

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk, May 22

Evidence digest focus issue: Youth and Disability Inclusion

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The latest evidence and guidance on disability inclusion and youth

Research

In August 2021, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia conducted a **Mapping of Disability-Inclusive Education Practices in South Asia** covering interventions implemented from 2010 to 2020 in eight countries in the region: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The mapping focused on initiatives targeted at facilitating the access of children with disabilities to inclusive pre-primary up to higher secondary education, including vocational training and non-formal education. Based on the findings, key recommendations include to: Continue advocating for disability-inclusive education and helping ensure children with disabilities are targeted in national laws and policies, sector plans and budgets; Strategically address the gaps in capacity to implement disability-inclusive education by aligning professional development programmes to existing frameworks, standards and plans; Organise professional learning communities or communities of practice among development organisations to foster knowledge sharing.

Inclusion of Young People Living with Disabilities in TVET, published in February 2021, is a mini-report based on publications from the African Education Research Database (AERD) highlighting how young people with disabilities can be supported to gain employment through participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It found that there is a dearth of evidence on TVET in Africa to facilitate evidence-driven decision-making and there is low participation of young people with disabilities in

TVET with young women most affected. There is a recommendation that female participation should be encouraged by using female TVET graduates as role models and including courses that are more attractive to women. TVET institutions should widen access for persons with disabilities by adopting affirmative action and make adjustments to their courses to meet the needs of students.

Rights Based, Participatory Interviews with Disabled Children and Young People: Practical and Methodological Considerations, published in January 2021, aims to critically reflect on “what works” to meaningfully engage young people with disabilities and facilitate their participation in research interviews. It is based on the learnings from an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded study exploring the experiences of children and young people with disabilities, and their parents in decision making about health and social care. Practical and methodological issues, such as the need for thorough preparation, interview process, understanding the children and young people and managing the presence of others are discussed. Recommendations are made for future researchers, including making participation fun, using a sensitive and individualised approach, and conducting multiple visits.

The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People with Intellectual Disability: A Scoping Review, published in March 2021 examines the breadth of research on sex, sexuality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people with intellectual disabilities in the past two decades. In the 68 studies reviewed, positive examples were found of sexual and reproductive agency across five key domains: 1) sexual development including sexual desire, identities, relationships, and menstruation, 2) sexual knowledge including sexuality education and sexual self-advocacy, 3) sexual activity and contraceptive use, 4) access to HPV immunisation and cervical cancer screening, and 5) pregnancy, childbirth, and parenthood. The strongest factors in enabling agency were found to be social support and sexuality education. Barriers included paternalist attitudes and infantilisation of young people with intellectual disabilities, affecting all aspects of sexual expression and leading to the persistence of unfair and avoidable health inequities over the past two decades.

Research looking at **sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services utilisation amongst in-school young people with disabilities in Ghana** was published in March 2021. A sample of 2,114 pupils with hearing or visual impairments aged 10-24 years old were given a questionnaire from 15 purposively selected schools in Ghana. The research found that whilst young people with disabilities have the same range of SRH needs and desires just like anyone else, they may encounter barriers when accessing healthcare services and asserting their SRH rights. The results show high levels of SRH service utilisation amongst the respondents studied. Young people with visual impairments experience physical accessibility challenges when seeking healthcare services whilst young people with hearing impairments experience communication challenges, given the general lack of sign language experts in many healthcare facilities. For programming, it is important that service providers are equipped with the skills to serve people with disabilities. Designating specific facilities to

address the particular SRH needs of young people with disabilities may promote utilisation.

Guidance, Training and Case Studies

The **Global Disability Youth Summit 2022** was held online on 14th February 2022 as part of the wider Global Disability Summit 2022. It was co-hosted by IDA, UNICEF, and the Atlas Alliance, represented by Youth Mental Health Norway, and all planning and decision making was led by youth with disabilities. A Call for Action was created, '**Youth with disabilities: From holding rights to exercising them**', with 16 Actions, spanning themes from decent work, assistive devices, the effects of climate change, inclusive education, social protection and disaggregated data on youth with disabilities. The Call for Action can be signed by emailing summit@ida-secretariat.org.

As part of the **Disability and Covid-19: 6th International Conference on Disability and Development** hosted by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in March 2022, there was a session on children and youth with disabilities. The session included case studies of the impacts of COVID-19 on youth with disabilities, with a focus on participatory research and research with caregivers. Case studies included a study talking to Nepali adolescents with disabilities and their peers about COVID-19 using participatory, creative and inclusive methods; Parents perspectives on the impact of the COVID-19 response on children with disabilities in Uganda; Lessons learnt from the Disabled Children's Campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic in England in using research to empower the voices of families with disabled children to create change; The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on inclusive education of children with disabilities in Peru. The [recording is available to watch online](#).

