ROADMAP 2023-2024

The inclusion of persons with disabilities in Swiss international cooperation

Summary

The Swiss Disability and Development Consortium (SDDC) has developed the following Roadmap for the period 2023 - 2024. The roadmap provides recommendations for a comprehensive pathway to render the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) efforts inclusive of persons with disabilities both at institutional and field level.[1]

Switzerland was reviewed under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in March 2022. The Committee made recommendations to the Swiss government on the following areas with explicit reference to implementation within Swiss international cooperation and humanitarian action:

- Ensuring the participation of diverse organizations of persons with disabilities in strategies and programs as well as the SDGs (Concluding Observation no. 10a, 62b); Mainstreaming the rights of women with disabilities across international cooperation strategies and programs and ensuring their effective participation through their representative organizations (14a, 14c);
- Adopting an action plan to implement the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (24b);
- Collecting and disaggregating data on disability in all humanitarian and development programs (60c);
- Adopting guidelines to ensure that all international cooperation programs are disability-inclusive (62a);
- Consistently applying the OECD DAC disability marker (62c).

Furthermore, at the Global Disability Summit 2023, Switzerland committed to:

1. Developing an action plan for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Switzerland's international cooperation
2. Successfully implementing this action plan and
3. Increasing consultation and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies and systems and in international cooperation

To help achieve and meet these recommendations and commitments, the SDDC strongly recommends the timely and holistic implementation of this roadmap.

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[1] This latest version is an update from the original Roadmap presented to the SDC in 2021. It complements the policy recommendations of the SDDC submitted to the CRPD Committee as well as other documentation and activities prepared by the Consortium. Please see www.leave-no-one-behind.ch.

Engagement and action are needed across SDC institutional and field operations levels, as well as through engagement in external networks to ensure a holistic approach. The SDDC stands ready to support the process as necessary.

1. Political commitment

> → Release a political declaration or statement in support of a disability inclusive Swiss development cooperation and humanitarian action

Clear demonstration of senior commitment to disability inclusion in international cooperation and humanitarian action is an essential first step. Switzerland will thereby send a strong message not only to the disability community, the Swiss parliament and development community, but also towards other development cooperation agencies and partners. A political statement will also provide additional internal buy-in and prioritization. Leadership on the issue should come from the top, with a clear statement on its importance for Swiss foreign affairs. This can be presented within the framework of Switzerland's obligations under the CRPD and its commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its key principle to 'leave no one behind'. Including persons with disabilities is essential for development and poverty reduction.[2]

With the adoption of this roadmap, the SDDC suggests the presentation of a political declaration or statement from Federal Councilor Ignazio Cassis, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and Patricia Danzi, Director SDC.

2. Structural embedding within SDC

> → 2.1. Ensure thematic expertise on DID within the SDC Secretariat

To ensure disability inclusion is mainstreamed across SDC, it is imperative that dedicated staff and coordination mechanism across thematic areas be in place. The placement of the disability portfolio under the responsibility of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) focal point is a welcome development. We encourage the SDC to consider hiring additional staff members, to ensure expertise and competency in the area, and to guarantee the necessary time and resources. It is important that persons with disabilities be recruited into the team.

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[2] United Nations. Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities, 2018. URL: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/publication-disability-sdgs.html

Over time and following internal capacity building (see point 3 on capacity building on DID), staff members across SDC headquarter, countries and regions could be nominated or nominate themselves to be DID champions, thereby creating an internal network on disability to help strengthen capacity and implementation. This could also be integrated into existing communities of practice. They would become the 'go-to' persons on questions related to DID within the organization and coordinate closely with the DID focal point and team.

3. Capacity building on DID

→ Develop and adapt capacity building programmes on DID for SDC staff

Capacity building can take shape in the form of dedicated workshops on DID as well as the adaptation of existing trainings to ensure the inclusion of a DID perspective. For example, the SDC training on Programme Cycle Management could be reviewed to include key concepts on disability inclusion. Trainings could also cover topics such as data disaggregation by disability, the appropriate marking of projects using the OECD DAC disability policy marker, reasonable accommodation, meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, CRPD compliant budgeting, etc.

Importantly, persons with disabilities must be directly engaged in these capacity building programmes. SDC should also ensure that its capacity building partners and those that provide external backstopping (e.g. in the realm of gender) improve their competencies around the rights of persons with disabilities.

4. Externally mandated evaluation

→ Commission an external evaluation of SDC projects for disability inclusion

To gain a better understanding of how DID is embedded across SDC projects and programs in countries, and to identify areas for improvement, the SDDC strongly recommends the commissioning of an evaluation. This externally mandated project evaluation could focus on one SDC country or region, bringing together criteria from CRPD Article 3 (General Principles), as well as key requirements such as those set out in Articles 11 and 32 of the Convention. The evaluation would assess to what extent the selected projects comply with these elements.

The evaluation could focus on one specific area (for example, all gender projects), or be broader in scope. Ideally, the country or region chosen would also allow for analysis of the humanitarian component, and specifically the application of the

IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action[3]. See Annex 1 for some suggested questions for the evaluation.

The results of the evaluation should not only inform SDC programming, but also the DID guidelines (see point 7).

5. DID Guidelines

> → Develop guidelines on DID in Swiss international cooperation

A set of publicly available guidelines to inform SDC's work on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international cooperation would provide a vision and strategic direction for SDC around disability inclusion. The guidelines would also help establish accountability and buy-in from the organization and staff. At a broader level, it ensures a holistic approach to disability inclusion at both institutional and field level.

The guidelines should promote a twin-track approach to ensure that Switzerland's international cooperation efforts reach persons with disabilities by mainstreaming their concerns across all SDC activities as well as by targeting them specifically. At the same time, the guidelines should adopt an intersectional lens and address accessibility. Persons with disabilities and their organizations in Switzerland and from SDC's priority countries in the Global South must actively participate in the development of such guidelines.

To strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, the guidelines should also include a clear approach for disability inclusion in Swiss humanitarian action. This would also address the CRPD Committee's recommendation to adopt an action plan to implement the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

For examples from other development agencies, please see the strategies developed by Australia[4] and the United Kingdom[5].

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[3] Please consult the IASC Guidelines, specifically Chapter 9 Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities – Donors, pages 63-64. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action/documents/iasc-guidelines
[4] See https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/development-for-all-2015-2020
[5] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfids-disability-inclusion-strategy-2018-to-2023

6. Partnership and collaboration with OPDs

→ Strengthen participation opportunities for persons with disabilities at both headquarter and country level

Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are led, directed, and governed by persons with disabilities themselves[6]. They need to be distinguished from organizations <u>for</u> persons with disabilities like CBM. To facilitate OPDs to actively take part in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as in the development of strategic plans, the SDDC recommends for participation forums to be set up both at headquarter and country level. Accessibility and reasonable accommodation need to be ensured for all consultations, including public consultations. The forums would allow for the participation of a wide range of representative organizations of persons with disabilities (national, regional and global) especially those that are most marginalized, including but not limited to women and girls with disabilities, indigenous persons with disabilities, as well as different types of impairments (ex. intellectual, visual, hearing, physical, psychosocial).

For this to happen, it is important that SDC continues to finance the capacity building of Swiss OPDs to effectively engage in the implementation of the CRPD, including in international cooperation. This can, for example, be integrated into existing institutional funding to Swiss NGOs (ex. LNOB Alliance CBM-FAIRMED).

These actions would help to fulfill Switzerland's commitment during the 2023 Global Disability Summit to "increased consultation and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies and systems and in international cooperation."

7. Institutional partnership criteria

→ Strengthen criteria for partnership to ensure disability inclusion

In selecting institutional partners, it is important that SDC strengthen the current partnership guidance and criteria to include persons with disabilities. Within the partnership requirements on Leave No One Behind, all partners should be committed to a rights-based approach that seeks to work alongside persons with disabilities and in line with the CRPD. Partners should be screened and report on how they ensure the adherence to the general principles of the CRPD (Article 3) including but not limited to non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, equality of opportunity and accessibility for all.

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[6] See CRPD Committee General Comment No. 7 (2018), paras 10 - 14

8. Data disaggregation and spending on disability inclusion

→ **8.1 Disaggregate data along disability**

To track quality and impact and to make sure persons with disabilities in general and specific groups of persons with disabilities are not left behind, SDC programs and projects must collect data on disability and disaggregate along disability. The SDC guidance on 'Leave No One Behind' highlights the importance of collecting disaggregated data, however, it does not make any clear recommendations or requirements on disability data.

→ **8.2 Review the quality of OECD DAC disability marker application**

To assess disability inclusion in SDC's projects and programmes, it is important that the SDC ensure the consistent and quality application of the OECD DAC disability policy marker (disability marker). Switzerland has been applying the disability marker since 2018. Recent data suggest that only 3% of all Swiss development projects or 5% of Switzerland's ODA spending aimed to be disability inclusive. Given that one of the aims of Swiss international cooperation is poverty reduction, the proportion of funding and number of projects for disability inclusion must go beyond current levels.

Moving forward, the focus needs to remain on the quality of the marking of these projects. Switzerland should review its data and provide training to ensure correct marking.

9. External collaboration and sharing of experiences

→ **Actively engage in global networks related to disability inclusive development**

SDC is encouraged to share and exchange experiences and best practices with other development agencies and partners. Importantly, this should include:

1. A more active role by Switzerland in the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) network, thereby also demonstrating political leadership in this area.
2. Engaging in bilateral exchanges or roundtables of best practice with other development cooperation agencies who are active on disability inclusion (ex. FCDO, DFAT or others).
3. Active engagement in, making and fulfilling commitments made at the Global Disability Summit, to demonstrate Switzerland's commitment to the issue.
4. Active participation at the annual Conference of States Parties to the CRPD (COSP), e.g. by organizing side events and exchanges.

Annex 1

Some considerations for the externally mandated evaluation (see point 6) could include[7]:

- Are programs compliant with CRPD principles and standards?
- Have positive programme outcomes on the inclusion of persons with disabilities been achieved through the current approach? What are some best practices?
- How are programs considering intersectionality? Are there coordination mechanisms with the disability focal point put in place?
- Do the selection criteria for SDC implementing partners stipulate the inclusion of persons with disabilities and if so how?
- Does every program budget reserve at least 2% for reasonable accommodation and accessibility and do programs consider accessibility issues from the beginning?
- Is project data being disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location and disability?
- Have OPDs been actively consulted and involved in the project design and are the implementation, monitoring and evaluation in line with General Comment Number 7 of the CRPD?
- Have disability-targeted funds been channeled directly to OPDs in the Global South?
- Are controls in place to mitigate the risk of Switzerland funding projects contravening the CRPD?
- Are safeguarding policies in place to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts of activities on persons with disabilities, especially from underrepresented groups or persons with disabilities experiencing multiple and intersectional discrimination (e.g. women and girls with disabilities)?
- Are complaint mechanisms accessible for persons with disabilities?
- In the case of humanitarian projects, have persons with disabilities been included and have they participated in humanitarian needs assessments, implementation and monitoring of programs?

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[7] Please consult the OHCHR Human Rights Indicators on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2020, particularly the illustrative indicators on Articles 11 and 32. See
https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disability/Pages/SDG-CRPD-Resource.aspx