



# Disability Inclusion Matters: Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the context of forced displacement



### UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

(UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006)

Since 2009, the GIZ Sector Project ‘Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities’ has been supporting programmes in more than 13 partner countries to include persons with disabilities in measures that address development responses to forced displacement. This publication consolidates our lessons learnt in this regard and offers guidance on how to include disability in GIZ’s implementation of transitional and long-term development cooperation in displacement situations. It is intended to be a resource for development practitioners and a Community of Practice on the inclusion of persons with disabilities, in order to realise the commitment of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to disability inclusion in Germany’s development cooperation in displacement contexts.

## 1 INTERSECTION OF DISABILITY AND CRISIS-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT

DISPLACED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FACE AN INCREASED RISK AND BARRIERS AS THEY SEEK OUT ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION, HOWEVER, PROGRAMMING MODALITIES DO NOT ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS YET.

Intersecting forms of discrimination and crisis exacerbate the situation of displaced persons with disabilities: Children with disabilities face a higher risk of neglect, and women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence (GBV).

By the end of 2017, the number of forcibly displaced people due to persecution, conflict or generalised violence reached 68.5 million, of whom 85% are in developing countries. Among them are an estimated 9.7 million persons with disabilities. Not only does the rate of disability increase in situations of forced displacement because of trauma, poor living conditions, psychological stress and a lack of rehabilitation services. They also disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, who often fall through the cracks of relief and development cooperation due to a range of barriers, including discrimination, the general invisibility of persons with disabilities and a lack of recognition as a distinct group with unique concerns. Scant data, time pressure, poor identification and the absence of reasonable accommodation further exclude displaced persons with disabilities from health, legal, psychosocial and other services as well as safe livelihood (opportunities).

## 2 FRAMEWORK FOR DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING IN DISPLACEMENT CONTEXTS

NUMEROUS INSTRUMENTS STIPULATE THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEEDS IN THE VOLATILE AND OFTEN EXTREME CONDITIONS OF DISPLACEMENT SITUATIONS.

### INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

The **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)** has been vital in advancing disability as a human rights issue. Germany and most of its partner countries ratified the UN CRPD. The Convention highlights the importance of international cooperation in its implementation: Article 32 obliges States Parties to ensure their development cooperation is accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities. Article 11 reinforces the international protection of displaced persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. In these contexts, the principle of reasonable accommodation (Article 2) plays a significant role to improve their conditions in whatever protection is provided.

Several **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and targets of the **2030 Agenda** relate to disaster management, and building resilience and peaceful societies (e.g. SDGs 11 and 16). The commitment of the **2030 Agenda** to ‘leave no one behind’ highlights the importance of the inclusion of displaced persons with disabilities in related efforts to implement it. The Agenda and five out of 17 SDGs reference disability and persons with disabilities. The global indicator framework requires the disaggregation of indicators by disability.

Important humanitarian standards and commitments also lend support to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in BMZ’s assistance in displacement situations: In 2016, Germany endorsed the **Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action**, a historic global agreement to do more for persons with disabilities in emergencies, and committed to disability-inclusive policy, response and services in relevant interventions. The **Global Compact on Refugees** highlights the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations in the design of responses. **The Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities (2018)** form part of the **Sphere Humanitarian Standards Partnership** and offer help to address the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in emergencies.



### Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)

It is important to distinguish between organisations that work for persons with disabilities and organisations “of” persons with disabilities: The latter are governed, led by and comprise a majority of persons with disabilities, and thus are representative of persons with disabilities. They operate as individual organisations, coalitions, cross-disability or national, regional or international umbrella organisations.

### NATIONAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

The inclusion of persons with disabilities is an important principle of German development cooperation. The first BMZ Action Plan on disability inclusion in 2013 is followed by a new cross-sectoral strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in German development cooperation. In line with Article 32 of the UN CRPD, the new strategy specifies the commitment to disability inclusion and related targets, including improved disability data. Furthermore, the **BMZ Strategy on Transitional Development Assistance (2013)** highlights the inclusion of persons with disabilities as one of the internationally recognised principles that Germany’s transitional development assistance conforms to.

### 3

## INCLUDING DISABILITY IN PROGRAMMING FOR DISPLACED PERSONS: WHAT'S NEEDED?

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE MEASURES TO ENSURE THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PROGRAMMING IN SITUATIONS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT, EVEN IN VOLATILE ENVIRONMENTS.

### INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN GERMAN DEVELOPMENT RESPONSES TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT: KEY AREAS OF ACTION



### 3.1

## DATA: COLLECT AND UTILISE INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Data on persons with disabilities and their situation are vital in order to design programming that is responsive to their needs, but often hard to collect due to the mobility of displaced people and volatile environments. In order to address the lack of reliable information, it is important to:

- **PROMOTE DATA COLLECTION**  
Support the collection of statistics and data on persons with disabilities from the displaced and host communities and the barriers they face in accessing basic services such as health or education. This involves for example the inclusion of disability in surveys, target group analyses or monitoring systems.
- **EXPLORE PARTICULAR NEEDS**  
Recognise the heterogeneity of this group that goes beyond a single strategy or one size fits all approach and identify persons with disabilities who are specifically vulnerable or excluded and their needs (e.g. women, children or older persons with disabilities).
- **COLLECT AND SHARE DISABILITY DATA**  
Ensure that all data collected during your intervention are disaggregated by disability and relevant aspects such as type of impairment, age etc. Use the short set of Washington Group questions and, for children aged 2 to 17 years, the Washington Group/ UNICEF Module on Child Functioning. Disseminate your disability data, using platforms like the UNHCR Primes and its proGres application.

### 3.2.

## PARTICIPATION: INVOLVE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS FROM THE DISPLACED POPULATION AND HOST COMMUNITIES

In displacement contexts, the contributions and resources that persons with disabilities and their organisations can offer to programmes and planners (e.g. mobilising persons with disabilities, conducting accessibility audits) are largely overlooked. In order to make use of this opportunity to improve inclusion, it is important to:

- **CONNECT PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FROM DISPLACED AND HOST COMMUNITIES**  
Involve DPOs from the host-country or host community in consultations with displaced persons with disabilities to support their involvement with and integration in local DPO structures.
- **STRENGTHEN HOST COUNTRY/COMMUNITY DPOS**  
Provide capacity building to increase the awareness and ability of DPOs from the host country or host community to address displacement in their work and represent the needs of displaced persons with disabilities in human rights mechanisms and CRPD implementation and monitoring processes.
- **UTILISE EXPERTISE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**  
Develop processes that enable persons with disabilities and DPOs from the displaced and host communities to participate in designing, implementing and evaluating accessible and inclusive responses. Explore how best to include them in key fora (e.g. refugee / IDP committees) and activities (e.g. in community meetings, assessments, capacity development, disability awareness).
- **CONSIDER DIVERSITY**  
Ensure the equal participation of particularly vulnerable, hard to reach or marginalised groups of persons with disabilities (e.g. persons with intellectual disabilities).



### 3.3. CAPACITY: STRENGTHENING INCLUSION COMPETENCES OF OUR PARTNERS AND WITHIN OUR PROJECTS

It requires adequate knowledge and skills in our programmes and stakeholders to plan, propose and deliver displacement interventions that are accessible for and inclusive of persons with disabilities. In order to develop and access relevant inclusion competences, it is important to:

- **MAKE USE OF INTERNAL RESOURCES**

Seek out input from the colleagues from the GIZ Sector and Global Programmes and the planning officers of the Sectoral Department on how to include displaced persons with disabilities in your proposal.

- **BUILD DISABILITY AWARENESS AND INCLUSION SKILLS**

Include activities to promote understanding among our partners and stakeholders (e.g. aid workers, community-based organisations, host governments) about the rights and needs of displaced persons with disabilities and the importance to address them even in volatile or resource-poor settings.

- **DRAW ON EXTERNAL EXPERTISE**

Build co-operations with local and international disability organisations (e.g. Humanity & Inclusion, CBM) or DPOs (see above) as well as other GIZ programmes that practise disability inclusion for the implementation of specific activities (e.g. disability awareness) and inclusion strategies. Utilise available resources and manuals to guide the planning for the greater inclusion of persons with disabilities (see box).

CBM International, HelpAge International and Humanity & Inclusion (2018): Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities.

UNHCR (2011): Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement.

Humanity & Inclusion and Leonard Cheshire (2018): Disability Data Collection: A summary review of the use of the Washington Group Questions by development and humanitarian actors.

### 3.4. ACCESSIBILITY: ENSURING ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN DISPLACED AND HOST COMMUNITIES

Accessibility benefits everyone and is an important precondition for displaced persons with disabilities to fully benefit from our interventions. Guaranteeing non-discrimination and equal access requires reasonable accommodation and other support measures across all activities and target groups:

- **VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Raise awareness of the increased risk of violence faced by displaced women and children with disabilities (e.g. during staff training, peace and community building). Include strategies to identify persons with disabilities who report violence. Strengthen referral mechanisms to ensure that survivors with disabilities receive appropriate support. Use mechanisms like the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations (MRM) for children with disabilities or the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) to report violence against persons with disabilities.

- **CHILDREN**

Arrange resources and expertise (e.g. sign language interpreter, occupational therapists) to address the specific protection and accessibility needs of girls and boys with disabilities, including mental health and psychosocial needs. Collaborate with organisations that already work with them. Train staff to be able to communicate with children with disabilities and to create an inclusive environment.

- **HEALTH**

Ensure accessibility for all health services. Allocate resources to provide reasonable accommodation (e.g. mobile health care, transport) and ensure access to specialised health services (e.g. rehabilitation, assistive devices, especially mobility devices and prosthetics). Develop the disability awareness of health professionals and services in host communities and their capacities to provide appropriate services, including mental health and psychosocial care.

- **INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION**

In line with the concept 'Building Back Better' that is behind all reconstruction of BMZ's transitional development assistance, ensure that all construction of social, economic and other infrastructure and transport systems adheres to universal design principles and accessibility standards. Conduct accessibility audits to test the infrastructure in your target area for barriers.

- **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Include a budget line to ensure the accessibility of events and activities for persons with disabilities (e.g. transport).

- **LIVELIHOOD**

Provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in cash-for-work programmes by including appropriate activities. Provide reasonable accommodation such as flexible working hours, as well as transportation allowances or assistive devices, if needed.

- **EDUCATION**

Ensure accessibility in the design, construction and rehabilitation of formal and informal education spaces. Facilitate the adaptation of teaching methods, curricula and learning materials to suit learners with different disabilities. Raise awareness among teachers, communities and other stakeholders working in education to promote inclusive education in displacement contexts.

- **ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION**

Use different formats to make information about your services accessible for persons with different disabilities (e.g. materials in easy-to-read formats, subtitles, Braille, audio descriptions, sign language interpretation).

- **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Include a budget line to ensure the accessibility of events and activities for persons with disabilities (e.g. transport).

- **DOCUMENT YOUR EXPERIENCE**

Consolidate and share your inclusion experience with partners, other GIZ projects and other implementing organisations, donors, communities of practice in displacement, and other stakeholders to close the gap in documented good practices and support other programmes in adapting their assistance towards greater access for and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

## CHECKLIST: WHAT DRIVES THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF DISPLACEMENT?

### DISABILITY INCLUSION MATTERS – LET'S GET STARTED!

At GIZ, we are committed to further develop approaches for the full participation of persons with disabilities across the different sectors and it is important for us to share our lessons learnt in doing so.

The experiences so far have shown that there is a wide range of measures to make displacement planning and programming accessible for and inclusive of persons with disabilities. This checklist is a guide to start your own disability inclusion journey: It sensitises to the needs of displaced persons with disabilities and draws attention to programmatic entry points for the inclusion of disability in your planning processes.

#### DISABILITY INCLUSION IN DISPLACEMENT PROGRAMMING:

##### IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK

#### DATA & MONITORING

- ✓ Have we gathered sufficient information about the situation of persons with disabilities in the host communities and among the displaced population, considering different sources like DPOs, disability (I)NGOs, service providers, ministries, UN clusters?
- ✓ Have we identified their needs and priorities with regards to the planned intervention (e.g. health, livelihoods, education)?
- ✓ Have we taken into account the heterogeneity of disability and identified those persons with disabilities who are being particularly excluded from assistance?
- ✓ Have we ensured that all data collected during our intervention can and will be disaggregated by (type of) disability?
- ✓ Have we included specific indicators and outcomes to follow up on the implementation of our commitment to disability inclusion in our intervention(s)?

#### PARTICIPATION

- ✓ Have we involved persons with different disabilities and DPOs from the displaced population and the host communities in the planning of our intervention?
- ✓ Have we identified a DPO as a partner to support the inclusion of disability throughout the intervention, the implementation of specific activities such as disability awareness, and the evaluation?
- ✓ Have we defined the role that persons with disabilities from the displaced and host communities will play in the implementation and evaluation of our intervention (e.g. as project staff or members of steering or advisory committees)?
- ✓ Have we identified strategies how we can engage even those persons with disabilities that are particularly marginalised or hard to reach?

#### ACCESSIBILITY

- ✓ Have we planned adaptations and reasonable accommodation to ensure the accessibility of our services and activities for the diverse group of persons with disabilities?
- ✓ Have we included activities to address the needs of displaced persons with disabilities in our intervention?
- ✓ Have we planned safe referral mechanisms to disability-specific services? Have we budgeted for inclusion-specific costs (e.g. transport, interpretation)?
- ✓ Have we ensured that our project delivery sites are accessible for persons with different types of disabilities?

#### CAPACITY

- ✓ Have we sought the input of the sectoral department on disability inclusion in the preparation and planning of the proposal/offer?
- ✓ Have we planned strategies to strengthen the capacities of persons with disabilities and DPOs?
- ✓ Have we included activities to further develop our capacities with regards to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and support the implementation of disability-inclusive practices in our intervention (e.g. consultant, training)?
- ✓ Have we identified partners working in the field of disability and inclusion to create synergies and add relevant expertise to our intervention (e.g. DPOs, community-based organisations)?
- ✓ Have we included disability in the ToR of missions to develop brief assessment (Kurzstellungnahme) as well as in appraisal missions (Prüfmission) to promote the routine inclusion of persons with disabilities?

**DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE REFUGEE  
EDUCATION: IMPROVED LEARNING  
ENVIRONMENT AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
IN HOST COMMUNITIES IN JORDAN  
(ILEPS) (2014 - 2019)**

The ILEPS project aimed to improve the education infrastructure, management and overall learning environment for more than 20.000 students in public schools in selected host communities in Jordan. In order to respond to the needs of children with disabilities from both the host and refugee communities, the project supported a range of measures in one of their pilot schools:

- Rehabilitation: The rehabilitation of school buildings (with a focus on sanitary units) was implemented in cooperation with a local DPO and addressed a range of accessibility needs, especially for children with physical disabilities. This included for example the construction of ramps and accessible toilets, although full accessibility is difficult to achieve in existing buildings.
- Inclusive learning environment: Classroom assistants were provided in cooperation with a local DPO to support teachers and students with disabilities in one of the pilot schools. In addition, accessible transport has been established for students with physical disabilities to facilitate their access to education.

