

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk

Evidence Digest
Issue 1, June 2019



Latest evidence

Here is a selection of the latest evidence on disability inclusion:

DFID-funded research on disability inclusion

[Evidence gap map and narrative report](#)

In the run-up to the UK government-hosted Global Summit on Disability in July 2018, DFID funded a number of studies examining the effectiveness of programmes for people with disabilities. The web-based [evidence gap map](#) outlines the quality and availability of existing evidence (from impact evaluations and systematic reviews) across a range of sectors. The accompanying [narrative report](#) (White et al., 2018) describes the findings from the mapping as well as two subsequent rapid evidence assessments (REAs) in [education](#) and [social inclusion and empowerment](#) programming.

The mapping found 158 eligible studies - the bulk of the evidence is in health, followed by education. There is limited evidence on social inclusion programmes and virtually none related to empowerment programming. Gaps included high-quality primary studies, and studies in low-income countries, particularly in Africa. The REAs found that most evaluations relate to programmes targeted at individuals with specific impairment types and attempt to improve their skills or behaviour, however there are far fewer relating to institutional and

systemic interventions which take a rights-based approach to disability inclusion. The report suggests that a research agenda should focus on evaluating rights-based approaches.

Data

[Analysis of disability data from 40 countries](#) (July 2018)

This report – prepared ahead of the 2018 Global Disability Summit - presents an overview of the Disability Data Portal Project, including findings for 16 indicators related to four key thematics (inclusion in education, routes to economic empowerment, harnessing technology and innovation, and tackling stigma and discrimination) across 40 countries.

The methodology involves collating pre-existing population level data that could be disaggregated by disability against selected SDG and other priority development indicators. The report - and corresponding online portal (www.disabilitydataportal.com) - identifies sources of available data and existing data gaps. It also provides a framework for the global community for how disability data can be accessed and analysed, to support the monitoring and evaluation

efforts for SDG-related goals, targets and indicators.

[Review of the use of the Washington Group Questions](#) (WGQ) (October 2018)

The report, based on mixed methods research by Leonard Cheshire and Humanity & Inclusion, finds that when used correctly, the WGQ can identify the prevalence of disability within a programme. The report also outlines a number of positive benefits of using the WGQ, including generating a better understanding of disability among staff, shifting organisational culture, and improving organisational communications about and with people with disabilities.

Common challenges included a lack of clarity within organisations around the purpose and scope of data, with organisations and individuals frequently misinterpreting the WGQ as a diagnosis tool. The research also highlighted that the WGQ often underestimate the number of people with psychosocial disabilities, and the report recommends the use of the WG extended set in order to more accurately estimate the prevalence of mental health issues. The report highlights challenges applying the WGQ in humanitarian settings in particular, and states that they may not be suitable in every context.

Finally, the report emphasises that adopting and embedding the WGQ is a process which will require sufficient training and guidance for organisations to ensure optimal use to improve inclusive programming.

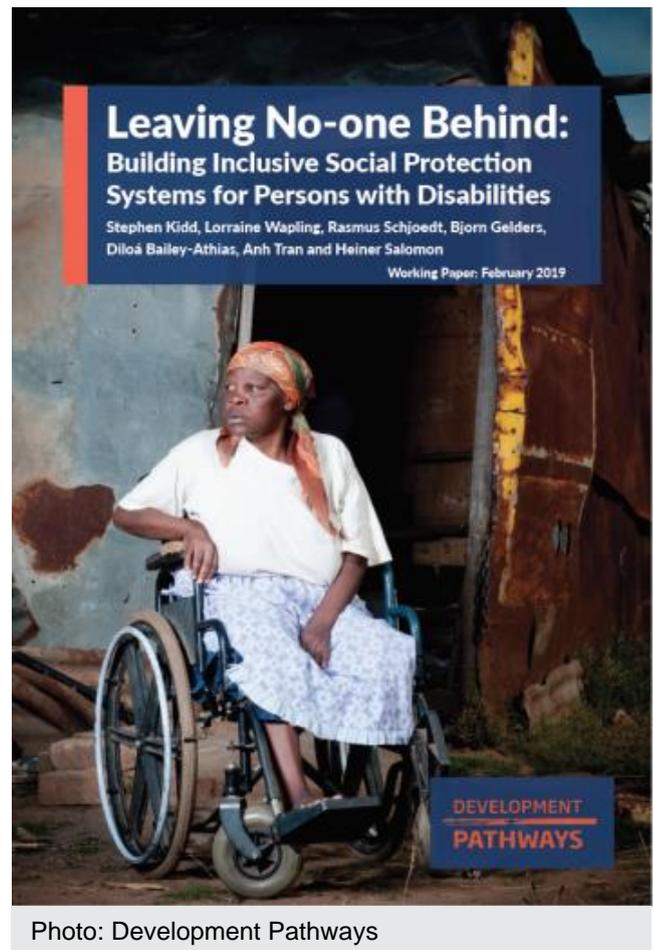
Gender-based violence

[Study on GBV among women and girls in Gaza and the West Bank](#) (March 2019)

This study by UNFPA maps available services, identifies gaps and challenges in service delivery, and analyses roles of stakeholders in delivering services to women and girls with disabilities who are survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The study finds that in a context where services are generally limited and inadequate, girls and women with disabilities face significant challenges in accessing services as they are not accessible to persons with disabilities, and service providers lack of capacity to respond to the needs of women and girls with disabilities.

Social protection

[Building inclusive social protection systems for people with disabilities](#) (April 2019)



This study by Development Pathways, based on mixed-methods research in seven low and middle-income countries, finds little evidence on the extent to which people with disabilities access national social protection schemes, although there is some evidence that access differs by the type and severity of impairment. The study finds some evidence that coverage of persons with disabilities varies across and within different types of schemes, with universal old age pensions and disability benefits offering a much higher coverage of persons with disabilities than those targeted at the poorest members of society. However, there is very limited evidence on the impacts of social protections schemes on people with disabilities, due to a lack of disaggregated data.

The study identifies a wide range of barriers in accessing social protection programmes for people with disabilities, including at the policy

level (i.e. low levels of awareness, discrimination and weak institutions); the design level (i.e. ineffective and insufficient disability assessment mechanisms, restricted coverage, and conditional transfers); and implementation level (i.e. lack of accessible communications, complex application processes, costs associated with registration, and a lack of disability disaggregated data within monitoring systems).

The report makes a number of recommendations on how to make social protection systems and schemes more inclusive of people with disabilities, including the need to generate better data on disability within social protection schemes, expanding coverage, ensuring accessible communications, improving disability assessment mechanisms, and building disability sensitive monitoring systems.

Policy and News

UK policy updates

In December 2018, DFID launched its new [Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) outlining an ambitious agenda for DFID's work in the next five years. The strategy includes a set of [minimum and higher achievement standards](#) in five areas: office-wide approach and culture, engagement and empowerment of people with disabilities, influencing, programming, and data, evidence and learning. The publication of the strategy followed the UK hosting the first ever [Global Disability Summit](#) in July.



Photo: Sightsavers/Ambrose Watanda

The [International Development Committee \(IDC\) is holding an inquiry](#) into DFID's work on disability. It has examined a number of questions including around the DFID strategy and commitments, global influence, spend, support to country offices and investment to fill knowledge and data gaps. Written submissions were due in late February, followed by oral evidence sessions. They are due to report in July.

Other policy and news

[In March, the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan signed a bill ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#), one of three former Soviet countries that have signed. There are approximately 180,000 people with in Kyrgyzstan.



Photo: Svetlana Zelenskaya/Amnesty International

[Renewed focus on disability in conflicts, displacement and humanitarian action.](#)

For the first time in over a decade, the UN secretary-general's [report on protection of civilians in armed conflict](#) (2019) documents the experiences of older people and people with disabilities, recognising that people with disabilities are highly vulnerable in conflict situations and that women and girls with disabilities are at high risk of exploitation and abuse. The [2019 Security Council Resolution renewing the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan](#) also highlights the dire situation of people with disabilities in conflict, stressing the need for humanitarian response to address the needs of people with disabilities. In March 2019, UNHCR published a revised guidance on [working with persons with disabilities in forced displacement](#), which outlines a set of guiding principles and approaches for actors working in this field.

Earlier this year, President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi of Egypt [approved a law establishing a National Council for People with Disabilities](#). Comprised of the president, vice president and 17 members with disabilities, this independent body aims to ‘promote, develop and protect the rights of persons with disabilities and their constitutional dignity’.

In January 2019, Nigeria’s new Disability Rights Act was signed into law. In March 2019, [the Disability Rights Advocacy Centre \(DRAC\) launched an accessible version of the act](#).

In Myanmar, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement announced it plans to [conduct a survey in 2020 on disability, including on education, health, employment outcomes](#).

Humanity & Inclusion has launched an [e-learning toolkit to improve data collection on persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises](#). The two-hour course - available in English, French and Arabic - will support humanitarian workers to understand, plan for and use the Washington Group Questions (WGQs) to identify persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. The toolkit has so far been tested in 13 countries by nine organisations.

The United Nations Human Rights Council held a panel focusing on [good practices including children with disabilities in education settings](#) at its annual meeting on the rights of the child held in Geneva this March. The aim of the session was to look into good examples of how to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children with disabilities through accessible, inclusive and quality education with an emphasis on the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination as the basis for protecting human rights.

[The United Nations Statistical Commission held an event](#) in early March, which highlighted activities to improve the collection and use of disability data to meet the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[The 12th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) was held from 11th to 13th of June 2019 in the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

A total of [230 new disability-themed emojis](#) have been approved for use building on drawings submitted by Apple after it had consulted a range of disabled people’s organisations (DPOs).

Sightsavers launched the next phase of its policy campaign on gender equality, [#EqualUN](#), at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March. Last year, #EqualUN successfully campaigned for the election of more women to the Committee on the Rights of Person with Disabilities and six women were eventually elected to the Committee.



Updates from DFID-funded programmes:

Disability Inclusive Development Programme

The Disability Inclusive Development (DID) programme aims to deliver tangible outcomes for people with disabilities including access to education, jobs and healthcare, to reduce stigma and discrimination and to encourage global actors to prioritise the issue. The programme will also test innovative approaches to disability inclusion and generate high-quality research to fill gaps and discover what works in this under-resourced area. The programme is led by Sightsavers in partnership with ADD International, BBC Media Action, BRAC, Institute of Development Studies

(IDS), International Disability Alliance (IDA), Humanity & Inclusion, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Light for the World, Sense and Social Development Direct.

The programme concluded its design phase in April 2019. This focused on setting up its management and governance structures and processes as well as designing projects for the innovation and scale components of the programme across the six countries (Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Nepal, Bangladesh and Jordan) through in-country consultations and challenging the programme's theory of change. The 14 country-level interventions are designed to cut across livelihoods, education, stigma and discrimination, and health. The majority of these focus on testing innovative approaches to disability inclusion to fill gaps and discover what works. The programme also includes a research uptake component, under which the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk is funded.

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk Roundup

The Helpdesk has produced a number of query responses on the following topics over the last quarter;

- > Evidence on factors affecting access to and the uptake of **family planning** for women and girls with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries
- > Good practice in providing **inclusive education** in resource-constrained environments
- > Prevalence, incidence and severity of the **sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment** of people with disabilities
- > The **impact of training programmes** on employment
- and/or livelihoods outcomes for people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries
- > Evidence on approaches to ensuring people with disabilities are reached through **nutrition programming**, focusing on children, adolescents, and women of reproductive age in low- and middle-income countries
- > Key risk factors for **HIV among people with disabilities**
- > **Disability in Nigeria**
- > The evidence on disability inclusion in **humanitarian response**

WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE HELPDESK?

Send us an email and we can discuss your request further:

enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk