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Bridging the Gap II

Disability inclusion in development cooperation – The European way forward

Brussels, 5 December 2019

Conference results summary



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1. Background

The European project "[Bridging the Gap II – Inclusive Policies and Services for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)" (**BtG-II**), organised in Brussels on December 5th, 2019 the conference **Disability inclusion in development cooperation – The European way forward**.

The **Conference** has been developed to strengthen the project development practitioner's partners in defining a stronger and more effective approach to disability mainstreaming, in line with the project's objectives. This meeting contributed to the current debate on disability-inclusive development by reinforcing the role of the European international cooperation, notably with reference to the external dimension of the **European Disability Strategy (EDS)** in order to

2. Discussion highlights

The presentations aimed to contribute to the **post-consultation on the EDS** which concluded in mid-October with the participation of 2,547 actors and 573 organisations (108 of which with international scope). [Marco Migliosi from the European Commission \(DG EMPL\)](#) highlighted that **over 30% of the respondents is unaware of the existence of the “external action” of the EDS** while, on average, the other components are not known by approximately 6% of the respondents. In addition, neutral views on the external action are double than in other areas. There is therefore a strong need for awareness raising on the external dimension of the European Disability Strategy.

The presentations that followed pivoted around five pillars of contribution to the EDS, namely:

Accessibility: Accessibility is crucial for the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities. From the beginning with universal design and the potentials of **reasonable accommodation**, the EU and development practitioners should support programmes and projects that fully address accessibility requirements.



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Accountability: It is decisive to define responsibilities for the implementation of **Agenda 2030**, indicators for tracking, progress towards **Leave No One Behind**, measuring to track the impact of programs, etc.

Participation: The EU and donors must ensure the effective, consistent and continuous involvement, and **participation of persons with disabilities**.

Inclusive Financing: **Adequate financial resources**, tracking investments in disability inclusion within mainstream development programmes (OECD DAC Marker), dedicated funds to remove barriers to effective participation, etc.

Data Collection and Use.

3. Good practices and examples for the EDS' external action dimension

ITEM	RECOMMENDATIONS	RELATED PRESENTATIONS
Accessibility	Ensure full accessibility of EU premises, including EU Delegations. Ensure reasonable accommodation and communicate on the benefits of it. Involve the private sector in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, prove by example that we all benefit from accessibility and inclusion (importance of role models). Involve in AT Scale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlotte Axelsson Consultant François Carbonez IDDC Álvaro Antonio Couceiro Farjas ONCE
Accountability	Define policy and accountability mechanisms applicable to all pillars of EU's external action (reporting against indicators): assign responsibility to a decision-making level. Mainstream disability using gender mainstreaming as reference. Work on building leadership and organisational culture (UN and World Bank set the example, plus EU Consensus). Strengthen the technical capacity on disability inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sreerupa Mitra UNDP Massimiliano Paolucci WB Sara Soltani ADA Charlotte Axelsson Consultant



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	<p>across DEVCO units and desks, ECHO, the EU Delegations abroad and the EU External services. Organise specific sensitization and awareness-raising trainings addressed to all staff, with particular regard to Directors and Heads of Units, also by making use of e-learning, webinars, DEVCO Learning Academy, etc. Develop a system of disability champions in the EU institutions to highlight good practices worth replicating and to foster synergies and complementarities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tove Soevndahl Gant EEAS • François Carbonez IDDC
Participation	<p>Holistic approach to participation (Finland, BtG in Ethiopia): governments, OPDs (ensure the participation of OPDs from the global south to the definition of the priorities for action) and international partners. Facilitate OPD's participation and capacity building via peer and likeminded organisations in Europe. Strengthen the model of small grants to empower OPDs in difficult contexts. Participation vs. Representativeness of OPDs: ensure transparency, modelling and support to OPDs. EU support to the definition of initiatives such as GLAD Network (opportunity to influence the new post-2020action plan).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachel Orme DiFID • Alessia Rogai BtG • Alex Cote Consultant • Mette Müller Kristensen IDDC • Tesfu Equbeyonas ADA-BtG • Daniele Manieri AICS-BtG • François Carbonez IDDC
Inclusive Financing	<p>Ensuring no European funds 2021-2027 are invested externally in creating or exacerbating barriers or segregation or institutionalisation for persons with disabilities (i.e.: ensure full compliance with the CRPD). Earmark support to OPDs using Finland's example (70% of total financing to disability inclusion) Define a stronger focal point/interest group/help desk mechanism based on Australia's DFAT-CBM and BtG experiences. Ensure staff training on inclusive budgeting and procurement and reporting against indicators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katariina Sario MoFA Finland • Charlotte Axelsson CBM • Alessia Rogai BtG • Tove Soevndahl Gant EEAS • Massimiliano Paolucci WB
Data Collection and Use	<p>Gathering evidence on inclusion of persons with disabilities. Well-tested data collection tools are available, such as the Washington Group set of Questions or the indicators elaborated under Bridging the Gap.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlotte Axelsson CBM • Sara Soltani ADA



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	Implement the use of the DAC Marker based upon existing experiences. Expand the preliminary study conducted by BtG to all EU's external action and Delegations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Alessia Rogai BtG</u>• François Carbonez IDDC
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4. Conclusions: priorities

Based upon the discussion following the presentations and the EDS-related recommendations above, the Conference concluded with an agreement on the follow-up of these priorities:

- Support to the capacity building of:
 - EU's focal points;
 - Planners;
 - Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (investments in need assessments are required);
 - Partner governments.
- Ask EU's Member States and other relevant stakeholders to participate in the new EDS design and resource allocation, and reflect this in the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and regulations (influence policy-making also through the GLAD network).
- Document the work of the EU for disability inclusion: role models, disability champions, subgrants, GLAD-alike initiatives (ex.: Group of Friends in Sudan).
- Involve the DPOs in the evaluation of Programmes and Projects.