## Mapping disability inclusiveness of European member states’ development and humanitarian aid : methodology and scope limitations

### Methodology

The review used a combination of :

1. Document review (in English/German/Spanish), covering :
* Official documents and web pages published by agencies responsible for development cooperation and humanitarian action – covering key strategies, policies, plans, guidance documents, pages for prospective implementing partners, procurement policies, and reporting frameworks.\*
* Any national strategy / implementation plan on disability
* Legislation on development cooperation and humanitarian action
* The [GLAD network](https://gladnetwork.net/) website ; [pledges](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/commitments) made at the 2018 Global Disability Summit ; signatories to the [Charter](http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org/) on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action
* Any official evaluations, or reports by parliamentary scrutiny bodies, on the subject of disability inclusion within Official Development Assistance (ODA)
* Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; UN Special Rapporteur on Disability’s [report on disability-inclusive ODA](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Disability/SRDisabilities/Pages/Disability-inclusiveInternationalCooperation.aspx) (and associated submissions from official bodies and civil society)
* Organisation for Ecnomic Cooperation and Development Development Assistance Committee peer review reports
* Reports on disability-inclusive ODA by organisations of persons with disabilities
1. Analysis of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s [Creditor Reporting System](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1) database
2. Interviews or email exchanges with officials from agencies responsible for development cooperation and humanitarian action (where available to take part in such an exchange). In addition, the draft fact sheets were shared with officials before publication, with a request to alert the author to any fundamental errors (though final responsibility for errors is the author’s own).
3. Interviews or email exchanges with European organisations of persons with disabilities (where available to take part in such an exchange).

The review took place between July and September 2020.

\* **Please note :**

1. Judgement was used to determine the priority documents for review : in general the review focused on (i) over-arching agency-wide documents ; and (ii) any disability-specific documents ; it was beyond its scope to investigate detailed sector- or theme-specific documentation (say, strategies on education or on gender) – this would require more in-depth research. The cut-off date for reviewing prior year documents was also decided judgementally, taking into account the timing of government changes in the country concerned.

2. The aim in reviewing guidance documents was to assess ODA providers’ ambitions and the extent to which they had invested in providing guidance for their staff. It was beyond the scope of the review to form a detailed view on the technical adequacy of guidance on specific disability inclusion themes (say, on disability inclusion within humanitarian action).

3. While the review looked at documents on strategies, policies, plans and processes, it was beyond its scope to drill down into individual projects and assess how far the aspirations set out in overarching policy documents had been implemented in practice.

### Scope limitations

In interpreting the fact sheets, some important limitations on their scope should be borne in mind :

First, the fact sheets only consider international cooperation and humanitarian action : **they do not consider how far domestic policy complies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**.

Sometimes, progress on disability inclusion within ODA can coincide with adverse developments on other responsibilities under the CRPD : for example, while the [UK has substantially increased](http://www.edf-feph.org/mappinginclusivenessuk/) its ambitions on disability-inclusive development in recent years, in 2016 the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities found that elements of the reform of the UK social protection system had resulted in « grave and systematic violations of the rights of persons with disabilities ».[[1]](#footnote-1) There can also be direct inter-dependencies between spending on the rights of persons with disabilities nationally and internationally : for example, one interviewee in a different country argued that cuts in that country’s social protection for persons with disabilities meant some advocates no longer had the resources to participate so actively in OPDs’ advocacy on inclusive development cooperation.[[2]](#footnote-2) But while clearly no complete judgement on CRPD compliance can be formed without a strong emphasis on domestic policies and practices, the added value of these fact sheets is to bring together more evidence and analysis on the international side, and so that is where they focus.

Second, while the fact sheets explore policies with an explicit bearing on disability inclusion within ODA (and processes that may help or hinder the implementation of these policies), **they do not cover bigger-picture questions financing for development that also have implications for on the rights of persons with disabilities**.

Bigger-picture decisions on issues such as debt, trade, tax and the overall structure of ODA portfolios rarely refer explicitly to disability, but can nonetheless have profound consequences for implementation of the CRPD.[[3]](#footnote-3) For example : (i) tax policies and secrecy laws, mostly in higher income countries, can deprive countries that receive ODA of revenue needed for disability-inclusive public services ;[[4]](#footnote-4) and (ii) upstream decisions on the overall structure of ODA portfolios – for example whether to channel ODA through investments in private sector companies rather than ‘conventional’ ODA spending channels – can restrict the range of policy options to promote the rights of persons with disabilities further downstream.[[5]](#footnote-5) It is essential to take this wider context into account in forming any judgement on whether an ODA provider government’s policies on financing for development fully promote the CRPD. But to do full justice to these bigger picture issues for each of the 10 providers studied would require separate research. Within this project, the focus has instead been kept on more confined question of explicit disability inclusion in ODA.

Finally, while the fact sheets analyse in some detail the extent to which ODA providers’ management and reporting processes promote disability inclusion, this is **not intended to imply any judgement on the optimum volume or complexity of such processes**. Much has been written on this, including on the potential unintended consequences of overly complex processes,[[6]](#footnote-6) but this debate was beyond our scope. Our starting point was simply that, whatever processes an ODA provider already has in place, it is essential for them to be adapted so that they incentivise, and never disincentivise, the full inclusion of persons with disabilities.

1. UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, CRPD/C/15/4, Inquiry concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland carried out by the Committee under article 6 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention : [Report of the Committee](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/326/14/PDF/G1732614.pdf?OpenElement), p.18 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Interview with OPD member. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For more context, please see for example IDA and IDDC, [position paper for the 2018 Financing for Development Forum](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/documents/idaandiddcpositionpaperfor2018ffdforum0-docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See for example Meeks and Cote, 2018, ‘“[Disability is always an afterthought” Why progress on inclusion demands action on budgets](https://inclusive-policy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Disability_budgets_discussion-paper_-2307_web.pdf)’, p.13 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Meeks, 2020, [submission](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/SubmissionInternationalCooperation/Individuals_Polly_Meeks.docx) to the UN Special Rapporteur’s inquiry on disability-inclusive development, pp. 1-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. For example Anderson, Brown and Jean, ‘[Time to Listen: hearing people on the receiving end of international aid](https://www.cdacollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Time-to-Listen-Hearing-People-on-the-Receiving-End-of-International-Aid.pdf)’, p.70 and p.80 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)