. Some staff participated to the Human Rights Based Approach training that has a strong component of gender equality but said that disability inclusion was not extensively covered. Staff interviewed for this study would prefer training that is accessible in country and adapted to their specific situation and challenges and welcome support from Bridging the Gap-II project.

## **Inclusion of persons with disabilities in calls for proposals**

Among the four calls for proposals during the period 2014-2018 under the CSO-LA and EIDHR that this study looked at, two calls (EIDHR 2014 and CSA-LO 2017) made reference to persons with disabilities as one of the priority groups to take into consideration. On the other hand, none of the four calls encouraged participation or accessibilities and there was an absence of requirement for disability-disaggregated data or other indicators that could account for the impact on persons with disabilities.

Among the 15 granted projects that this study could access, one was granted to an organisation of persons with disabilities, while another one for disability specific interventions. Nine of the projects did not mention or include persons with disabilities, while four projects were somehow inclusive of disability. According to information provided by EU staff at the Delegation, the forthcoming EIDHR call for proposal might target young peoples access to employment and young people with disabilities will be part of the main target group.

Discussions with two organisations implementing projects funded via the EU Trust Fund for Africa in Sudan reflected partially this finding, and confirmed that the initial Action Document was not requiring the inclusion of persons with disabilities, but the EU Delegation in discussion with the partners had requested them later on in the design phase to ensure that persons with disabilities were taken into account in the project action. These requests were positively taken on-board by both GIZ and UNIDO in their projects supporting Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

## **Spotlight 1 - EU supporting disability inclusive TVET in collaboration with GIZ in Sudan**

GIZ is implementing a BMZ commissioned programme on improving employment opportunities in Sudan, with a particular focus on TVET. The project is titled 'Vocational Training and Food Security for Refugees and Host Communities in Eastern Sudan' and was in 2017 reinforced with a grant contribution from the EU Trust Fund via the EU Delegation in Sudan. The programme has three main components:

- 1.** Vocational training and introducing new certified training products and curricula in coordination with the Supreme Council on Vocational Training and Apprenticeship that better respond to the specific context.
- 2.** Private sector development through working with different business organisations and unions to connect companies and enterprises with vocational training centre.
- 3.** Employment promotion through supporting and reinforcing employment centres management by Department of Labour. It also includes organising job fairs to match job seekers and enterprises.

During the discussion between GIZ and the EU Delegation in Sudan for the design of the action, the inclusion of persons with disabilities was strongly encouraged by the EU Delegation. GIZ was positive to look at how their programme could become more inclusive and succeeded in integrating a few persons with disabilities in the first graduation of vocational trainees. When analysing the barriers to the low number included, they identified a few key areas where they could improve, such as better targeting of information to persons with disabilities using other channels, looking how to adapt training courses or identifying additional skills development that would better suit the needs of persons with disabilities and continue to develop closer partnerships with DPOs. So far collaboration has been established with the Women with Disabilities Association.

GIZ is currently involved in five other programmes supporting employment and vocational training and has created a working group that will exchange on experiences. In addition, a wider working group with other development agencies, involved in employment creation and TVET including the EU, is set-up and in both these groups, GIZ plans to bring in exchanges around disability inclusion.

Several of the DPOs that participated to this study expressed a concern about that the requirements to obtain funds from the EU were often difficult to meet. While a couple of organisations had participated to some consultation meeting organised by the EU Delegation in Sudan, this was not considered a general practice and many of the DPOs were not aware of such a mechanism.

## Empowerment of persons with disabilities

According to information gathered from Bridging the Gap-II in Sudan and from the focus group with DPOs, the disability movement in Sudan require much support and organisational capacity building. While much advancement at the legal and policy level have been made, their voice remain weak in the development sector and in policy implementation level.

So far, the EU grants for CSO-LA as well as EIDHR are not accessible to most collectives of DPOs; they do not have sufficient organisational capacity to comply with the requirements of the EU calls and would have challenges to manage the scale of such grants. Only one DPO among the ones interviewed for this study had succeeded in receiving a grant, through support by an international development NGO.

Smaller grants, which can support DPOs to build up their administrative and operational procedures, are necessary and the recent small grants scheme provided by Bridging the Gap-II project can be an interesting initiative to learn from. They have put in place a mechanism where DPOs received support in constructing and designing the project, as well as receiving training on administrative processes, as part of the granting scheme.

