

Quick Guide to the Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Ensure that your organization is inclusive of people with disabilities, and promotes and respects their human rights. Consider what improvements you could make to your organizational structure or activities. The following steps may help:

Identify People with Disabilities and their Organizations (DPOs)

Having strong civil society partners will assist in ensuring that your organization and its programs meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- Partner with local DPOs that have credibility with the disability community.
- Preferably, these organizations will be managed by disabled people.
- Ensure that the DPOs are representative of all disability groups, including people with intellectual disabilities, people with psycho-social disabilities, and women with disabilities.
- If local DPOs cannot be identified, consider supporting disability civil society development, or connect with an international DPO.

Evaluate the Situation of People with Disabilities

- Through meetings with DPO representatives, people with disabilities, or via survey, identify the needs and priorities of the disability community to assist with future program development.
- Locate barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in your activities.
- Consider whether your organization is currently committing human rights abuses against people with disabilities, even unwittingly.

Develop a Policy for People with Disabilities

- Develop policies that take a human rights approach to people with disabilities who are members of your organization, or consumers of your services. Implement and enforce these policies.
- Ensure that organizations you partner with also comply with your policies.

Provide Human Rights Training

- Train workers on the human rights of people with disabilities and your organizational policies towards them. Educate your employees about discrimination faced by people with disabilities and local cultural attitudes toward people with disabilities.
- Raise awareness of the human rights of people with disabilities and their capabilities in your program activities.

Designate a Disability Focal Point

- To raise awareness on the rights of people with disabilities and to prevent discrimination against them.
- To encourage participation in human rights training.
- To reach out to DPOs.
- To develop a disability action plan with DPOs that has concrete goals and a time line for their achievement.

Employ People with Disabilities

- Employing persons with disabilities in part or full time positions or as interns will enhance workplace diversity, improve relations with the disability community, and increase the sensitivity of your work to disability-related issues.
- Ensure that human resource policy and procedures do not inhibit the employment of people with disabilities.
- Employment positions can be advertised/posted to DPOs to ensure applications from potential workers with disabilities.

Ensure Accessibility

- Ensure that all construction and renovation is accessible to people with disabilities. Universal design benefits all people.
- Inspection by disabled people or disability experts can assist in ensuring accessibility.
- Hold events, meetings, and training sessions in accessible locations.
- If facilities are not accessible, temporary ramps can be constructed or rented.
- High technological solutions to access such as electric lifts should only be engaged if they can be maintained.
- Accessible transportation may be required.
- Providing sign language interpretation and materials in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, or on CD can ensure that information is accessible to all.
- Ensure your website is accessible.

Encourage and Facilitate the Participation of People with Disabilities

The participation of people with disabilities in planning, implementation and evaluation is vital to ensuring inclusive programs and activities.

- Partner with DPOs or include people with disabilities from the onset in planning sessions.
- Representatives of all disability groups need to be included because each subgroup may have different needs.
- Encourage people with disabilities and their organizations to take part in open forums. For inclusion to be meaningful there needs to be acknowledgement of how cultural and power relationships may be barriers to participation. Women with disabilities, for example, may be inhibited from voicing their views in public, or fear that voicing alternative positions may prevent them from receiving funding.
- Facilitators can emphasize the value of participation by the entire community as equal stakeholders, and ensure ongoing outreach to DPOs.
- Participatory processes can be assessed to determine if all disability subgroups participate, what barriers to participation exist, and how programs can be altered to ensure full participation.

Inclusion of the Needs of People with Disabilities in Project Selection

- Fund projects that enable people with disabilities to claim their human rights.
- People with disabilities or disability experts should be included in project selection.

- Review contracts to ensure that they follow inclusive practices and respect the human rights of people with disabilities.

Implementation of disability inclusive projects and activities

- Develop programs that promote and protect the human rights of people with disabilities.
- Consult with local people with disabilities, DPOs, disability experts, or international DPOs on how to ensure your programs are inclusive.
- DPOs can be selected as partners in undertaking programs and activities.
- If NGO partners or contractors have not worked with the disability community previously they can be encouraged to become inclusive.

Monitoring

- Encourage DPOs and disability rights experts to be involved in monitoring and evaluation programs.
- Include disability-related indicators.
- Ensure that all data can be disaggregated by gender and disability sub-group.
- Continue to evaluate barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities within your organization and its activities.

Encourage collaboration and coordination on disability issues

- Collaborate with DPOs and disability rights experts.
- Disseminate good practices.
- Coordinate with other sectors, such as government programs and private donors.