

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Report No. 76

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Key Facts on Disability Inclusion in China

- **6.3% of the population in China (nearly 85 million people) are living with a disability** (CDPF 2006), although this is likely to be an underestimate.
- The Government of China ratified **the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in 2008 and there are several policies and laws to promote the rights of people with disabilities.
- **Social attitudes** towards people with disabilities in China have traditionally been negative but are slowly shifting, with people with disabilities becoming more accepted and included in society.
- **Progress on disability inclusion in recent years includes:**
 - a) Increased poverty alleviation of people with disabilities;
 - b) Increased social protection coverage;
 - c) Improvement of rehabilitation services;
- **Current gaps on disability inclusion include:**
 - a) A lack of participation of people with disabilities in political and public life;
 - b) A limited focus on gender in disability policies and programmes;
 - c) People with disabilities living in rural areas experience less inclusion than in urban areas.
- The disability movement in China has been disproportionately affected by the Charity Law and Overseas NGO Law, which have necessitated a move from advocacy towards service provision.
- **Inclusive Education:** children with disabilities have the right to education by law, but children with disabilities commonly experience exclusionary attitudes.
- **Inclusive Employment:** As of 2020, out of 32 million people with disabilities of working age, there were 8.617 million people with disabilities in employment, of whom 4.34 million worked in cities and towns and 4.24 million in rural areas (CDPF 2021).
- **Access to healthcare:** 45.6% of adults with disabilities in China require more rehabilitation services than they receive, 15.4% lack medical treatment when ill, and 13.7% lack accessible facilities (Zhao and Wang 2021).
- **Hidden disabilities** such as mental health conditions, autism and chronic disease are prevalent in China. People with hidden disabilities often experience unique barriers to social inclusion, for example a lack of public understanding and negative attitudes.
- China's **assistive technology industry is growing:** it was valued around 700 billion yuan (US\$102 billion) in 2020, nearly 160% of its value in 2015.
- From June 2018 to May 2019, **5.53 million people with disabilities in China shopped on Taobao**, an e-commerce site, generating RMB 23.86 billion in sales.
- People with disabilities are **successful digital entrepreneurs:** from June 2018 to May 2019, 174,100 online stores set up on Taobao by disabled people achieved sales revenue totalling RMB 11.663 billion.
- The **inclusive tourism market in China** is still in its early stage. A survey of travellers with disabilities found that most of them spent 1,000-6,000 RMB each year in tourism (Institute of Accessibility Development 2019).

1. People with disabilities are:

'...those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.' (Article 1, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

Impairments (e.g. physical, cognitive or sensory) become disabling when they interact with prevailing attitudes, behaviours and policies or physical spaces to effectively bar the individual(s) from participating fully in society.¹ For example, inaccessible signage or footpaths deny access to markets or workplaces for individuals with visual or physical impairments. Impairments can also combine with other key factors and characteristics to compound the level of marginalisation. These include differences based on age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, rural versus urban locations and other issues.

2. Disability prevalence in China

According to the 2006 census, 6.3% of the population in China (nearly 85 million people) are living with a disability (CDPF 2006). This is lower than the global average of 15% of the global population (WHO 2020), likely due to the method used by the China census; it was based on a medical model, which has a narrower definition of disability. Use of the Washington Group Questions is recognised as best practice globally for identifying people with disabilities in national censuses. Approximately 44 million (52%) of people with disabilities in China are 60 years of age or older. Men account for approximately 52% of people with disabilities, and women account for 48%. The proportion of people with disabilities living in rural areas is greater (75% of people with disabilities) than the proportion living in urban areas (25% of people with disabilities) (CDPF 2006).

3. Policy and legislative context of disability inclusion in China

In 2006, the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which aims to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and promote respect for their inherent dignity. Both the Chinese Government and the government-organised China Disabled Persons Federation (CDPF) played active roles during the negotiation process and the drafting of the CRPD. The Government of China signed the Convention in 2007, ratified it in 2008 and revised national law to align with the CRPD in 2008. The CRPD put the promotion of disability rights at the centre of the international funding agenda, which facilitated the emergence of disability rights advocacy in China that has led to major policy and legislative changes since 2008 (Huang 2019).