The pilot generated important lessons learnt about the educational inclusion of children with disabilities – both Jordanian and Syrian refugee children - for the follow – up intervention of the BMZ and beyond. Displacement often brings an influx of children with disabilities into the schools of any host community. The experience showed the need for programs to ensure that schools and teachers are not overwhelmed with both the number of children with disabilities and the needs that are associated with the different types of disabilities. Project implementation in displacement contexts often takes place under time pressure and in a volatile environment. The experience highlighted the importance to think beyond short-term solutions for inclusive education, ensuring that it is included in national education systems and sector plans: An integrated approach is required that works at local level with parents, schools and communities to create an inclusive setting and also targets the systemic level in order to create favorable framework conditions for the education of refugee children with disabilities.

**DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE RESILIENCE-  
BUILDING: SUPPORTING INTERNALLY  
DISPLACED PERSONS AND BOLSTERING  
THE RESILIENCE OF HOST COMMUNITIES  
IN NORTHERN AND NORTH-EASTERN  
NIGERIA (2016 - 2021)**

The programme aims to improve the living conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities and those returning to their communities of origin in the states of Adamawa and Borno. It addresses the sectors of livelihoods, education, infrastructure rehabilitation and governance. In order to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the programme includes a range of activities across all four components:

- Considering accessibility requirements of persons with disabilities in the construction measures e.g. schools, hospitals, water points, grain storage houses, market places, vocational training centres
- Supporting the rehabilitation of a vocational training centre for persons with visual disabilities
- Engaging self-help groups of persons with disabilities in Community Development Planning processes and the prioritisation of needs
- Developing approaches to address the needs of children with disabilities in the context of the programme's overall strategy for addressing the acute education needs in the target locations

The focus of the programme on vulnerable groups provides a favourable basis for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Prioritising the different cross cutting themes like gender, age and disability in the different programme components further allows for a systemic and balanced approach to disability issues.

**INCLUSION OF DISPLACED PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT  
PROMOTION: INCOME GENERATION  
FOR IDPS, REFUGEES AND SOCIALLY  
VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS IN HOST  
COMMUNITIES IN IRAQ (2017 - 2020)**

The project is part of GIZ's support for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities in northern Iraq. One of the key areas of intervention are employment programmes, including cash-for-work (CfW) programmes, and livelihood activities such as 'Livelihood Activation Grants and Support to Small and Medium Enterprises' to increase the access to temporary and longer-term employment and income. The project used two entry points to include disability and persons with disabilities in its activities:

The design of training modules on disability rights and accessibility followed, as well as the dissemination of the study findings, and training of local authorities and DPOs. Fora brought together deconcentrated public services, DPOs and local authorities, and allowed DPOs to voice their needs in accessing public services. The impact of capacity building and the participation of persons with disabilities are reflected in recent annual investment plans that include a range of activities related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities:

- Inclusive cash for work and livelihood activities: Inclusion of specifically designed cash-for-work activities that allow persons with disabilities to participate in CfW activities according to their capacities (e.g. library work, gardening); access to grants for persons with disabilities to activate or reactive income generation through self-employed economic activities
- Multi Purpose Cash Assistance: In addition, the programme provided unconditional cash transfers (Multi Purpose Cash Assistance) for labour constrained households (with special focus on persons with disabilities)
- Cooperation with DPOs: Involving local DPOs in the design of interventions and their involvement in the identification of persons with disabilities

The results have been very positive in all intervention areas described above. Especially for ongoing interventions, it was found important to identify entry points that provide for concrete and feasible steps towards greater inclusion and accessibility in order not to overwhelm projects and project staff. It was highlighted that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is most successful when applying inclusive approaches from the first step of the planning process.



**Published by:**  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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Bonn, June 2019

**Responsible editor:**  
Bettina Schmidt (GIZ)

**Design:**  
yellow too, Berlin

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