Reference Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

Mechanisms for Engagement[1]

Membership Criteria and Expectations

Reference Group membership aims to be diverse, as various skills, resources and strengths are needed to carry out the activities, produce the outputs and meet the overall goal of the Group. Representation is needed from entities with knowledge and expertise in humanitarian action, in inclusion of persons with disabilities and/ or with sectoral knowledge and expertise.

Membership of the Reference Group is open to international, regional and local organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies, as well as interagency networks, multilateral or bilateral agencies, private sector, academics and others committed to promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.

Entities may appoint more than one representative to the Reference Group, when the entity covers multiple sectors/ thematic areas.

All members must agree to abide by and support human rights and humanitarian principles and standards, as well as agreed standards on disability inclusion in humanitarian action[2]; and are expected to demonstrate a willingness to share expertise, technical materials and work in a collaborative manner.

Individual members, regardless of membership level, represent their organizations/ entities and have a role in informing and meaningfully engaging their respective organizations/ entities in relevant activities of the Reference Group. In order to advance the objectives of the Reference Group, Members are also encouraged, in coordination with the co-chairs, to share relevant information with networks and other coordination mechanisms that they participate in.

Resourcing

Individual members will participate in the Reference Group alongside their regular jobs and their various contributions will be considered in-kind support. Where specific activities in the work plan require financial resources for implementation, working groups will be responsible for raising and managing funds.

Ensuring that any reasonable accommodation requirements are met for individual members to participate in regular meetings of the Reference Group will be the responsibility of co-chairs.

Membership Structure

---

[1] This document has drawn heavily from the Terms of Reference for the Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support and the Gender in Humanitarian Action Reference Group, in order to benefit from the experience of these groups

[2] Including as set out in the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action

The Reference Group will work on a two-tiered Membership:

Core Membership

Core membership is open to entities committed to proactively forwarding and promoting inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.

- Core membership will require a commitment from the entity for at least 1 year that their participation will be active and the entity's designate/s will be able to contribute up to 10% of their time to advancing the goals of the Reference Group
- The Core Membership will commit to contributing to the workplan of the Reference Group and participating in at least 1 working group
- Core members will commit to participating in monthly meetings on a regular basis; and responding to requests for input and review to documents, where relevant
- Core members will have full voting rights for the decision- making processes of the Reference Group. Voting is restricted to 1 vote per organization/ entity
- Core members will be eligible to stand for a co-chair position

Associate Membership

Associate membership is open to entities interested in contributing to specific outputs of the Reference Group, including working groups, but who do not have the capacity to provide sustained and ongoing support to the work of the Reference Group more broadly.

- Associate members are invited to attend and contribute to the regular meetings of the Reference Group but will not have voting rights on final decisions
- Associate members will be included in the mailing list of the Reference Group, keeping them abreast of developments and progress towards the key deliverables

Members may request to co-chairs to change their membership from core to associate or vice- versa at any time. Members are encouraged to make decisions on changes in their membership status based on their ability to commit to the workload of the Reference Group as demonstrated by their participation in the 12 months prior.

Other forms of engagement

Donors and/ or members states

Donors and/ or member states may be invited as participants, contributors or observers to provide technical input or to discuss strategic relevant issues, when deemed appropriate.

The Reference Group will, as a matter of priority, establish and maintain mechanisms for regular engagement with donors and/or member states, through relevant channels.

Individual Experts

Individual experts, with substantial knowledge and expertise in inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action may participate in the Reference Group as associate members. As with other associate members, individual experts must agree to abide by and support human rights and humanitarian principles and standards and be interested in contributing to outputs of the Reference Group.

Where individual experts are employed by an organization, they are requested to seek approval from their organization to participate in the Reference Group as an individual expert not associated with the organization, in order to mitigate risk of conflict of interest.

<u>Working groups</u>

Based on the workplan agreed by the Reference Group, working groups will be established to work in a more focused way on specific outputs. These working groups may be related to a specific sector/s or thematic topic/s and will have concrete, tangible outputs with agreed timeframes for delivery.

Working groups will be led by core members on a voluntary basis, with membership by core and associate members.

Working groups report to the co-chairs of the Reference Group and provide regular updates to the broader Reference Group during monthly calls and by email, where appropriate. Any products produced by the working groups will need to be endorsed by the wider Reference Group (including through voting by core members).