In September 2020, the African Union (AU) published **AU Disability Inclusion: Guidance for Youth Exchange**. The guidelines aim to support hosting and sending organisations working in the field of youth exchange and youth mobility programs in their efforts to be more inclusive for youth with disabilities by putting in place necessary support measures. The guidelines set out tools, examples and suggested steps that illustrate good practice and minimum quality standards for disability-inclusive youth volunteer programs on the African continent. These guidelines are designed as a comprehensive practical, "how-to" framework of technical knowledge and good practice for youth exchange practitioners. They include guidelines for creating inclusive cultures as well as how to ensure the inclusion of youth with disabilities before, during and post- exchange programs.

The latest evidence and guidance on disability inclusion: Other topics

Global Disability Summit 2022

During the Global Disability Summit (GDS) 2022, approximately 1,300 commitments were made by representatives from all stakeholder groups, distributed across the five thematic areas: Meaningful engagement of organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs); Inclusive Education; Inclusive Health; Inclusive Livelihoods and Social Protection; and Situations of Conflict and Crisis, including a focus on Climate Change. All regions of the world were represented, and 44 countries have made commitments. OPDs, civil society organisations and multilateral organisations demonstrated their continued commitment to disability inclusion.

The Co-Chairs of the (GDS) (Government of Norway, Government of Ghana and the International Disability Alliance) produced a [summary document](#). The short summary includes noted commitments from participants of the GDS to a human rights-based approach, meaningful engagement of OPDs, making all humanitarian action fully inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities, and the need for an increased effort to strengthen community inclusion.

IDA and NORAD have published a GDS [Discussion Paper on Promoting Engagement of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities \(OPDs\) in Development and Humanitarian Action](#). OPD engagement was one of the overarching themes of the GDS 2022, in line with the motto of the disability rights movement 'Nothing about us without us'. This paper aims to support governments, donors, civil society organisations, and OPDs in their efforts towards inclusive and accessible development programmes. It provides 10 recommendations under four themes: (1) Advance the disability rights movement by building a stronger and more diverse collective voice, including diversity and intersectionality; (2) Increase and monitor funding that goes to OPDs; (3) Support OPD technical and organisational capacity development; and (4) Create conducive legal and social environments for OPDs to exist and operate.

As part of the GDS, World Bank has updated their ten commitments on disability inclusion, first made at the Global Disability Summit in 2018. The [ten updated World Bank commitments](#) include: (1) Ensure all World Bank-financed education projects are disability-inclusive by 2025; (2) Ensure all World Bank-financed digital development projects are disability sensitive, including using universal design and accessibility standards. (3) Build up the evidence base on disability inclusion through data collection, to inform good practice for policymakers globally. (4) Analyse data on the socio-economic inclusion of women with disabilities in legal and policy frameworks by the Women, Business and the Law team to build evidence for better protection of the rights of women with disabilities in World Bank Group operations. (5) Ensure that all projects financing public facilities in post-disaster reconstruction are disability-inclusive. (10) Promote the updated [Disability Inclusion and](#)

Accountability Framework amongst World Bank staff.

Humanitarian

The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk published a report into the **Impacts of the Ukraine invasion for persons with disabilities and priority entry points in humanitarian response** in March 2022. It found that persons with disabilities were at increased risk of harm due to a lack of accessible communications, shelters and evacuation routes or methods. Adults and children with disabilities living in institutions are at increased risk. It also found that internally displaced persons and refugees with disabilities were facing barriers to accessing basic needs. The query includes a non-exhaustive list of organisations working in Ukraine on disability-inclusive response and guidance on how the humanitarian response can be disability-inclusive.

A **Ukrainian translation of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning** is now available.

From Commitment to Action: Towards a Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Response in South Sudan was published in February 2022 by the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict. This study investigates how humanitarian organisations in South Sudan implement the four 'must do' actions from the IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. It finds that mainstream and inclusion-focused organisations actively promote the 'must do' actions to make disability inclusion an integral part of humanitarian action, investing heavily in capacity-building and awareness-raising at all levels of the response, and leading to tangible progress. Nevertheless, serious gaps and challenges to disability inclusion remain. Recommendations include to promote the meaningful participation of people with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, support the establishment of OPDs outside of Juba and improve data collection and information sharing on disability at all levels of the response.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), together with Humanity & Inclusion and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) have published a **Disability Inclusion Study in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) sites** within Kismayo, Somalia. The study took place between August 2021 and December 2021 with the objective to collect data showcasing some of the barriers and challenges that people with disabilities face in accessing services both at the IDP site-level but also within the broader community. Despite the increased frequency of disability data collection efforts in internally displaced person sites throughout Somalia, the broader humanitarian and development communities continue to possess fragmented information about persons with disabilities and the barriers they face in accessing humanitarian services. Key findings include that 20% of survey respondents were people with disabilities, with 31% of those indicating mental health concerns. Over 24% of respondents reported that they encountered dangers when accessing or using services within internally displaced person sites or the wider community including 9% of respondents experiencing physical violence when accessing services, 6% citing verbal harassment and 5% highlighting incidents of bribery when accessing services.

