

Handout 7

STAGE TWO: DEFINITION OF DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The following principles can be applied to implement disability inclusive development using the rights based approach.

CBM Australia – *Inclusion Made Easy: Practice guide for disability inclusive development.*

1. Awareness

Awareness of disability and its implications is the crucial first step in development programs becoming inclusive.

People with a disability have lacked a voice at many levels of society, and attempts to identify and meet their needs have rarely occurred. Any strategy to increase awareness of disability must involve people with a disability in:

- ▶ Gaining an understanding of the situation for people with disabilities (and particularly the differential impacts on women and girls with a disability) within context, and the barriers they may face to participating and benefiting from development activities.
- ▶ Raising awareness with key partners, policy makers, decision makers and stakeholders of the need and ways to adopt disability-inclusive approaches.
- ▶ Raising awareness within communities regarding disability and the rights of people with disabilities.

2. Participation

Participation is about people with disabilities actively participating in decisions that affect their lives so that actions are not planned or implemented without their input.

People with disabilities are the experts on their own lived experiences of barriers to inclusion in society, and are therefore the most valuable voice in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs, and setting priorities when there are many options to consider.

It is particularly important to consider and act on the particular barriers to participation that women and children experience.

Extensive involvement of people with disabilities will build skills and capacity of all stakeholders. At the same time, people with and without disabilities working alongside each other can often foster changes in attitudes and understanding about abilities, contributions and aspirations of people with disabilities.

Working in partnership with DPOs (Disabled Peoples Organisations) is an important strategy and should be done in a way that embraces the mutual capacity building within the partnership. People with disabilities can be empowered and enabled by the confidence that results through the fostering of genuine partnership.

A few key points to remember when involving people with disabilities and DPOs:

- ▶ People with disabilities, particular women and girls may not be accustomed to voicing their opinions in meetings and may lack self-confidence. Be supportive and encouraging and specifically seek the input of people with disabilities in meetings. If necessary, consider strategies such as providing opportunities for consultation in small groups or gender specific groups.
- ▶ Ensure that there is equal partnership with development partners. Consider the context in which the DPO operates. DPOs are often very under-resourced and are increasingly in high demand from NGOs, governments and donors. Remember to reimburse DPOs for their time and support capacity development and organisational running costs where possible.
- ▶ Although people with disabilities are experts in their own lived experience of disability, they may not be experts in all development sectors and activities and support may need to be provided to enable DPOs to understand development concepts or source expertise from elsewhere. Building sector specific capacity among people with a disability (e.g. disability inclusive WASH, health promotion, inclusive education) is an important strategy and opportunities should be sought through a range of mechanisms to build this capacity.

3. Comprehensive Accessibility

Comprehensive accessibility ensures that physical, communication, policy and attitudinal barriers are both identified and addressed.

Accessibility is often understood as physical access. While this is critical, there is more to accessibility than physical barriers alone. Comprehensive accessibility is fundamental for the full inclusion of people with disabilities. Removing 'disabling' barriers and ensuring comprehensive access plays a significant role in creating opportunities for people with disabilities to participate.

Barriers can be grouped into four categories:

- ▶ Policy/institutional barriers
- ▶ Physical or environmental barriers
- ▶ Attitudinal barriers
- ▶ Communication barriers