The most significant policies and legislation include:

- The Constitution provides a general principle of protection to people with disabilities, declaring "all citizens ... have the right to material assistance from the state and society when they are old, ill or disabled. The state develops the social insurance, social relief and medical and health

¹ Medical models understand disability as an individual physical or mental impairment along with the impairment's personal and social consequences, while social models understand the association between disability and well-being as "highly contingent, mediated by a variety of environmental and social factors" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).

Social models tend to interrogate the overarching systems which classify or segregate people and their characteristics or experiences based on norms of ability and disability (ibid). This is the model which is used to frame the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

services that are required to enable citizens to enjoy this right..."

- The Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons was enacted in 1991, and amended in 2008. The law addresses: rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural life, welfare, access, and legal liability. The amendment added provisions for stable financial support, improved medical care, and rehabilitation for people with disabilities, along with favourable employment and tax measures.
- The Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities (as amended in 2017) stipulate that the State guarantees the right of people with disabilities to equal access to education.
- The Regulations on Construction of Accessible Environment (2012) requires local governments to construct various public facilities to accommodate people with disabilities.
- The Mental Health Law (2012) standardises mental health care services, requiring general hospitals to set up special outpatient clinics and/or provide counselling. It calls for the training of more doctors and aims to prevent people from being involuntarily held and treated in psychiatric facilities.

4. Social attitudes toward disability in China

Stemming from Confucian ideology and traditional attitudes, many people in China believe that disabilities are linked to past wrongdoings, and that disability is a problem that needs to be “fixed” or pitied (Campbell and Uren 2011). Traditional attitudes attach a strong moral condemnation and stigma on people with disabilities and their families, even though the Confucian Book of Rites mentions that people with disabilities should be well taken care of. These attitudes, coupled with a lack of accessible facilities, has led to people with disabilities often being largely invisible from the public sphere, being kept in family homes and with limited presence at educational institutions and in the workplace (Campbell and Uren 2011; Dai 2017).

However, the changes in legislation and policy are slowly causing social attitudes to shift, with people with disabilities becoming more accepted and included in society. For example, new words are being used for people with disabilities that are less offensive than those used in the past (Dai 2017; Fjeld and Sagli 2011). For example, in Mandarin Chinese, the traditional word for a person with disabilities is “*canfei*” which means “useless person”, and the official government term is “*canji*”, which means “diseased (or ill) person”. However, people with disabilities and advocates are now using the term “*canzhang*” implying a person who faces barriers in their life, reflecting the emerging social model of disability in China (Dai 2017; Fjeld and Sagli 2011).

Since the CDPF was established in 1988, it has launched national campaigns to promote medical interventions, social protection, and legal mechanisms for people with disabilities. This has improved the awareness in society of people with disability as right holders. The ratification of the CRPD, along with the Beijing Paralympics in 2008, have led to the social or rights-based model being used and advocated for by both CDPF and people with disabilities. However, Chinese Human Rights Defenders (2019) note that the Chinese government and law still uses concepts such as ‘self-strengthening’ or ‘helping the disabled’ in discourse.

5. Progress on disability inclusion in recent years

a) Poverty alleviation

The CDPF and Chinese government have been focussing on poverty alleviation for people with disabilities in recent years. There has been a campaign based on “two assurances and three guarantees”, achieved in 2020, whereby impoverished people with disabilities and their families have been assured adequate food and clothing, and guaranteed access to compulsory education, basic medical services and safe housing (CDPF 2020). Since 2015, more than 7 million registered

people with disabilities have been lifted out of poverty (CDPF 2020). The per capita net income of poor families including people with disabilities has increased from 2,776.2 yuan in 2015 to 8,726.2 yuan in 2019, an average annual increase of 33.2% (CDPF 2020).

b) Social protection for people with disabilities in China

Historically, there has been a gap in the social protection system for people with disabilities. However, in 2015, China established a social welfare system for people with disabilities at the national level with a comprehensive living-subsidy system for people with disabilities and a nursing-care subsidy system for people with severe disabilities (Government of China 2018). More people with disabilities have also been brought into the scope of existing social assistance systems, and basic medical insurance has been subsidised for those who are unable to pay (Government of China 2018). The government has provided rural-skills training and placed 707,000 people with disabilities in employment (Government of China 2018).

c) Rehabilitation services

There has been an improvement in rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in recent years. Whilst historically there has been a gap in rehabilitation services, the 2017 Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities stipulate that the government must take measures to provide basic rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. In 2017, 8.547 million children with disabilities received basic rehabilitation services and the coverage rate of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities reached 65% (Government of China 2018).