Inclusive Education

Save the Children published the **Inclusive Education Resources and Toolkit** in February 2022 as a resource and reference for all of their staff working in education programming to mainstream inclusion in their work. The Toolkit provides recommendations and resources to strengthen their inclusive education programming, based on a comprehensive analysis of key gaps in existing guidance shared by practitioners globally, as well as a review of international standards and resources in the field and innovative and adaptive models of inclusive education programming already in use by Save the Children and other organisations (INEE, Plan International, UNESCO, USAID, and others). It is composed of seven chapters, covering Access, Emotional and Psychosocial Protection, Physical Protection, Teaching and Learning, Parents and Community, School Leadership and Management, Policy and Systems, and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL). Each chapter includes common challenges with key steps and tools to address them.

The Inclusive Education Initiative published **A Landscape Review of ICT for Disability-Inclusive Education** in January 2022. The review seeks to understand the current status and trends in the practice of educational technology (EdTech) and the use of ICT in improving the educational participation and outcomes of children with disabilities. The report recommends an Innovation-Enabled Education for All approach and makes four recommendations: (1) Strengthen systems and shape markets to systematically improve the provision of inclusive education and reduce the cost of assistive ICT for inclusive-education products; (2) Develop a “massive-small” technology and service infrastructure for inclusive education to enable massive-scale distribution of evidence-based, small-scale innovations; (3) Develop a “massive-small” technology and service infrastructure for inclusive education to enable massive-scale distribution of evidence-based, small-scale innovations; (4) Capture better data and evidence vital to policy making, identification of learners, early intervention, and mapping of progress.

Leonard Cheshire and UNESCO have published **School Violence and Bullying of Children with Disabilities in Eastern and Southern African Region: A Needs Assessment** in February 2022. The study used policy analysis and primary qualitative research to look at the robustness of policy and legal frameworks and the needs of teachers and learners with disabilities in addressing school violence and bullying within five countries in the region (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, South Africa and Zambia). It found that all countries have some form of policy supporting inclusive education and relatively well-developed disability inclusion policies which clearly identify the need for additional protections for people with disabilities. However, children with disabilities are not always specifically mentioned as a population needing additional protections against school violence, nor is school violence and bullying highlighted as a particular context of risk. Ten key recommendations are highlighted, including to review the Education Acts and education policies in each country, strengthen the inclusive of education systems at every level of education, and give clearer guidance at school-level on dealing with school violence and bullying, including anonymous reporting mechanisms in schools and communities and

establishing stricter punitive consequences.

Disability-disaggregated Data

In January 2022, UNICEF published **Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities**. Using the latest available data from UNICEF's global database of disability data with more than 1,000 data points, the publication draws on internationally comparable data from 43 countries and covers more than 60 indicators of child well-being – from nutrition and health, to access to water and sanitation, protection from violence and exploitation, and education – including several indicators used to report on the Sustainable Development Goals. The report also includes the first-ever global and regional estimates of children with disabilities, finding that nearly 240 million children have disabilities – 1 in 10 of all children worldwide.

UNFPA Asia and Pacific have undertaken a mapping of the capacities of countries in the region to produce key population-based indicators disaggregated by disability. Published in February 2022, the report, **Are persons with disabilities included in the effort to leave no-one behind? Mapping disability data in development in Asia and the Pacific**, builds on other initiatives such as the UN SDG Data Platform, the Disability Data Initiative and the ESCAP Midpoint Review of the Asian Decade of Disability. It reflects the overall trends and findings from 20 countries which responded to the survey, complemented by targeted interviews with persons with disabilities on their related experiences. It found that capacity varies greatly across the region, most of the respondent countries have significant gaps in their overall technical capacity to produce critical development indicators on disability, and very few countries are using the Washington Group questions, raising questions about the quality, usefulness and comparability of the data. At the same time, many people with disabilities are concerned about inadequate data and evidence around disability, but do not feel they know enough to confidently use or advocate for better data. Recommendations are provided, targeted at National Statistics Offices (NSOs), donors and technical partners, OPDs and multi-stakeholders.

In January 2022, Leonard Cheshire published **Why Disability Data Matters: Review of Leonard Cheshire's latest disability data and the Disability Data Portal**. The report aims to show why it is essential that everyone has access to high-quality disability data. It spotlights key data initiatives achieved by Leonard Cheshire within each of the Global Disability Summit 2022 thematic areas and seeks to highlight the meaningful actions and commitments needed to advance inclusive and disaggregated data at the Global Disability Summit 2022. It makes calls to action, including for national governments to commit to using Washington Group Questions in all surveys and censuses, and for international development partners to ensure programmes and policies capture disability data in line with the Washington Group Questions.

Other

In December 2021, Open Society Foundations published **Disability and Climate Justice: A Research Project** by Dr. Maria Kett, Gaya Sriskanthan and Ellie Cole. The report provides an overview of the current state of work around climate justice and disability to support the work of donors and other actors working in these areas. The authors conducted a thematic literature review complemented by an online anonymous survey, with 75 respondents, and more than 20 semi-structured interviews with practitioners, academics, and others working in the field of disability and/or climate focused organisations. The literature review revealed an increasing focus on the human rights aspects of climate change, and a key finding is the tendency to focus on the substantive and procedural rights of people with disabilities in relation to climate change, rather than on transformative approaches. The research identified very few examples of effective partnerships between the environmental movement and the disability movement. Given the lack of data, examples, and knowledge about the specific impacts of climate change by the disability community, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is a lack of consensus about what the priority issues are for the community

In February 2022, Disability, CBR & Inclusive Development journal published the **Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in Africa: A Scoping Review**. This scoping review aimed to map the evidence on strategies employed by countries in implementing the UNCRPD in Africa and the implementation challenges faced. The study revealed evidence of implementation of UNCRPD in Africa, albeit limited, especially to the areas of education and employment.

The Institute of Development Studies published **Accessible Sanitation in the Workplace – Important Considerations for Disability-Inclusive Employment in Nigeria and Bangladesh** in January 2022. Both Nigeria and Bangladesh have sanitation and hygiene challenges as well as disability-inclusive employment challenges, but the existing evidence on the intersection of these issues in the two countries extremely limited. Building on the literature where this complex issue is addressed, this paper presents the findings of a qualitative pilot study undertaken in Nigeria and Bangladesh. It focuses on the need for toilets at work that are easy for people with disabilities to use in poor countries. Accessible sanitation is not regarded as a challenge that must be addressed by people with disabilities themselves, but as a challenge that must be addressed by many people working together – including governments, employers, and the community.

CBM Global published **Lessons learned from partnerships with organisations of persons with disabilities** in February 2022. During 2020-2021 CBM Global conducted a listening exercise across fourteen countries and 32 organisations to see how their partnerships with OPDs were working, and what could be strengthened. They found that one of the most important contributions CBM Global makes to OPDs is in building bridges to raise the profiles of OPDs and connect them with governments and international organisations. CBM Global also strengthens OPDs in their ability to represent people with disabilities and intervene on disability-related issues, helping them to grow and access other sources of funding. Working together as equals is also important, working on shared goals

with mutual respect. This was found to work better with more established OPDs, whilst partnerships with smaller OPDs were more challenging, particularly where partnerships were formed through an intermediary organisation. CBM Global has identified eight measures to strengthen its partnerships with OPDs: (1) Ensure persons with disabilities set the agenda; (2) Jointly identify how organisations want to grow; (3) Increase funding; (4) Establish inclusive feedback mechanisms; (5) Model accessibility across all areas of work; (6) Foster inclusiveness; (7) Advocate for OPDs; (8) Ensure accountability for authentic partnership.

Programme learning on youth and disability inclusion

The **Skills to Succeed programme**, run by Save the Children and local partner KAP in Indonesia, is preparing youth with disabilities to start their careers and making workplaces more inclusive. The program delivers employability skills training developed specifically for youth with disabilities, with a curriculum focussed on life skills and an interactive approach to encourage reflection and engagement. The programme also organises working groups with employers to advocate for changes that make workplaces more inclusive of youth with disabilities. Three main insights and follow up actions from the early phases of program implementation are: (1) Parents can be reluctant for children to participate due to concerns of bullying and discrimination, therefore a targeted needs assessment and outreach to parents will be conducted to better address concerns and promote the programme; (2) To better serve mixed disability groups, the training will be adapted for youth with cognitive and developmental disabilities as well as towards older youth wanting more practical skills and younger youth to motivate them to continue their education; (3) Ongoing and targeted support is needed for employers who receive youth with disabilities, such as ongoing technical assistance and the establishment of an inclusive employer association.

Disability inclusion policy news

In February 2022, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office released a new **strategy on disability inclusion and rights, 2022-2030**. The strategy reaffirms the UK's commitment to act as a global leader on disability inclusion and sets out FCDO's approach towards 2030. The strategy retains previous priority areas such as inclusive education, inclusive social protection and mainstreaming disability inclusion, and expands to include global health and climate action. It emphasises that greater voice, choice, and visibility are important for the full rights and freedoms of people with disabilities.

About the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk:

The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk provides research and technical assistance on disability inclusion to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office as part of the Disability Inclusive Development Programme. All our published reports are available on [our website](#). Contact us via: enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk