

1. Overview

The [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy \(UNDIS\)](#), launched by the Secretary General in June 2019, defines disability inclusion as “the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights, the development of disability-specific programmes and the consideration of disability-related perspectives in compliance with the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#). This requires the development and implementation of a consistent and systematic approach to disability inclusion in all areas of operations and programming, internally and externally.”¹

This is upheld in the [IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#) (October 2019), placing persons with disabilities and their human rights at the centre of humanitarian action, and giving practical information and actionable recommendations for humanitarian actors and other stakeholders on disability inclusion. Recent feedback and global trends show increasing emphasis on disability inclusion, reflecting that many persons with disabilities are in vulnerable situations with specific protection concerns, including unmet basic needs, due to barriers to access and meaningful engagement in humanitarian aid.

The [CBPF Global Guidelines](#), released in December 2022 following extensive consultations with stakeholders, reflect much of the practice of Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) vis a vis disability inclusion, emphasizing the need to integrate it in all phases of the Fund cycle. The CBPF approach aims to mitigate threats and vulnerabilities, enhance capacities, and reduce risks for persons with disabilities from violence, coercion, and other hazards.² Drawing inspiration from these guidelines and recognizing the significance of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)³ this guidance note echoes the call for robust disability inclusion, ensuring the rights, protection, capacities and needs of persons with disabilities are at the forefront of humanitarian response supported by the CBPFs.

2. Objective

This guidance note aims to support CBPF managers and teams in operationalizing the provisions of the CBPF Global Guidelines that pertain to disability inclusion. It provides an overview of minimum standards and other desirable good practices around disability and as such, contributes to the roll-out of the Global Guidelines and to more harmonized approaches across the CBPFs. The note gives a basis for promoting and facilitating learning and experience-sharing across the Funds. It draws on existing experiences in the Funds and reflects key elements of the HC’s Vision Papers⁴ and Annual Reports.

3. Strategic approach

According to the Global Guidelines,⁵ CBPFs are expected to champion a disability-inclusive approach, aligning with existing strategies and policy frameworks, particularly the above-mentioned UNDIS and IASC Guidelines. CBPFs contribute to strengthening disability inclusion through:

- **Promoting meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representatives, including OPDs, in CBPF processes.** This means supporting empowerment of persons with disabilities to engage

¹ Annex 1: Definition of key terms, UNDIS, June 2019.

² As per the article 11 of the CRPD (2006), “States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.

³ As per [Annex II of CRPD/C/11/2, para. 3](#), OPDs are “those comprised by a majority of persons with disabilities - at least half of its membership - governed, led and directed by persons with disabilities”.

⁴ The Vision Papers are developed by HCs to better articulate the strategic positioning of each CBPF within its operating environment, outlining a vision for the Fund’s distinctive added value and how it will have influence and shape humanitarian response in the context.

⁵ See title 3.1, para. 89-94 of the Global Guidelines issued in December 2022.

and raise their voices in CBPF processes and considering support to efforts to equip OPDs with knowledge, skills, and leadership to contribute to humanitarian aid and protection.

- **Mainstreaming disability in allocation strategies and projects**, in alignment with global policies and recommendations,⁶ stressing the importance of placing persons with disabilities at the centre of humanitarian action.
- **Encouraging disability-inclusive needs assessments and analysis in Pooled Fund processes**. Data and information on risks and barriers faced by persons with disabilities and OPDs, as well as their capacities, should be collected and analysed to inform collective priorities and should, as much as possible, reflect the views and experiences of persons with disabilities.
- **Advocating for the use of disability-inclusive language and disaggregated data in Pooled Fund processes and tools**. Disability-related data, both qualitative and quantitative, must be protected in line with UN personal data protection and privacy principles, ensuring confidentiality.
- **Contributing, where possible, to the knowledge and understanding of disability inclusion, by collaborating with/involving disability inclusion experts**. This may include hosting interactive workshops with partners and relevant stakeholders, collecting experiences and identifying good practices, developing management and reporting skills, and providing technical support.

4. Practices

The following sections provide minimum standards⁷ for CBPFs as well as other desirable good practices in relation to disability inclusion, based on the provisions of the 2022 Global Guidelines and related stakeholder consultations. The content is presented under five headings: a) Fund and Allocation Strategies; b) Project Design, Implementation, and Monitoring; c) Capacity Assessment and Capacity Development; d) Governance and Partnerships; and e) Communication and Visibility.

Fund and Allocation Strategies

1. ***Integrate disability inclusion in Fund strategic planning**. Consider disability inclusion as a priority within the HC's Vision Paper, championing progress in this area when appropriate for the strategic positioning of the Fund in the operating context.
2. ***Incorporate disability inclusion within allocation strategies**, motivating partners to strengthen efforts to make all sectors disability inclusive. Champion efforts to identify disability inclusion outcomes in consultation with local communities and OPDs, considering age, gender and types of disabilities.
3. **Consider risks related to disability during the development of allocation strategies, prioritizing these as relevant**. Advocate for and, as needed, develop disability-focused risk assessments with partners, encompassing community consultations including in hard-to-reach areas.
4. ***Prioritize funding to projects that incorporate disability inclusion by ensuring, where appropriate, that scorecards used to review and select projects for funding reflect disability considerations**, in line with the allocation strategies. This should be done in consultation with persons with disabilities, OPDs and other relevant stakeholders and experts in country, with special attention to integrating mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) for persons with physical, sensory, psychosocial, or intellectual disabilities. Enhancing the provision of assistive technology and other specific requirements such as Sign Language or functional rehabilitation can be considered.