The 'Regulation on the Prevention and Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons' was issued in 2017 and formulated to prevent and reduce physical disabilities and to promote people with disabilities' rehabilitation (Zhao and Zhang 2017). It represents progress in promoting people with disabilities' health and living conditions, and is partly consistent with the principles of the CRPD (Zhao and Zhang 2017). However, people with disabilities were not consulted in the making of the policy and the national rehabilitation service system relies on communities and families of people with disabilities and mainly focuses on the youth and those who live in cities (Zhao and Zhang 2017). This has meant that the requirements of people with hidden disabilities and people with disabilities living in rural areas have not been satisfied.

6. Current gaps in disability inclusion in China

a) Lack of participation in political and public life

People with disabilities in China have a lack of access to decision-making processes that affect them. Although there is a growing disability movement, the global movement's slogan 'nothing about us without us' is yet to be fully realised in China. People with disabilities lack meaningful participation in political and public life, such as through consultations for new disability inclusive policies. For example, people with disabilities were not consulted during the drafting of the Regulation on the Prevention and Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in 2017 (Zhao and Zhang 2017). The Foreign NGO Law and Charity Law also curbs the participation of OPDs in society (International Service for Human Rights 2020).

b) Limited focus on gender in disability policies and programmes

There is currently a limited focus on gender in disability-focused policies and programmes, or a disability perspective in gender equality legislation, policies and programmes in China. This is despite the fact that globally, women with disabilities are more at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and often have limited social, political and economic opportunities, and a lack of access to basic services (Source 2021). As women with disabilities are not being specifically targeted by gender or disability policies, there is a risk that they are being left behind.

During the concluding observations (17–28 September 2012) of the initial CRPD report of China (including Hong Kong and Macau), the International Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed deep concern about the repeated occurrence of domestic violence against women and girls with disabilities; incidents of women and girls with intellectual disabilities being subjected to sexual violence, as well as the heightened risk of violence against women and girls with disabilities experiencing domestic violence and abuse; and the practice of forced sterilisation and forced abortion on women with disabilities without free and informed consent (UNCESCO 2013). Domestic violence services and legal information are often not accessible for people with disabilities in China, for example hotlines set up in a number of cities in China are not accessible to people with hearing disabilities (Women Enabled International 2018). Since then, China has passed a new Family Law which protects against domestic violence, with the protection of people with disabilities specifically included in the law, after long term advocacy by civil society, UN agencies and scholars (Tingting 2016). There is a need to further integrate gender and disability into legislation, policies and programmes in China and the UN's Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020) has requested more information from the Chinese government on this.

c) People with disabilities living in rural areas

People with disabilities living in rural areas experience less inclusion in society than people with disabilities living in urban areas, and there is a lack of measures from the government to accelerate equality. The 2006 census found that there are more people with disabilities living in rural areas (75% of people with disabilities) than in urban areas (25% of people with disabilities) (CDPF 2006). A recent study on people with disabilities' healthcare requirements found that people with disabilities in rural areas had 13-40% higher levels of unmet healthcare requirements (Zhao and Wang 2021). This may be due to barriers to accessing facilities and health professionals (Zhao and Wang 2021). There is also evidence that women with disabilities from rural areas experience domestic violence at a higher rate than those from urban areas (Yuan 2013). Civil society organisations (CSOs) have called for more disaggregated data by province/region and ethnicity to better understand variations in access to social services and public goods, particularly in Yi, Tibetan, Turkic Muslim and Uyghur ethnic communities (International Service for Human Rights 2020; Chinese Human Rights Defenders 2019).

7. The disability movement in China

a) From advocacy to service provision

After the ratification of the CRPD, progress on disability rights has slowed in recent years. In 2016, the Overseas NGO Law outlawed Chinese NGOs and individuals from receiving any form of funding or delegations from an overseas NGO. This has had a disproportionate effect on the disability rights movement in China which, as a relatively new movement, relied heavily on overseas funding (Huang 2019). The 2016 Charity Law, which allows only formally registered CSOs to raise funds from the public, has further restricted funding options. Most organisations for people with disabilities (OPDs) are now service providers, pursuing government contracts, rather than advocacy and policy change (Huang 2019).

b) Building a movement

However, service provision represents an opportunity to bring people with disabilities together, for example through providing the service of independent living skills training. In recent years this has led to a disability consciousness emerging in China, with a collective identity starting to form amongst people with disabilities (Huang 2019).

Service providers are beginning to provide rights-based services (Huang 2019). For example, the One

Plus One Group of Disability (OPO), the most influential OPD in China, used to be an advocacy-oriented organisation which submitted the first independent shadow report of the CRPD to the United Nations in 2012. It has been restructuring itself since 2016 and now operates five social service organisations, three social enterprises and one foundation to implement rehabilitation services besides policy advocacy. In doing so, the OPO has become more responsive to the service needs of the grassroots community, attracting more members than it did previously when it only did advocacy (Huang 2019).

In 2014, OPO initiated Disability Voice Month (November each year) as an advocacy initiative. In 2014 there were only 57 DPOs that actively engaged in the Disability Voice Month movement, but this number increased to 147 in 2015. By 2016, it helped more than 150 organisations to obtain external resources and carry out advocacy activities by themselves (Zhang 2017).

c) Moving towards a social model of disability

Recent policies are showing a shift towards more transformational, social models of disability which follow the rights-based approach of the CRPD. For example, the 'Regulation on the Education of Disabled Persons', revised in 2017, now promotes inclusive education whereby people with disabilities can either go to mainstream school or a disability-focused school which has differentiated education resources based on diverse groups of people with disabilities (Zhao and Zhang 2017). However, educational administrative departments still decide access to mainstream schools and education policy does not nurture awareness of the rights of people with disabilities (Zhao and Zhang 2017).

8. Disability-inclusive education in China

China's Law on Compulsory Education stipulates that school-age children with disabilities have the right to receive compulsory education in mainstream schools or schools specifically for people with disabilities. In 2017, the enrolment ratio in compulsory education among children with visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities was over 90%, with more than 50% of students with disabilities attending classes in mainstream schools (UNICEF 2018). However, children with disabilities are still experiencing exclusionary attitudes and processes at school due to social attitudes together with a competitive and performative educational culture (Wang 2021). The participation of children with disabilities in senior secondary education is still limited (UNICEF 2018).

The accessibility of universities has improved in recent years. The Ministry of Education formalised the provision of reasonable accommodations for the university examination for students with visual, hearing and physical impairments in 2015. There are now almost 6 times more people with disabilities being admitted to mainstream colleges compared to disability focussed colleges (Lei 2018).

9. Disability-inclusive employment in China

As of 2020, out of 32 million people with disabilities of working age, there were 8.617 million people with disabilities in employment, of whom 4.34 million worked in cities and towns and 4.24 million in the rural areas (CDPF 2021).

The Rules on the Employment of Disabled Persons, adopted in 2007, encourages social groups and individuals to support the employment of people with disabilities through various means, and bans discrimination based on ableism. The Employment Promotion Law (2007) contains an anti-discrimination provision relating to people with disabilities.

The Government of China has also established a quota system requiring all public and private employers to reserve no less than 1.5% of job opportunities for people with disabilities. However,

there are reports that the quota system is not being implemented properly, with Chinese companies choosing to pay the fines rather than meeting the quotas (Feng 2018). There is currently no openly available disaggregated data on the number of investigations into violations of the quota system or the employers and amounts that have been fined (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2020).

There have been reports that people with cognitive impairments in China may be vulnerable to modern slavery, for example by being forced to work in brick kilns (Demick 2011).

10. Disability-inclusive health in China

A recent analysis of 9,642,112 adults with disabilities in China found high levels of unmet healthcare needs. 45.6% of adults with disabilities in China need more rehabilitation services than they receive, 15.4% lack medical treatment when ill, and 13.7% lack accessible facilities (Zhao and Wang 2021). People in rural areas have 13-40% higher levels of unmet healthcare requirements, which may be due to community-level factors such as access to facilities and health professionals (Zhao and Wang 2021). In general, people with multiple disabilities have the highest rates of unmet care, medical and accessibility requirements, whereas those with physical disability have the highest unmet rehabilitation requirements (Zhao and Wang 2021).

