

## Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Note: Prosperity Fund

Query title	Disability inclusion training for the UK Prosperity Fund: Q&A
Authors	Lorraine Wapling
Date	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020

### Q&A

- 1. I find it more tricky to understand the practical implications of the UN Convention for partner governments – i.e. does it actually act as a hook for engagement, or is it seem as something occurring in abstract?*

Generally, one of the reasons I like to talk about the CRPD is because it is quite a practical document. It's a widely ratified treaty (currently has 181 ratifications) so it is highly likely the countries in which you work will have signed up. It has started to make a difference in terms of raising awareness of the rights of disabled people and the need to challenge barriers which have excluded them from economic and social participation. Because disability is so often associated with a medical approach (assuming it's just about providing medical based interventions) or understood mostly in terms of disabled people being unable to work / dependent etc the CRPD has been an important tool for pressuring services providers / governments to take the issue of inclusion seriously. It is certainly a powerful tool for disabled people themselves and is leading governments to either enact or revise disability equality legislation.

There is still a long way to go, disability equality legislation remains quite patchy in its quality and there are associated resource issues when it comes to putting things into practice. There is also less emphasis very often on recourse mechanisms – being able to legally challenge governments or service providers / private companies on their provisions for example. Nevertheless, it is a good starting point for conversations on disability inclusion and how to put that into practice.

- 2. Could you say something about the ongoing debates about definition/conceptualisation of disability, or is the UNCRPD/rights-based approach broadly accepted*

Before we had the CRPD there was widespread differentiation in how disability was conceptualised. Whilst the CRPD doesn't actually define disability, it does provide a rights-based frame within which disability can be understood that is not debatable – it's very clear:

“... disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on a equal basis with others.’ (CRPD Preamble, 5)

One of the reasons I always spend quite a bit of time with new groups talking about the rights-based approach to disability (and the CRPD) is because whilst the framework is no longer debatable the extent to which people understand what a rights-based approach means in

## Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Note: Prosperity Fund

---

practice is less secure. In many contexts, disability is still something that is experienced as shameful and comes with a lot of stigma. This can make it hard to talk about. Without awareness raising the stigma and discrimination will persist which manifests very often in non rights-based definitions being used. So, it is important that whenever you get the chance you are able to ensure people understand disability from a rights perspective and use CRPD compliant definitions whenever you need to collect data.

### *3. Given the PF focus on macro-economic reform in favour of inclusive growth – could you say something about barriers at the policy/enabling environment/trade level?*

Very often when you are working at a high level it can seem fairly impossible to focus on individual inclusion issues. I think there are a couple of things to focus on that can be really, really important. Firstly, it's important to look at the wording of policies (or programmes) and underlying assumptions being promoted through these policies (or programmes). You should be mindful of taking a Do No Harm approach – ensuring from a policy perspective that no-one is being disadvantaged specifically through the policy / programme. When looking at policy reform processes then it is more common to bring in a gender perspective – essentially with disability inclusion the process is pretty much the same. You are looking to free up space to make it as accessible as possible to the largest number of people. When looking specifically at working on lifting trade restrictions for example you are trying to understand who traders are, what issues they face and where changes could be made to improve their opportunities (or conversely to look at the impact of trade restrictions on a range of different groups). You can do this from a gender perspective, looking at the relative impacts of changes on men and women traders for example. By adding in a disability perspective, you are likely to broaden the range of those included (older people for example) but the process is pretty much the same. What you have to do is make the assumption that disabled people will be involved in trade – this is where you may need to actively challenge assumptions and where gaps might exist. It comes up also in relation to procurement processes – looking at ways to ensure the kinds of equipment/technology used by disabled people is as easily available as possible. Overall, it's about gaining an understanding of what economic participation means for people with disabilities – getting their perspectives and inputs, making sure that situational analyses consider their barriers, and about seeing the potential they offer.

### *4. I'm keen to hear your perspective on working in communities where disabled people are routinely segregated from mainstream society (i.e. institutionalised) – what additional steps can be taken to ensure inclusion?*

In terms of communities where people with disabilities are segregated, it is really, really important that programmes aimed at providing economic empowerment are inclusive. That will likely involve a lot of awareness raising and challenging deep rooted stigma. It's basically the same process you'd use to ensure any marginalised group is included. It's not a different process, it should be one that is incorporated into current ways of working. It may be that work has to be done in communities to challenge negative attitudes and stigma in order to help them realise disabled people are able to live (and will be living) amongst them – that segregation is not the norm. Awareness raising is really important in this.

In terms of institutions – the UK government is very clear that it does not support the

## Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Note: Prosperity Fund

---

institutionalisation of disabled people so projects should not be set up with this aim in mind – we shouldn't be supporting institutions but should be assisting in the promotion of de-institutionalisation. This is complex because it will involve multiple layers – from national policies, funding to individual circumstances. Where institutionalisation is the norm that will often mean that the majority of services required by disabled people will only be available through institutions (and hence families will feel forced into institutionalisation as the only way to get support) so its not simply a matter of closing them down. Unpicking all of the related services and ensuring their replacement is available at community level can take a lot of time. Moving to 'sheltered spaces' – workshops, residence etc is a more inclusive approach, especially when they are economically meaningful for people. If you are supporting sheltered workshops/work placements then they need to be meaningful and not exploitative (Do No Harm approach is really important) and appropriate safeguarding needs to be in place. But you also have to be careful to ensure this is not a system being put in place because there is no other choice – because the rest of the economy is not accessible.

*5. Are Washington Group questions recommended for all our programmes? A lot of our programmes focus at policy level or governance. How would the individual focus work for those? What were WG questions designed for?*

The WG questions were originally designed to be used in the context of national surveys / census exercises as a way to obtain prevalence data. They are in fact primarily designed to provide data on prevalence – it's important to stress they are not designed to diagnose or identify disability in individuals. There are a few different sets available, the most widely used is the Short Set – a basic set of six questions which are usually used on adult populations. There are Child Functioning question sets designed specifically for use in children and young people (0-18 years). The key features of the WG sets are they are designed within the rights framework (hence they are compliant with the CRPD) and they are by far the most reliable way to collect disability disaggregated data on a population level (which means data can be compared over time and across different contexts). DFID promotes use of the WG questions whenever disability disaggregated data is collected. They are therefore recommended in all contexts where population data is being collected. Increasingly projects and programmes are using WG questions when they do surveys or in general monitoring so that any data collected can be disaggregated by disability status. So, if you are running programmes that are collecting population data then you should be utilising WG questions. It can be used to understand what percentage of the programme beneficiaries or stakeholders have disabilities, which may help in understanding whether or not they are accessing interventions. Where a specific intention has been declared to be inclusive of disabled people then this level of information will be essential in being able to demonstrate you are meeting expectations.

*6. Language related to the gender equality act and how we should interpret?*

Claire noted in her response to this issue: many points mentioned so far resonate, especially in relation to creating inclusive workplaces for everyone. That's about gender but it can be extended to be inclusive of a whole range of different people. More specific work is perhaps needed looking at attitudinal barriers. For the most part, a lot of the gender and inclusion work should incorporate this broader perspective in terms of quality programming. Initially a lot of suppliers noted the fact we have signed up to the Gender Equality Act so they see this potentially

## Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Note: Prosperity Fund

---

as an added extra this is optional rather than really focusing on the fact that the Sustainable Development Goals also focus on this leave no one behind agenda and have elements of disability throughout. So its important for us to think about that even though the Gender Equality Act is one component we also have very much identified that we are responding to the SDGs as well.

7. *Interesting slide on private sector engagement. I think there is another side to this from PF secondary benefits angle. Where is British business in terms of innovation, responding to the interests of people with disabilities, developing & producing the types of adaptive equipment (is that the right term?) that you are talking about?*

[Global Disability Innovation Hub](#) is based at UCL on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and is probably the most cutting-edge source for this kind of innovation at the moment.

A couple of other websites/forums are bringing businesses together to come up with innovative ways to include disabled people including: the UKs [Business Disability Forum](#) and the [European Disability Hub](#).

8. *Should we also be encouraging our delivery partners to have a diverse and inclusive workforce? - what are the best ways of doing this, where have you seen good practice?*

Yes, in fact one of the practical suggestions in the slide deck highlights the importance of ensuring disability inclusive practices amongst those delivering programmes. It's good to start with awareness raising, encouraging partners to engage directly with organisations of disabled people (especially those that can offer disability equality training for example – it can be a good business to support), having disability access audits carried out so they can work on removing some of the easiest barriers. Audits can also be carried out in relation to recruitment and HR policies/practices and positive messaging around hiring disabled people are all well recognised techniques (much of which will be along the same lines as those related to gender).

I think it's also important when working through partners, to ensure that you are transparent in your expectations of them. It's good to set ambitious targets together, to ensure you are both understanding the need for inclusion in the same way and that you are supportive in terms of providing access to and resources for training for example. It won't happen instantly, but small changes can be effective as people become more familiar with talking about and working with disabled people.

There can be a lot of stigma around disability in some contexts so it's really important to make sure you are taking that into consideration – not that you should be any less ambitious but that it may take more time/resources to gain traction.

9. *In Ukraine (and I imagine possibly other Embassies/country offices?) one of the issues with influencing our partners to do more on disability is that the UK Embassy is not accessible to those with physical impairments (e.g. those in wheelchairs).*

This is not uncommon, but it also should not be an excuse! Being aware that a premises is inaccessible is the first step to being able to do something about it. There are mitigations that

## Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Note: Prosperity Fund

---

can be made, even temporarily in order to improve access.

Remember also that access extends well beyond just providing step-free access – you need to think about communication and information as well (such as websites etc).

You could start things off by having an accessibility audit carried out – that will provide a plan as to where access can be improved looking at short to long term solutions. Being proactive in doing this kind of thing will send out positive messages and if you are able to support disabled-led businesses to carry out these audits that's also a way to build relationships.

You can also look to hosting events in accessible venues and with access accommodations in place for participants and speakers – making sure that you are doing what you can where you can will send positive messages out to others.

*10. Can you present few examples of mainstreaming disability inclusive programming in PF programs globally. Thinking more from implementing it for India programme and ways of approaching it.*

The Helpdesk is currently offering a query option to Prosperity Fund programmes to identify progress, entry points and opportunities to do more on disability inclusion, with a view to programmes sharing these at a G&I champions meeting down the line. If you would like more info please email [enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk)

Please note that the presentation included a section on implementing disability equitable programmes (slides 15-19) with some practical examples from relevant sectors. There is a need to expand on practical implementation with case studies from PF programming or relevant DFID programmes to date. This will be organised as a follow on webinar in due course to accompany and build on this introductory session.

*11. Are there training sessions available for delivery partners?*

Currently these trainings are limited to HMG owing to the specifications of the contract with SDD on the disability helpdesk. We will look into developing further how to guidance including details on training options available outside of this direct facility.

*12. One more question that can be picked up later... What is the scope for programmes that are into implementation but didn't focus on disability inclusion during Design phase?*

This is something we can pick up later, but in essence the best place to start is in data gathering. If you can build in some opportunities to start collecting monitoring data which is disaggregated by disability that would help to show the extent to which disabled people are currently accessing programmes. Awareness raising sessions can be held to start sensitising people to what will be coming next. Build up relationships with organisations of and working with disabled people so that when you come to scope out new programme ideas you have groups of disabled people you can bring into consultation processes. If there are opportunities for doing some small scale qualitative (or quant) research on the lived experiences of disabled people that could also help. Start becoming familiar with government policies and approaches to

## Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Note: Prosperity Fund

---

disability. Build a disability element into endline evaluations so that you are building up a picture of where potential gaps may lay.

### Resources mentioned

Accenture (2018) *Getting to Equal: the Disability Inclusion Advantage*.

[https://www.accenture.com/\\_acnmedia/pdf-89/accenture-disability-inclusion-research-report.pdf](https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/pdf-89/accenture-disability-inclusion-research-report.pdf)

International Disability Alliance (IDA) (2020) *International Disability Alliance Key Recommendations toward a Disability-Inclusive COVID19 Response*.

<http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/covid-19-and-disability-movement>