## Accessibility policies

Staff interviewed at the EU Delegation in Sudan for this study said that the EU Delegation is not accessible and that so far there is no accessibility policy, nor a plan to develop one, in place. Efforts have been made to make the consultation processes with civil society more accessible via on-line consultation and reaching out also to those not living close to Khartoum and hopefully also more diverse civil society organisations. It was not possible to have any data though on how many DPOs had been participating to consultations during this interview.

Among some of the DPOs consulted, they also mentioned that they were not informed or did not know how to access information about events or call for proposals being issued by the Delegation.

## 3. EU implementing partners

During the assessment of EU Delegation in Sudan, two implementing partners (GIZ implementing two different actions on TVET and UNIDO one) were interviewed over a Skype call. Unfortunately none of the implementing partners of the EIDHS or CSO-LA grants could be included due to limited time because of the increased tension and deteriorating security situation in the country. Six DPOs and the National Council of Persons with Disabilities participated to a focus group discussion organised by Bridging the Gap-II project in Khartoum.

### Organisations' policies and strategies

GIZ, as mentioned in Spotlight 1, is implementing a large programme on vocational training and food security in Sudan. The EU funding is complementing this programme and because of the Delegations requirement to make sure that persons with disabilities can access the vocational training component, GIZ has already made adaptations and started developing partnership with DPOs.

GIZ has over the years developed considerable experience in inclusive vocational training and recently published a compilation of good practices of inclusive employment from five countries and a guide on making employment inclusive of persons with disabilities[6][7].

In Sudan they are implementing several projects on vocational training and to support the disability inclusion aspect, they plan to bring this into the working groups that have been created across GIZ projects but also with other agencies working on vocational training and employment, including the EU Delegation.

UNIDO in Sudan has so far more limited experience on disability inclusion in their programmes but is positive to strengthen their understanding and adapt their projects to be more accessible to persons with disabilities. They welcome support from both DPOs and others on how to realise these adaptations and ensure better access of persons with disabilities to their programmes.

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[6] GIZ. Sector Project Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. 'Including Persons with Disabilities in Employment Promotion'. 2019.

[7] GIZ. Sector Project Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. 'Disability-inclusive Employment Promotion: Lessons learned from five GIZ projects'. 2019.

In general, the implementing partners welcomed capacity building and were interested in developing partnership with DPOs and other expert organisations. This was the first time both partners had been encouraged specifically to make sure the persons with disabilities are included and appreciated more guidance but also suggested that the EU should require specific indicators on disability so that the impact could be better monitored.

## 4. Organisations of persons with disabilities

Due to the limitation of this study being conducted on distance, it was not possible to get a good understanding of the capacity and organisation of DPOs. Feedback from a number of DPOs during the focus group discussion indicate that the movement is still quite weak and with important needs of organisational capacity building to be more representative and sustainable in their actions.

### Participation to EU programming and planning

The information gathered from the focus group discussion about their view on EU policies and financing mechanisms in Sudan, indicates that most DPOs do not yet have any systematic collaboration with the EU Delegation and have important difficulties to access funding. The CSO-LA and EIDHR grants provided by the EU are not accessible for these DPOs at this stage. Some DPOs, through partnership with international NGO such as for example ADD International, had made them benefit from some EU funding.



Workshop on CRPD and disability mainstreaming.  
Held in Khartoum  
from 7 to 10 May 2018.



## 5. Conclusion

While being limited in its scope and finally conducted from distance via calls and with a much reduced number of key informants compared to the other 3 country studies, some interesting findings help to feed the overall study. There seems to be an engagement and positive approach from the Delegation in Sudan to advance in this

area, which will require stronger leadership and a systematic approach to disability inclusion. Recent security concerns though and political turmoil risk to hamper some of the necessary changes in case on-going projects are stalled or cannot be implemented as foreseen. Evidence show that when DPOs are organised and have the capacity to claim their rights and start holding the government to account, wider systemic changes can happen. This require the EU to look at ways of empowering DPOs across their funding mechanisms and ensure that all funding streams address disability inclusion.

There were strong recommendations from most organisations included in the study that all relevant EU funding should require disaggregation of data on women, men and children with disabilities and that persons with disabilities should equally benefit from all projects and funding provided by all development donors. There should also be better monitoring of disability inclusion among both donors and organisation receiving funds, with transparent reporting on progress.



Activity 'Development of woman and girls with disabilities in rural areas'. Held in Gadarif city from 29 April to 3 May 2018.

# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>ADD</b>	Action on Disability and Development
<b>BMZ</b>	Germany Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSO-LA</b>	Civil Society and Local Authorities
<b>DPO</b>	Organisation of persons with disabilities
<b>EDF</b>	European Development Fund
<b>EIDHR</b>	European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization





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# Bridging the GAP



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