⁶ See IASC Guidelines on Disability Inclusion, particularly the twin-track approach and 'must do' actions (pages 19-21): - promote meaningful participation, remove barriers, empower persons with disabilities and support them to develop their capacities, and disaggregate data for monitoring inclusion.

⁷ Practices considered as minimum standards are denoted with a red asterisk (*). Those without the denotation are considered as desirable but may not be applicable in every context.

5. **Ensure a coherent approach to disability inclusion when using cash and voucher assistance (CVA), particularly multi-purpose cash (MPC).** The Funds should seek guidance and expertise in country to make CVA useful and accessible to persons with disabilities.
6. ***Boost engagement with and accountability to persons with disabilities** by supporting tailored dialogue and engagement, adapting feedback systems and promoting accessible forms of two-way communication to ensure that persons with disabilities receive and give information on humanitarian assistance. This includes Fund-level feedback mechanisms as well as those used by humanitarian partners, and may involve, as examples, easy-to-read formatting, voice messages, pictures, etc.⁸

Project Design, Implementation, and Monitoring

7. ***Encourage the use of disability-inclusive language**⁹ throughout the project cycle, avoiding discrimination, prejudice or stereotypes which can be perceived as condescending, patronizing and offensive because they euphemistically stigmatize differences.¹⁰
8. ***Promote the use of disaggregated data on disability, both quantitative and qualitative, and disability inclusion indicators.** This includes setting targets for persons with disabilities¹¹ to be assisted, and monitoring humanitarian activities, such as the number and nature of actions carried out to remove barriers and increase access to aid.
9. **Encourage partners to use the [Washington Group Question Set](#)¹² and other existing tools to identify persons with disabilities.** The question set locates disability as at the interaction between a person's capabilities (limitation in functioning) and environmental barriers (physical, social, cultural or legislative) that may limit their participation in society.
10. ***Where advisable, conduct technical reviews of pre-selected project proposals in consultation with disability inclusion experts and working groups,** to validate their design in respect of protecting persons with disabilities and ensuring adequate mainstreaming of disability inclusion.
11. ***Monitor and report on disability issues using disability disaggregated data analysis.** This includes promoting participatory monitoring processes with persons with disabilities and OPDs, ensuring their inputs and feedback inform recommendations and the adjustment of activities. It should include the systematic tracking of equitable access to assistance and enabling meaningful adjustment of project activities and approaches.

Capacity Assessment and Capacity Development

12. ***Review partners' disability inclusion policies within capacity assessments,** confirming commitment to disability inclusion through specific policies and guidelines, including on protection, AAP, PSEA, and other safeguarding measures.
13. **Document good practices and lessons observed on disability inclusion and encourage, when possible, learning on disability inclusion in collaboration with other relevant entities.** Facilitate training, awareness and technical support on disability inclusion, including about different types of disabilities, focusing on local actors and specialized OPDs to enhance their expertise.

⁸ See UNHCR tool: [Accessible Communication for Persons with Disabilities](#).

⁹ As per the [Disability Inclusive Language Guidelines](#), prepared by the United Nations Office at Geneva as part of efforts to implement the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, launched in 2019.

¹⁰ Stigma is one of the key barriers for humanitarians reaching persons with disabilities, and for persons with disabilities accessing aid.

¹¹ Targets should, as a minimum, align with the global average of 16 per cent of all people that experience disability (see the [Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities](#), WHO, 2022). The percentage should be revised and increased as per available data and specific contexts.

¹² Here a summary note on the [Washington Group Short Set on Functioning \(WG-SS\)](#).

14. **Consider developing disability-related guidance/standards¹³ where helpful (especially in the case of targeted allocations),** in line with existing disability inclusion strategies in country, such as those from HCTs, clusters/sectors and other coordination mechanisms.

Governance and Partnerships

15. ***Promote, where possible, meaningful representation and vocal participation of local and national OPDs and experts in Advisory Boards.** When not possible, engage with local and national OPDs¹⁴ to obtain insights and understand perspectives on disability inclusion and disability-related issues. Other sources of disability expertise, including representatives of disability inclusion working groups, may be invited as observers or resource persons for Advisory Board meetings and discussions as relevant.
16. **Encourage discussions by the Advisory Board on disability inclusion.** Incorporate discussions on disability-focused outcomes in Advisory Board meetings, highlighting progress across the project portfolio and feedback from persons with disabilities and OPDs. To this end, collaborate closely with entities associated with disability inclusion initiatives in country (e.g., Protection Cluster, Senior Experts (ProCap), the Disability Inclusion Working Group¹⁵).
17. **Promote mapping of local and national OPDs by the humanitarian system,** including community based OPDs, to better track engagement and customize support provided by the Funds. This includes support related to the capacity assessment process, and during project implementation either as a main fund recipient partner or sub-partner.

Communication and Visibility

18. **Promote visibility of disability inclusion initiatives and ensure that communications products are respectful of persons with disabilities.** Spotlight, where possible, initiatives and success stories on disability inclusion, with emphasis on projects implemented by local/national partners, especially local OPDs. This includes communication and information products in local language(s). In all communication products, uphold the dignity of persons with disabilities and avoid stigmatization, with special attention to any necessary safeguarding and confidentiality protocols.¹⁶

¹³ Following indicator 9 of the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework ([Technical Notes](#)).

¹⁴ The Funds must promote the participation of local and national OPDs in clusters/sector or other coordination mechanisms in place, in collaboration with OCHA Country Office. See additional guidance: [Consulting Persons with Disabilities](#), UNDIS, May 2021.

¹⁵ The Funds may promote the creation of disability working groups where not in place, in collaboration with OCHA Country Office, clusters/sectors and other coordination mechanisms.

¹⁶ See [Disability-Inclusive Communications Guidelines](#), UN Department of Global Communications, March 2022.