

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in European Union development cooperation mechanisms

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

Country report - Sudan

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Bridging  the
GAP

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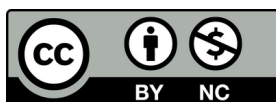
Editor

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

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Abbreviations and acronyms

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

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

[1] 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

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

[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 hphone 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.

[5] 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 people's 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.

[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 two 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.



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