



CREATING A NEW ‘BUSINESS AS USUAL’:

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN AID PROGRAM ON ENGAGING WITH DISABLED PEOPLE’S ORGANISATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION



Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA) National Coordinator, Nelly Caleb, pictured with members and staff of VDPA © Erin Johnson for Room3/CBM Australia

INTRODUCTION

Globally, there is increasing recognition of the need for effective development programs to be inclusive of people with disabilities in order to ‘leave no one behind’. Disability is a human rights issue and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires that disability be considered across all sectors, including across portfolios within international development cooperation and humanitarian action. Global frameworks reflect this requirement, for example in Agenda 2030, as do donor policies such as the Australian Government’s *Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability inclusive development in Australia’s aid program*. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals under Agenda 2030 necessitates the effective inclusion of people with disabilities. A key mechanism for ensuring inclusion programs is meaningful engagement with representative organisations, Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), who are best placed to provide informed input to strengthen the quality and realisation of inclusive practice.

About this paper

Many donors and international development agencies are familiar with funding DPOs; however engaging DPOs to help design, implement, monitor and evaluate programs and portfolios of programs, especially within mainstream development programs, is less common. This paper provides some perspectives from the Australian Aid program and Australian development sector more broadly.

The paper seeks to answer the following questions:

- What has DFAT done to encourage and enable DPO engagement in development programs, which could be replicated by other donors and funders?
- What roles are DPOs fulfilling in order to help make programs more disability inclusive?
- What issues should program managers and implementers consider and address to maximise effective and meaningful DPO engagement in programs?

The paper addresses the three questions sequentially. It is supported by case studies that illustrate the roles DPOs can undertake in programs, as well as more detailed lessons arising from these.

Development of the paper

CBM Australia prepared the paper, with input and review from DFAT, under the ongoing DFAT-CBM partnership. It reflects CBM Australia's experiences working with DFAT since 2009 and draws on DFAT's reviews of the *Development for All* strategy and other documentation, as well as the recent evaluation of DFAT's international advocacy on disability conducted by the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE). The paper was reviewed by the Pacific Disability Forum, SIGAB Indonesia, International Disability Alliance and Abilis Foundation. CBM Australia provides disability inclusion advice within mainstream development programs across sectors with DFAT, managing contractors, international NGOs, multilateral agencies and other implementing partners. Brokering roles and relationships between DPOs and other development partners is a significant part of this work. The paper also draws on a comprehensive CBM Australia internal inquiry on DPO engagement in programming from our portfolio of advisory work, including work co-implemented with our partner organisation, the Nossal Institute of Global Health, University of Melbourne.

What are Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)?¹

DPOs are organisations that are representative of people with disabilities; they can be global, regional, national or local organisations. There are numerous definitions globally. Generally, the main common feature is that their membership comprises, and they are run by and for, people with disabilities. Their existence is encapsulated in the slogan of the disability movement 'nothing about us without us'.

DPOs often comprise a voting membership of people with disabilities and a board, of which a majority percentage (usually 51% or over) is people with disabilities¹. In some countries, organisations must be registered with the government in order to be considered a 'DPO'; in others DPOs are registered/classified as 'NGOs' and the term may be used more loosely. In some countries requiring DPO registration, some organisations that function as a DPO may choose not to register as a DPO in order to allow for more freedom in the range of activities conducted. Some DPOs are now choosing to refer to themselves as Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs.)

¹ This paper uses the more well-known term – "Disabled People's Organisations"/"DPOs" – though notes there is growing use of the term "Organisations of Persons with Disabilities"/"OPDs" globally.



Advancing Human Rights

Australia's rights based approach to disability is consistent with Australia's commitment to advancing human rights globally. Men, women and children have the right to fundamental freedoms and the right to live their lives with dignity.

Australia's Foreign Policy White Paper affirms that disability is a crosscutting priority for Australia's international engagement in human rights, development assistance and humanitarian action and commits Australia to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities as one of six key focus areas for Australia's 2018-2020 term on the United Nations Human Rights Council. This is alongside a commitment to protecting and strengthening civil society internationally.

Australia's development efforts take a human rights based approach and include a strong focus on supporting DPOs to advocate for disability rights, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

THE VARIETY OF FUNCTIONS AND ROLES DPOs FULFIL

Globally, DPOs perform a range of roles, including:

- raising awareness of the rights of people with disabilities, both amongst people with disabilities themselves, and in the general community;
- representing people with disabilities to service providers, the government and UN bodies;
- engaging in advocacy, to promote the development and implementation of policies which are reflective of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- providing peer support and networking opportunities for people with disabilities;
- in developing countries and/or in contexts where there is a lack of services, providing services to people with disabilities – such as, for example, running training programs focusing on skills, mobility or income generation, and providing accessible transport and assistive technology services – in addition to, or in place of, more traditional DPO advocacy and representational roles; and
- Working with donors, governments and others to plan and implement projects.

In many cases, these focus areas have led to DPOs collaborating first with their members (people with disabilities), disability services providers and the relevant government department (often the Ministry of Social Welfare or similar).

Working to influence *international development programs* to be more disability inclusive is strategic in that it allows DPOs to:

- raise awareness of the CRPD and the human rights of people with disabilities with a broad range of stakeholders who may also influence the government to ratify/implement the CRPD and other relevant human rights instruments;
- ensure members (people with disabilities) benefit from and contribute to development programs, from planning, implementation, to monitoring of programs, in collaboration with governments, donors, other stakeholders, or through their representative organisations; and
- work with program partners to test and demonstrate CRPD compliant program and service delivery models that can generate evidence to inform policy and to be used in advocacy.



DONOR STRATEGIES FOR FACILITATING DPO ENGAGEMENT IN PROGRAMS

To achieve the SDGs and to implement the CRPD, disability inclusion and DPO engagement need to become standard practice. In the international development and humanitarian action sphere, donors/funders can greatly contribute to this practice change by creating policy imperatives and systemic changes within their own agency, which in turn influences the practice of their partners.

Engagement between mainstream development agencies, programs and DPOs is relatively new, and there are varying capacities on all sides with regard to doing this well. Concerted effort and time are required. DFAT has made significant progress on DPO engagement throughout the implementation of its disability strategies, however there is still a need to continue to learn, improve, refine and broaden the practice through the department and with all partners. The following outlines high-level recommendations drawn from DFAT's experience for other donors and funding agencies looking to improve and refine their practice of DPO engagement throughout program work. Program level recommendations are provided in another section.

- *Model* an inclusive approach by engaging with DPOs at a strategic level, not just within program activities.
- *Learn* to work together, and know that learning should occur on both sides. Take a concerted and strategic approach to strengthening disability inclusion capacity of both internal and program partner staff.
- *Promote* DPO leadership and engagement as a vehicle for strengthening disability inclusion within programs in relevant strategies, policies and guidance and promote the role and capacity of DPOs more broadly throughout your agency and to partners.
- *Invest* in funding DPOs and their capacity, and encourage implementing partners to do so within programs also. This includes providing core funding. At a high level, this could include forming DPO partnerships with regional and global bodies who also support and fund smaller DPOs and other bodies such as the Disability Rights Fund. Support DPO capacity development initiatives.
- *Encourage* DPO collaboration in program requirements by making it a consideration for funding. Take care: making DPO engagement a firm requirement that is applied broadly, without flexibility, may encourage tokenistic engagement of DPOs, and/or DPO engagement that is not appropriate for the context.
- *Collaborate* recognising that all parties can learn something from one another, and design approaches that capitalise on this and address power dynamics
- *Report* by including qualitative reporting requirements on DPO engagement within program reporting. Qualitative reporting allows programs to explain the type of DPO engagement within the program, and the context around that, and to provide rationale if DPOs are not engaged. There may be good reasons for non-engagement and other appropriate steps taken to improve disability inclusion. Purely quantitative reporting may inadvertently penalise programs with context appropriate low DPO engagement.
- *Nuance your approach* recognising that the end goal is for people with disabilities to participate in, lead and benefit from programs, and that DPO engagement is a means to this end. Requirements for DPO engagement should promote flexibility so that engagement is meaningful and appropriate, and international development actors do not end up unintentionally diverting DPOs away from their own priorities and objectives by attempting to co-opt DPOs into every program in every situation.



Furthermore, DPO engagement is only one element of inclusion. A continued focus on necessary disability specific and support services is also vital for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, and indeed the good functioning of DPOs, their members and leaders.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF DPOS WITHIN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Disability inclusive development guidance often references DPO engagement, however the specifics of *how* DPOs could be engaged to strengthen a program, can be less clear. DFAT is not prescriptive in what roles they expect of DPOs, rather encourages DPOs to engage actively with the department, and to hold it to account. DFAT encourages DPOs to clarify their own priorities, and be clear about what, if any, support is required for effective engagement, both in terms of reasonable accommodation for individuals, as well as organisational support. Clarity and good communication regarding this eases the negotiation of roles and is more likely to result in a mutually beneficial collaboration. Through this approach, a range of roles and functions for DPOs to help strengthen disability inclusive programming in the Australian Aid program, have emerged. They may serve as useful examples for others.

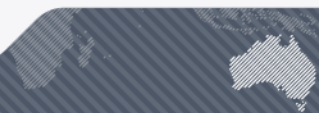


Orsula from Timor-Leste with Field Officer, Veronica, from the national Disabled People's Organisation, Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO). © Erin Johnson for Room3/CBM Australia

DPO engagement with a donor

Strategic guidance

DPOs are being engaged to provide general advice and guidance at an organisational or portfolio level. This higher level, more strategic engagement 'sets the tone' for DPO engagement within programs and activities underneath, modelling an inclusive approach. It allows both parties to rise above the detail of development activities to build trust, understand the context of both parties and determine joint priorities. High-level engagement provides opportunities to mitigate power dynamics, enabling the DPO to provide broad feedback and advice outside the role of funding recipient or program partner.



For example, Australia's *Development for All 2009-2014: Towards a disability inclusive aid program* strategy was guided by a Disability Reference Group made up of leaders and active participants in disability inclusive development, including DPO leaders from the Pacific. The small honorary advisory group provided high-level guidance and ensured a transparent, consultative approach to the development and implementation of *Development for All 2009-2014*, as well as the design of the second strategy. The group formed an informal accountability mechanism for the strategy, and advised donor staff on the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

Similarly, DFAT has a partnership with CBM Australia to provide technical assistance to DFAT to design, implement, monitor and evaluate disability inclusive policies and programs. Within this partnership, DPOs provide strategic guidance in several ways:

- The partnership specifically engages with selected regional DPO networks with a view to contributing to their strategic objectives. This creates opportunities for the partnership to draw on DPOs to strengthen DFAT's work, whilst also strengthening the disability movement more broadly by providing technical assistance and capacity development to DPOs as requested by DPOs.
- The Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) is a member of the DFAT-CBM partnership steering committee to provide the partnership with relevant contextual information and to provide feedback on the focus, direction and means of delivering technical advice. With the focus of the DFAT-CBM partnership extending beyond the Pacific, the steering committee membership and function is being reviewed in 2018.
- When capacity development and/or technical advice is being delivered by CBM outside Australia, local DPOs representing people with disabilities from that context are engaged as speakers, co-facilitators and/or advisors. This ensures advice is contextually relevant, and complements the disability movement in that context. See case study *DPO Engagement in DFAT Disability inclusive development capacity development* for a detailed example.

DFAT also receives context information and guidance from DPOs through its partnerships with the International Disability Alliance (IDA), Pacific Disability Forum, the Disability Rights Fund, and the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund.

Joint advocacy

Donor and other development agencies collaborate with DPOs on joint advocacy. The recent evaluation of DFAT's *Advocacy for Disability Inclusive Development*² found donor-DPO collaboration to be highly effective. Australia's diplomatic missions advocate for disability inclusion and rights through public diplomacy, and engage with DPOs and people with disabilities for both disability specific and general public diplomacy events, particularly around International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd each year. Embassies/High Commissions also engage in targeted joint advocacy. For example, in Timor-Leste the Australian Embassy has been actively involved in advocacy for the ratification of the CRPD, alongside the national DPO. In Indonesia, the Australian Embassy supported DPOs to contribute to the drafting of the Indonesian Disability Law and bylaws.

DFAT works with DPOs to advocate for disability inclusion and disability rights at the global level. For example, DFAT, the Finnish Foreign Ministry, (in collaboration with the Abilis Foundation), the International Disability Alliance, the Women's Refugee Commission, CBM International and Handicap International worked in partnership to influence negotiations at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2015, resulting in the development of the *'Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action'*. DFAT, and other members of the group, funded and supported DPO engagement within the Summit, enabling the voices of

² <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/strategic-evaluations/Pages/unfinished-business.aspx>



people with disabilities to be prominent and influential throughout proceedings. This significantly influenced negotiations.

DPO engagement within program implementation

Within the Australian Aid program, DPOs are strengthening the inclusivity and quality of individual programs in a range of ways. The model of engagement varies according to the context and program. Some factors that commonly shape engagement include:

- the existence of DPOs in the program area;
- the DPOs' organisational capacity, sector and program expertise and resources;
- the priorities of specific DPOs;
- how representative a particular DPO is; and
- how politicised the DPO movement is in that location.

DPOs may take on different roles as contexts, priorities, capacity and trust between the DPO and the partner organisation change over time. A summary of emerging roles for DPOs is provided below.

1. DPO ENGAGEMENT IN PROGRAM DESIGN

DPOs can be engaged as part of a design team or as key informants within a design process. This engagement provides crucial information to support program design, including for example:

- the disability policy context within the country/region;
- the needs and priorities of people with disabilities within the DPO constituency;
- particular barriers that may prevent full inclusion of people with disabilities across different impairment groups, ages and genders (depending on the representativeness of the DPOs engaged); and/or
- potential links with other DPO activities, including policy advocacy.

Consulting with DPOs does not replace conducting a social inclusion/disability analysis; rather it is an element of these processes, and/or provides context for further preparatory analysis.

An example of DPO engagement in program design was the engagement of Samoa's national DPO Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) in the design of the Samoa Disability Program. The DFAT-CBM partnership supported NOLA to articulate its own strategic priorities and contribute these priorities into the DFAT funded Samoa Disability Program. NOLA went on to receive funding to implement key activities under the program. A multi-stage approach, whereby DFAT invested in supporting NOLA to build its own organisational and absorptive capacity, allowed NOLA to play an important and active role at each stage in the program cycle. Supporting NOLA to articulate its priorities within the design process ensured the program reflected the needs and priorities of people with disabilities in Samoa.

DFAT aims to replicate this kind of engagement increasingly within mainstream development programs. For example in Indonesia, in the design of phase 2 of the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice, DPOs were effectively engaged in design consultations with government and program stakeholders, which resulted in a strong disability inclusive design as well as better relations between DPOs and government.



DFAT programs valued at \$3 million dollars or greater are required to engage with people with disabilities/DPOs within the design of the program. The *Aid Quality Check* reporting process requires programs to report on the participation of people with disabilities/DPOs in planning, as well as report on program measures that reduce barriers and enable people with disabilities to benefit from the investment³. This helps to create systemic change to make DPO engagement standard practice for DFAT programs.

2. DPOS PROVIDING DISABILITY INCLUSION TRAINING/AWARENESS RAISING

Disability inclusive development requires changing attitudes and up-skilling program staff and stakeholders. DPOs can facilitate/co-facilitate training to donor, program and partner staff on disability inclusion. Depending on the context, co-facilitators with a sound understanding of inclusive programming - including design, monitoring and evaluation - and who can help to broker and translate between the disability movement and program staff, can complement the DPO. Hearing directly from people with disabilities and their representative organisations provides a powerful opportunity for workshop participants to understand disability issues and the barriers that might exist for women, men, girls and boys with disabilities in their program. This often sparks enthusiasm and motivation to engage further with DPOs and to ensure programs are accessible and inclusive. For example, see case study: *DPO engagement in DFAT's disability inclusive development capacity development*.

Awareness raising of disability inclusion and disability rights may also be required at the community level, for which DPOs can play a vital role. For example, the Access to Education Program in Fiji had a disability awareness team made up of DPOs who visited communities and schools to raise awareness of the importance of enrolling and supporting the attendance of children with disabilities in school. The program evaluation found this to be effective at improving participation of children in education.

3. DPOS CONTRIBUTING TO IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DPOs can be engaged to assist with the implementation of program activities. Emerging trends from the Australian Aid program include:

- Data collection: DPO involvement in the training of data enumerators and/or in engagement of people with disabilities as data enumerators, can improve the quality of disability data in research/analytical activities within programs⁴. Involving DPOs in enumerator training increases the confidence of enumerators in communicating with people with disabilities, understanding the importance of data, and asking appropriate questions. When DPO representatives or other people with disabilities are used as enumerators, particularly for qualitative inquiries, the richness and quality of information sourced from people with disabilities may be enhanced⁵.
- Identifying and locating people with disabilities to be included in the program: Many program managers report difficulty in identifying people with disabilities in program areas due to systemic barriers to participation in community life, and due to stigma. People with disabilities may not be visible in the community, remaining within the family home. Individuals or families may be reluctant to identify someone as a person with a disability, or may not understand disability. DPOs can help to locate and

³ The following indicators are used within the Aid Quality Check reporting process. 'The investment actively involves people with disabilities and/or disabled peoples' organisations in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation' & 'The investment identifies and addresses barriers to inclusion and opportunities for participation for people with disabilities to enable them to benefit equally from the aid investment.'

⁴ Disability data collection methodology should also be informed by disability data expertise such as the Washington Group on Disability Statistics

⁵ <https://iwda.org.au/resource/report-triple-jeopardy/>



communicate with potential program stakeholders, change agents and beneficiaries with disabilities by helping to facilitate community consultations, linking programs to grassroots DPO networks, such as self-help groups or CBID networks, and by conveying program information through their networks. For example, see case study: Partnering with Disabled People's Organisations to improve disability inclusive skills development and economic empowerment in Vanuatu.

- Implementation program activities: DPOs are often engaged as implementers. For example, see case studies: DPO engagement in the DFAT Civil Society WASH Fund Projects and DPO engagement within the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice. These describe how DPOs were engaged in a range of program implementation activities such as providing advice on the accessibility of program-funded infrastructure, disseminating legal information among networks, and contributing to community mobilisation and planning. When DPOs and other civil society and/or government organisations work together, new partnerships and alliances are formed, mutual learning can occur and new ways of working are established.
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of accessibility and inclusion: DPOs provide valuable input to M&E, such as contributing to inclusion steering committees, participating in monitoring of accessibility and inclusion and on evaluation teams. For example, see case study: Engaging with DPOs to implement disability inclusive WASH programming - learning from the Australian Aid-funded Civil Society WASH Fund.



Fatima from Timor-Leste now has access to safe water and sanitation thanks to WaterAid, supported with disability-inclusive training from CBM Australia © Erin Johnson for Room3/CBM Australia

DPO ENGAGEMENT ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM DESIGNERS AND IMPLEMENTERS

As DPOs become more engaged in international development, a range of issues is emerging. Issues noted by CBM and DFAT in discussion with DPO partners are highlighted below along with recommendations for international development partners.

Issue	Explanation	Recommendations
Under- resourcing of DPOs globally	Globally DPOs are under-resourced with only 3 percent of human rights funding globally granted to disability initiatives ⁶ , despite people with disabilities representing 15 percent of the population. Many DPOs receive little or no core funding. Limited human and other resources (such as accessible transport, access to phone and email communication) may limit a DPO's ability to respond to all requests for consultation and engagement without being provided with some funding and logistical support to facilitate this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider providing core funding to DPOs, or funding a dedicated DPO staff position if they are strongly engaged in a program. Core/staff funding provides important flexibility in resources and capacity, allowing DPOs to pursue program activities and policy and legislative reform. Flexible funding is also recommended as it allows organisations to be responsive to new and emerging issues and opportunities. Funding is important to create and support emerging networks. • If core funding is not possible or appropriate, adequately reimburse DPOs for their time and expertise. Cover the cost of reasonable accommodations where required (for example if an accessible taxi is required to attend a meeting, consider providing transport). • Build accessibility and reasonable accommodation budget lines into all program activities and events to ensure people with disabilities, including from DPOs, can effectively participate.
Increasing demand for DPO engagement	Increased awareness of the need for disability inclusion within sustainable development programs presents good opportunities for DPOs to strategically partner with international development agencies. There are also risks, however, that DPOs could be overwhelmed with requests and demands from development partners,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to engage DPOs in ways that also contribute to their own strategic objectives. This leads to longer term, and more effective, engagement and will mitigate risks of international development partners co-opting rather than complementing the DPO movement. For example, discuss ways in which the program could leverage networks and resources to assist with policy advocacy objectives of the DPO, or with reaching and supporting new members, or growing leadership capacity of staff, as well as

⁶ <http://humanrightsfunding.org/report-2017/>



	without being well equipped to respond; and that DPOs could be diverted from their own policy and advocacy objectives by engaging in diverse programs which may not necessarily contribute to sustainable policy change.	ensuring the program effectively includes people with disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and programming networks and coordination mechanisms (such as the cluster system within humanitarian responses) can provide an efficient way for DPOs to provide insights and advice to a number of development partners⁷. Ensure DPOs are represented within these mechanisms and that they are able to effectively contribute.
Varying organisational capacity and resources	Like many civil society organisations, and compounded by educational and other barriers faced by people with disabilities, capacity – including internal organisational capacity - varies across DPOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a capacity strengthening approach, which may include supporting DPOs with organisational capacity. This contributes not only to the quality of your program but to a strong civil society and disability movement. • Recognise that capacity is best strengthened when both parties acknowledge there is something each can learn from the other. • DPOs may request a variety of forms of capacity strengthening. This could include governance, human resourcing and organisational development, financial and office management, through to more technical training and support in policy advocacy, legislative reform and program design.
Lack of experience in disability mainstreaming	Many DPOs have historically focused on disability specific programs, and/or disability related policy advocacy, and may have less experience in mainstream programs or programs in particular sectors. This means there may be a need for clear briefing and support to translate DPO recommendations into program features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide DPOs with clear briefings on the program and sectoral area and clearly discuss mutual expectations for the process. • Where appropriate, work in partnership to translate DPO input into appropriate programmatic outputs, or engage a trusted disability inclusion advisor to assist with this process.
Representation of/by all people with disabilities	Disability inclusion applies to all women, men, girls and boys of all genders, ages, ethnicities, locations and impairment types. DPOs may	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage widely, aiming for diversity of representation across impairment types and genders in particular. This may lead to also collaborating with less “official” representative networks, which will also help

⁷ when they are aligned to DPO priorities



	<p>only represent one impairment type or group of people, or may be a cross disability DPO. Often some impairment types are more marginalised or excluded than others (particularly people with psychosocial and intellectual impairments, Deaf people and people who are deaf-blind or have multiple impairments). These groups may have fewer representative groups, and/or be less represented within cross disability organisations.</p>	<p>to support emerging coalitions and civil society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umbrella DPOs may be a useful mechanism to disburse funds to members if smaller, less formal DPOs are unable to receive funds. Umbrella organisations can also be helpful with coordinating other members but, like all movements, there is often politics between organisations.
Coalitions for inclusive development and human rights	<p>DPOs benefit from working in broader disability and civil society coalitions for combined impact. These collaborations can lead to mutual learning, new ideas and innovative practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broker links and partnerships between DPOs and other program partners. When a broader range of actors work together on disability inclusive programs, strong, multidisciplinary social movements can emerge to champion inclusion in and outside of the program.
Leadership	<p>There are a range of experienced, charismatic and capable DPO leaders globally who have contributed to enormous change in terms of disability inclusive development. To maintain momentum in the long term, DPOs often identify the need to nurture and develop new leaders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, identify opportunities to support the capacity of a diverse range of young and emerging leaders, to ensure sustainability of the movement. • Providing emerging leaders with opportunities to work alongside others in program work, gaining skills and networks can significantly contribute.
Tokenism	<p>In the guise of inclusion, people with disabilities or their representative organisations are often consulted/engaged quite superficially, merely to “tick the box” or to satisfy donor requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify with DPOs whether the consultation or engagement was genuine and whether they feel their contributions were valued.



CONCLUSION

There is no one better qualified to understand how people with disabilities can be included in international development programming, than people with disabilities themselves - and their representative organisations, DPOs. These represent an incredibly valuable source of information and expertise for international development partners who are committed to disability inclusive development. Done well, DPO engagement can provide mutual benefit, with development programs improving their reach and effectiveness, and DPOs expanding their voice, gaining influence and receiving resources. Done poorly, DPO engagement risks diverting DPOs from their own priorities, overwhelming their capacity and available resources, and perpetuating the marginalisation already experienced by many people with disabilities.

There is also no one better placed to influence how DPOs are engaged in international development programs than donor organisations. This paper has reflected on the lessons learned through DPO engagement in the Australian Aid program and provided a range of recommendations for effective engagement with DPOs based on the experience of one donor. By engaging strategically as well as operationally, by being willing to support capacity development and to provide resources to DPOs to enable them to participate in development processes, by embedding DPO engagement in internal systems and processes as well as in program requirements for implementing partners, DFAT is starting to see the benefits in some of its programs. Other donor organisations are encouraged to take note of these lessons, and to use their influence with implementing partners carefully, to ensure that good practice DPO engagement becomes business as usual in international development programming.

This paper was prepared by Briana Wilson, Disability Inclusion Advisor- Manager at CBM Australia.

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AUSTRALIA INDONESIA PARTNERSHIP FOR JUSTICE

A CASE STUDY ON ENGAGEMENT WITH DPOS

This case study was developed by CBM Australia under the DFAT-CBM Partnership based on program evaluation documents available on the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice (AIPJ) website in December 2017. It has been reviewed by the AIPJ Disability Inclusion Advisor and the DPO SIGAB.

Key summary: The Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice has involved disability inclusion as a key strategy. This has been progressed through a range of approaches, including the participation of DPOs in organisational capacity building together with other CSOs, and core funding to organisations to strengthen their approaches. Outcomes, lessons and recommendations have been identified. Mainstream participation of key people with disability as both agents of change and beneficiaries of change was identified as a key enabler of success.

Background

The Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice (AIPJ) is an Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded program implemented in close collaboration between the Governments of Indonesia and Australia. AIPJ aims to support the rights of Indonesian people to legal identity (e.g. birth, marriage and divorce certificates), to fair and accessible justice services, and to legal information. Total funding for AIPJ has included just over AUD\$50 million for phase one (June 2011 – December 2015) and AUD\$40 million for phase two (from May 2017). This case study focuses on findings and learning from evaluation and case studies relating to disability inclusion in phase one of the program, noting that disability inclusion remains an important priority area for the program in phase two.

How DPOs were engaged in the program: Disability Inclusion Strategy

Although disability inclusion had been on the agenda since the beginning of the program in 2011, this was initially through specifically designed activities rather than as a strategic priority area. AIPJ realised early that there was a need to develop a disability inclusion strategy, recognising that meaningful action to include people with disabilities needs to be across the project cycle and part of project management processes, rather than through specific activities alone.

The program developed a Disability Inclusion Strategy in consultation with representatives from Indonesian disabled persons' organisations (DPOs), government and civil society organisations (CSOs). This strategy was approved in December 2012 and provided a much clearer direction, helping to elevate disability as a mainstream and specific issue in the program with Australian and Indonesian partners. The strategy specified an overall goal that:

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN INDONESIA ARE ABLE TO REALISE THEIR RIGHTS EQUITABLY AND FAIRLY LIKE OTHERS, PARTICULARLY THEIR RIGHTS TO LEGAL IDENTITY, LAW AND JUSTICE SERVICES AND LEGAL INFORMATION.

The aim of the Disability Inclusion Strategy was to progress the inclusion of people with disability using formal and informal processes, interaction and engagement between people with disabilities, organisations and systems. A core component of this was the facilitation and fostering of a partnership between Indonesian DPOs and Indonesian government and CSOs that work in law and justice.



This was progressed through four key outputs:

- Capacity strengthening of DPO representatives through sharing technical training, awareness, access to information and ideas.
- Capacity strengthening of government and CSOs on disability inclusion (including funding, technical training, awareness and access to information and ideas).
- Facilitating opportunities for establishing new networks and relationships across AIPJ partners, including DPOs.
- Providing support for partners to engage in disability inclusion (such as through funding for specific activities, organisational operational costs, and providing technical assistance and information resources).



Towards Inclusive Policy Workshop 2017

Approaches to capacity strengthening with DPOs

The AIPJ program took a differentiated approach to capacity strengthening with DPOs. This included both inclusion of key DPOs in the national level capacity strengthening of CSOs, and provincial level disability specific strengthening that targeted DPOs at a local level.

The national level strengthening mainstreaming approach was found to have a number of benefits that contributed to the outputs and outcomes of the strategy. Monitoring and evaluation found that whilst there were some positive outcomes resulting from the provincial level disability specific approach, it could have been strengthened by providing more time and resources to support the organizational development of provincial DPOs, as was provided at the national level.

DPOs included as part of CSO capacity strengthening at national level - a mainstreaming approach

Two larger DPOs with experience and priorities in law and justice areas that align with AIPJ were selected to participate as part of a cohort of national level Indonesian CSOs working in law and justice. The Asia Foundation (TAF)'s expertise on organisational development was made available to the organisations, which also had an impact on helping to make TAF (a large international NGO) disability inclusive and elevate disability to one of their priority areas in other programs.

Key enablers of capacity strengthening of CSOs included:

- Mainstream involvement of DPOs. This was a critically important aspect of promoting and supporting disability as a relevant issue to be adopted and prioritised by the other CSOs. This involved some formal awareness and training but, most importantly, mainstream partners' engagement and links with DPOs and people with disability. The 'lived experience' which people with disability brought to trainings, forums and meetings, and the engagement of strong DPO leaders, was highly effective in increasing the interest and commitment of partners. This also resulted in DPOs and CSOs initiating unexpected partnerships, networks and disability inclusion activities beyond the program initiative. This contributed to effectiveness of process and outcomes, as well as being an important factor in ongoing sustainability.

"The knowledge of Legal Aid Makassar about disability was based on empathy and charity – it was not about Rights"

Legal Aid Makassar

- 'Champions' for disability inclusion within CSOs as well as perceived commitment and ownership by the leadership of these organisations were important for progressing and sustaining disability inclusion strategies.



- Clearly communicating that disability inclusion was an AIPJ target and priority for DFAT was an incentive for many CSOs to engage in disability inclusion.
- Core funding and provision of additional resources on disability inclusion for mainstream organisations also assisted CSOs to progress disability inclusion strategies.

Key enablers of capacity strengthening of DPOs included:

- The AIPJ program demonstrated that capacity strengthening of DPOs was most effective when mainstreamed.
- The program showed flexibility and was responsive to emergent priorities and opportunities through incremental inputs and provision of core funding over an extended period. This enabled opportunities and flexibility for development of wider capacity of DPO staff and systems, which cannot occur easily through short term project specific funding.
- The existing capacity of DPO leaders was recognised and harnessed to facilitate capacity strengthening across all partners as well as in sharing of knowledge and experience with Australian partners through a study tour to Australia and meetings and trainings in Indonesia.
- Consideration of time demands placed on DPO leaders through their involvement in the program was also an important component of the approach; acknowledging that this may inadvertently reduce the time they put into capacity and effectiveness of their own organisation's operations.
- Ongoing mentoring and support to apply skills and knowledge in a supportive environment was a powerful strategy in building confidence and capacity of DPO representatives. However, the importance of recruiting motivated and committed individuals to engage in this process was acknowledged.
- Evaluation recognised the challenges of directly contracting small DPOs who may not have the governance capacity to meet due diligence requirements of the contracting organisations. For this reason, it was very important that the

selection processes for DPO representatives were transparent and openly communicated to the wider disability movement and DPO stakeholders.

Inclusivity Meet & Greet Day 2016



Lessons learned on DPO engagement in AIPJ Phase 1

1. Core funding for mainstream and disability CSOs provided important flexibility in resources and capacity that assisted them pursuing joint action on policy and legislative reform.
2. Creating and supporting networks in new areas is required to create changes and action.
3. Longer-term support of organisations is needed as building capacity and changing attitudes and practice takes time.
4. Resources provided enabled the development of new initiatives and innovative models of practice that were used to demonstrate value and informed successful advocacy for ongoing government support.
5. Flexible funding allowed AIPJ partners to be responsive to new and emerging issues and opportunities.
6. Systematic interaction between CSOs and DPOs has created mutual exchange of knowledge.

Recommendations for working with DPOs

1. Facilitate and support partnerships, networks and alliances of different mainstream and disability actors from government and civil society.



2. Dedicate resources for both disability specific and disability inclusive action.
3. Support collaborative action by DPOs with mainstream CSOs to promote disability rights and inclusion.
4. Strengthen capacity of DPOs and leadership of their representatives by providing core funding and technical advice.
5. Make information and processes relating to your project/ program accessible for people with different disabilities.

References for more information

Evaluation summary:

http://www.aipj.or.id/uploads/reports_publication/47_f_20160426-020842_FA_Report-12_AIPJ_Evaluation_Report_08.pdf.pdf

Case study from The Asia Foundation on including disability:

http://www.aipj.or.id/uploads/reports_publication/37_f_20160426-020109_FA_REPORT-2_TAF_Outcomes_ENG_08.pdf.pdf





DPO ENGAGEMENT WITHIN DFAT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Summary: A range of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) have been involved in short-term disability inclusive development capacity development visits to Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Posts, as co-facilitators, speakers and advisors. Involving DPOs in disability inclusion trainings and meetings: supports the 'nothing about us without us' principle; upholds DFAT's own strategy principles; ensures that training and advice is contextually relevant; and contributes to establishing and strengthening relationships between DPOs, DFAT, governments and implementing partners. DPO involvement in visits also helps to build DPO capacity and create momentum for DFAT and partners to identify opportunities to support DPOs or involve them in their programs.

Background

The DFAT-CBM Partnership (the 'Partnership') works to strengthen the capacity of DFAT and its partners in Disability Inclusive Development (DID). One element of this involves "Post visits" in which staff from DFAT Disability Section (DIS) and CBM Australia⁸ visit Australian High Commissions/Embassies "Posts" to support the implementation of the Australian Government's *Development for All Strategy* at a country level. The purpose of a Post visit is for the Partnership to support the Post in progressing its DID work as needed. DPOs from the local context also play an active role in these visits.