About 81% of elderly people with disabilities in China depend on a family member as their primary caregiver (Chen et al. 2020). Whether they use more formal care is heavily correlated with whether they have health insurance (Chen et al. 2020). In recent years, the government of China has made efforts to ensure more people have health insurance, integrating the previously separate urban and rural health insurance systems. There is evidence that this has significantly reduced the total medical and out-of-pocket costs for patients with a psychosocial disability (Xie et al. 2019).

11. People with hidden disabilities in China

Not all disabilities are visible, some disabilities may not be immediately apparent. Hidden, or invisible, disabilities can include: autism, chronic pain, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, mobility impairments, speech impairments, sensory impairments, respiratory conditions, chronic conditions such as diabetes, and sleep disorders that significantly impact daily life. People with hidden disabilities often experience unique barriers to social inclusion, for example a lack of understanding and negative attitudes.

According to a recent study, the prevalence of psychosocial disabilities (including mood disorders, anxiety disorders, alcohol-use and drug-use disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and dementia) in China is 9.3%-16.6% and anxiety is the most common type of psychosocial disability (Huang et al. 2019). The prevalence of most psychosocial disabilities in China was found to be higher in 2013 than in 1982, when it was 1.1% to 1.3%. Another recent study using a mental health survey found that the prevalence of depression was higher amongst women than men and amongst unemployed people than employed people (Lu et al. 2021). It also found that only 0.5% participants with depression received adequate treatment (Lu et al. 2021).

Other hidden disabilities are also prevalent in China. In 2020, the first national prevalence study on autism found prevalence amongst children aged 6-12 years old to be 0.7% (Zhou 2020). Autistic people in China may face barriers such as limited public awareness, long waiting lists for services and the need for expansion of services (Braddick 2018). Chronic illnesses are becoming increasingly prevalent due to the ageing Chinese population. Almost 80% of deaths in China in

people over 60 years old are from chronic non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, strokes and diabetes (Thomas et al. 2020).

12. Disability inclusion and international trade with China

a) Consumption

The State Council estimated that China's assistive technology industry was valued around 700 billion yuan (US\$102 billion) in 2020, nearly 160% of its value in 2015. The market is growing fast under the government support and interventions. In October 2016, China's State Council issued 'Several Opinions of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of the Assistive Device Industry' to promote the development of the disability aids industry. Under the policy, China invites established foreign companies to set up research and development (R&D) centres in the assistive technology domain – together with Chinese businesses. In December 2017, the Ministry of Civil Affairs announced it will establish pilot zones for the assistive technology industry in 12 municipalities. In addition, China's Ministry of Commerce encourages the assistive technology industry to hold more expos and fairs. It opened to foreign exhibitors in 2018.

While it is suggested that the first beneficiaries of those policies are domestic companies, Chinese government aims to promote medical innovation to meet its "Made in China 2025" targets. Although the new plan emphasises domestic participation and innovation, foreign companies can benefit from its ambitious scope in the short term, by offering higher-end products and services in assistive technology. China's medical insurance coverage also includes only a few assistive devices and only those that are produced by local firms. While there are thousands of assistive devices in the world, China's medical insurance covers only around 20 types of these products.

According to Alibaba Foundation (2019), from June 2018 to May 2019, 5.53 million people with disabilities in China shopped on Taobao, an e-commerce site, generating RMB 23.86 billion in sales. According to the statistics, the consumption of male shoppers accounted for 56%, higher than that of female (44%), which is opposite to the consumption amount distribution by gender among general shoppers.

b) Digital Entrepreneurs

According to CDPF, there are 634,000 people with disabilities who have individual business in 2020. According to big data from the China Disabled Persons' Federation and Alibaba, from June 2018 to May 2019, 174,100 online stores set up on Taobao by people with disabilities achieved sales revenue totalling RMB 11.663 billion. About 21,800 stores owned by people with disabilities achieved monthly sales higher than RMB 30,000 in May 2019 (Alibaba Foundation, 2019).

c) Value Chains

China is one of the biggest producers in value chains, and people with disabilities' work could be untapped opportunities. Ethical Trading Initiative has developed a disability inclusion guide to support its members' Chinese suppliers in garment value chains (Ethical Trading Initiative 2018).

Brands like L'Oreal, LinkedIn, Starbucks, Apple, and Standard Chartered Group are developing programs to support their Chinese value chains employing people with disabilities. Considering the gap between the need for skilled workers and the limited qualifications amongst people with disabilities in China, the above-mentioned companies started to invest funds to develop inclusive programmes with Chinese Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems.

d) Emerging Opportunities: Digitalisation

In Sep 2020, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and CDPF issued guidance on promoting information accessibility. It states that by the end of 2025, a more complete and accessible information system will be built, aiming for no barriers to governmental and private information services and desirable products. The aim includes to build an information barrier-free evaluation system, incorporate barrier-free information, and into urban construction, and deliver information technology services to the whole society. This guidance already attracts investments and transforms the IT industry towards digital inclusion. Major Chinese IT companies like Tencent, Alibaba, Baidu, Betadance started to adopt various programs looking for talented people with disabilities and to make their products more digitally inclusive. For example, the Information Accessibility Products Alliance, which is a unified organisation that is established to promote China's connected networks and accessible information products by Alibaba Group, Tencent, Baidu, Microsoft and other 40 major Chinese IT companies.

To further promote collaboration in business opportunities and disability inclusion, the ILO Global Business and Disability Network China Chapter (GBDN-China), launched in 2018, brings together businesses, OPDs and NGOs with the aim of generating inclusive employment for people with disabilities, inclusion in business operation, running seminars and job fairs and offering practical advice to companies (ILO 2019).

13. Chinese tourists with disabilities

The inclusive tourism market in China is still in its early stage. There are a few Chinese businesses operating in this industry. For example, in 2018, the Kanghui Travel Group's "Love Trip Program" was officially launched, offering tour routes for people with disabilities, equipped with sign language guides, and less obstacles for people with mobility impairments. It also provides accessible rooms and barrier-free facilities in its affiliated Capital Hotel Group. Another Chinese major player in this industry is C-trip, founder of the first "Global Travel SOS" in December 2018, a platform used to accommodate travellers' particular requirements, including those of people with disabilities. In the middle of 2019, C-trip launched its first "barrier-free tourism plan" with more than 6,000 accessible service items. Its booking website attaches a label "accessible travel" on its international service, including supporting services such as providing wheelchairs and other reasonable accommodations (Zhihu 2019). There is limited data on the results of the inclusive tourism program under Kanghui Travel Group and C-trip.

Rare & Roll, a Chinese startup social enterprise focused on disability and accessibility in the tourism industry conducted an interview to 631 travelers with disabilities in 2019. It finds that most of them spent 1,000-6,000 RMB each year in tourism, and 21% of them spend less than 1,000 RMB, only 38% of them would spend more than 5,000 RMB. Among them, 6.28% will spend more than 20,000 RMB and those people are more frequent in surfing tourist websites abroad (Institute of Accessibility Development 2019).

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About Helpdesk reports: The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk is funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, contracted through the Disability Inclusion Team (DIT) under the Disability Inclusive Development Programme. Helpdesk reports are based on between 3 and 4.5 days of desk-based research per query and are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues and expert thinking on issues around disability inclusion. Where referring to documented evidence, Helpdesk teams will seek to understand the methodologies used to generate evidence and will summarise this in Helpdesk outputs, noting any concerns with the robustness of the evidence being presented. For some Helpdesk services, in particular the practical know-how queries, the emphasis will be focused far less on academic validity of evidence and more on the validity of first-hand experience among disabled people and practitioners delivering and monitoring programmes on the ground. All sources will be clearly referenced.

Helpdesk services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations and individual experts on disability, including Social Development Direct, Sightsavers, Leonard Cheshire Disability, ADD International, Light for the World, Humanity & Inclusion, BRAC, BBC Media Action, Sense and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Expert advice may be sought from this Group, as well as from the wider academic and practitioner community, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of FCDO, the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk or any of the contributing organisations/experts.

For any further request or enquiry, contact enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk

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