The program is tailored to the priorities of the Post, with a key objective of the visit being facilitation of

stronger or new links with DPOs. Other examples of objectives include:

- Capacity strengthening on disability inclusive development for DFAT staff and DFAT partner staff (government, managing contractors, NGOs, CSOs, development banks, other bilateral and multilaterals).
- Facilitation of cross learning across Post and with partners regarding disability inclusive development.
- Raising awareness and generating commitment to disability inclusive development and the *Development for All Strategy*.
- Supporting Post with disability related public diplomacy and advocacy.

A range of activities are conducted to achieve these objectives, such as:

- A briefing on the aid program and diplomatic objectives of the *Development for All Strategy*
- Training for program staff and/or partners
- Receptions hosted by the Ambassadors/ High Commissioners with a disability inclusion focus, such as a media exhibition or a panel discussion featuring DPO representatives
- Sector-specific meetings and roundtable discussions with program teams to identify opportunities to enhance DID practice, and plan for any future technical support
- Exposure visits



Young boy with Autism talking about his experience of schooling during the DPO panel at the Australian embassy in Mongolia. © Briana Wilson / CBM Australia

⁸ CBM implements the DFAT partnership activities in partnership with the Nossal Institute of Global Health. Some post visits involved Nossal staff.

DPO engagement within Post Visits

A large objective of all Post visits is to broker and/or support relationships between DFAT, its partners, including governments, and DPOs. This is achieved through DPOs being engaged to:

- co-facilitate trainings
- give presentations and share case studies
- contribute to meetings and roundtable discussions
- participate in panel discussions usually involving a range of DPO leaders speaking on different topics of relevance as part of a training or as a separate event

CBM Australia uses its and Posts' networks, including CBM's affiliated offices, to identify potential DPOs to be involved in all Post visits, affirming the central principle of the disability rights movement of 'nothing about us without us'. CBM Australia typically spends 1-3 days working with DPOs in-country to better understand the operating contexts of DPOs, the situation of people with disabilities in that context, as well as to explain the operating context of DFAT and the DFAT-CBM Partnership and to work with DPOs to prepare for their engagement in the Post visit.

The impact of DPO engagement in Post visits

The Partnership's monitoring and evaluation processes allow for stakeholders to regularly provide feedback on Post visits (and other Partnership activities and technical advice). Feedback has indicated the following:

Benefits reported by DPOs:

- In all cases but one, DPOs have indicated they have seen the benefits and flow-on effects of being involved in the Post visits for their organisation and for their development.
- DPOs have reported that they have a greater capacity to network with DFAT and other stakeholders, including government partners.
- All DPOs, ranging from young DPO members with no prior experience, to those with

significant existing training experience, reported increased knowledge, skills and confidence. E.g. increased skills in speaking to and delivering training to development actors and an increased understanding of (a DPO's role in) disability inclusive development.

- In cases where the DPO movement is fragmented, the visit provided an opportunity for greater coordination and aligned key messaging among DPOs, easing engagement between DFAT, partners and DPOs.
- In some countries, where DPOs were already engaging with DFAT and/or implementing partners, they observed subsequent changes in the way they are seen and approached by development partners.

"We thought we knew [the DPOs] because we have provided them funding but we have never truly listened to them, their positions and their stories." (DFAT staff member)

"Because you know in our country, if we raise our voice alone, the development partners do not hear us. But if another partner introduces us, like CBM, they listen to us." (DPO representative)

Benefits reported by DFAT and their partners:

- DFAT staff report having a greater capacity to engage with DPOs in their work as a result of the Post Visits.⁹
- In some cases, DFAT or partners subsequently decided to support DPOs: financially; with their organisational development (e.g. by placing volunteers in DPOs); in their advocacy; or through brokering strategic relationships.

⁹ DFAT-CBM Australia Partnership Annual Report – Year 1



- Stakeholder interviews report new relationships with DPOs that would not have occurred without CBM Australia brokering these relationships.¹⁰
- Stakeholders often noted DPO involvement in Post visits as a highlight.¹¹
- Many DFAT staff members and partners who listened to the lived experience, situations and needs of DPO members stated that it has profoundly changed the way they perceive people with disabilities, their capacity and rights:

“Listening to the woman who had a disability sharing about her experience as a female researcher brought tears into my eyes and helped me to better understand the challenges of women with disabilities” (DFAT staff member).

- DFAT and partners report a better understanding of the role of DPOs and how they could be engaged in programming and other activities at Post, such as public diplomacy.
- There is evidence that in a number of countries there is now more contact between DPOs, DFAT and partners, and a number of the potential collaboration opportunities identified during the visits have materialised.
- Increasingly, DFAT and partners are consulting with DPOs when designing new programs, proposals or workplans, involving them in program implementation and as co-facilitators and speakers for workshops and events.

“I now understand why you (CBM Australia) thought it was important to have the DPOs involved... we were just cautious ... but now we know them and their role and they know us. Now we can engage with them

more.” (Senior DFAT staff member).

High level lessons and recommendations

Lessons

- Donor agencies provide a positive and powerful example to implementing partners and governments when DPOs are meaningfully engaged in their activities.
- The engagement of people with disabilities and DPOs in awareness raising and capacity strengthening activities has significant impacts on participant’s understanding of and commitment to disability inclusive development.



Ms Gerel Dondovdorj, President of the Mongolian National Federation of the Blind chairing the DPO panel at the Australian embassy in Mongolia. © Briana Wilson / CBM Australia

- There is often a lack of understanding among development agencies regarding the role of DPOs and how they could be engaged to assist with inclusive programming. Similarly, many DPOs don’t fully understand how development partners work, and particularly how development partners work with and influence one another. For example many DPOs have little understanding of how donor agencies can interact with and influence their national government.
- Brokering relationships between DPOs and development partners can enable greater

¹⁰ Stakeholder interviews

¹¹ Stakeholder interviews and Post visit reports



understanding and trust to develop between parties and result in fruitful collaborations, including DPO engagement in programs.

Recommendations

- Development agencies should invest time and resources into developing/strengthening trust and understanding between DPOs and program staff. Trust and understanding leads to better DPO engagement in programs, and this engagement is likely to be mutually beneficial for both parties.



ENGAGING A DPO TO ASSIST WITH PROVIDING DISABILITY ADVISORY SERVICES TO A HEALTH PROGRAM

Summary: DFAT recruited a disability advisor to support implementing partners develop and implement disability inclusion strategies within the health program in Timor-Leste. By stipulating that these services must be provided in partnership with a national DPO, DFAT was able to ensure DPOs were strongly engaged, but also supported, in providing advisory services. Through this engagement, the DPO developed new relationships with government and non-government partners and increased its capacity to provide advice on disability inclusive health.

Background

Australia is the largest bilateral donor supporting Timor-Leste's health sector and focuses support on improving maternal and child health. It invests in a range of activities implemented by government and non-government agencies to improve the continuum of care for maternal and child health, including family planning and antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care and critical care for infants and children. During the design of the program, DFAT recognised the need for targeted and ongoing advice regarding disability inclusion to ensure women and children with disabilities benefited from the program. It therefore budgeted for a two year disability inclusion advisor role to support implementing partners with developing and implementing inclusion strategies.

How the program engaged with DPOs to increase inclusion

In line with DFAT's *Development for All Strategy*, the health program wanted to ensure Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) had a role in providing disability inclusion advice, but was also conscious of the limited capacity of national DPOs to take on this role independently. It therefore developed a Terms of Reference (TOR) for the advisor role which stipulated that applicants must sub-contract Ra'és Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO), the national DPO of Timor-Leste, to deliver the advisory services. The TOR also required applicants to outline their approach to building the capacity of RHTO to provide independent advice on inclusive health in the future.

CBM Australia had existing strong relationships with RHTO and other stakeholders in Timor-Leste. It worked with RHTO to develop a proposal and was successful in securing the role. This enabled RHTO to recruit a health program officer who worked closely with CBM Australia to provide advisory services. The program officer served as the key in-country contact for health program implementing partners. His role included coordinating and managing relationships with different stakeholders, delivering training or referring requests for training, and recruiting DPO members and other people with disabilities to be involved in activities.

Orsula from Timor-Leste with her daughter and a nurse at the accessible Marie Stopes Health Clinic. Staff at this clinic have received disability inclusion training and the clinic has undergone an accessibility audit ©Erin Johnson for Room3/CBM Australia



CBM Australia managed the high level contract with DFAT and developed guidance notes and



training materials, and supported the RHTO program officer to adapt and apply these through ongoing mentoring. CBM Australia and RHTO co-facilitated training until the program officer felt confident to run the training independently. Although the initial focus of the work was determined by the DFAT program design and CBM Australia's priorities, over time RHTO became much more involved in planning and prioritising activities.

What did the DPO get out of this engagement?

- Through this partnership, RHTO built relationships with mainstream health program partners, including the Ministry of Health, with whom it had not previously been able to engage.
- RHTO staff members strengthened their skills and knowledge in a range of technical areas, including health, international development and donor engagement, research methods, international advocacy and program management.
- The RHTO program officer in particular was able to significantly build his confidence and his communication, training and advocacy skills over time; by 2016, he was actively leading the work with DFAT.
- The profile and reputation of RHTO has been strengthened in Timor-Leste, with many organisations now wanting to work with the DPO.
- Having a program officer working on a national program enabled RHTO to increase its focus on high level, national advocacy messages, which complemented the local awareness-raising which its field officers were already doing.

High level lessons and recommendations

- Engaging a DPO in the provision of advisory services for implementing partners was successful in raising awareness about the need for disability inclusion, and in helping partners to identify barriers to inclusion and develop strategies to address these.
- The provision of funding for a dedicated program officer within RHTO ensured that the DPO had the resources to provide advisory services without distracting from their other organisational priorities.
- In this circumstance, it was not feasible for the DPO to take on the advisory role independently and partnering with a technical partner provided an important capacity development opportunity. In other country contexts where DPOs have greater capacity and experience, this role could be done by a DPO without external support.
- Providing advisory services through a contracting arrangement was a new way of working for the DPO. Sufficient time needs to be invested in ensuring the DPO understands the terms of the contract and has the opportunity to raise any concerns. DPOs may also need support with financial management and meeting reporting requirements.



CBM Australia and RHTO provide advocacy training for people with disabilities and disability organisations to increase demand for disability inclusive health services

PARTNERING WITH DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS TO IMPROVE DISABILITY INCLUSIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN VANUATU

Summary: After successfully working together to deliver awareness raising activities regarding disability inclusive skills development opportunities in communities across Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA) established a formal relationship. Through this partnership, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) support each other towards shared goals, by providing relevant technical advice and bi-directional capacity development support. Recognising the limited funding opportunities available to Pacific DPOs, Vanuatu Skills Partnership also funds an appropriate proportion of VDPA's institutional costs. This joint work has resulted in increasing demand amongst people with disabilities for disability inclusive skills development, and improved supply of disability inclusive post-school education and training. The Vanuatu Skills Partnership is a joint investment between the Governments of Australia and Vanuatu.

Background

Working collaboratively with the Government of Vanuatu, the Australian Government, through DFAT, supports the strengthening of the Vanuatu skills development sector through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership. The Vanuatu Skills Partnership aims to catalyse reform within the post-school education and training system so that people across Vanuatu experience improved access to economic opportunities, and greater quality of life.

Recognising that people with disability, comprising between 5 and 12% of Vanuatu's population, face



Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA) National Coordinator, Nelly Caleb, pictured with members and staff of VDPA ©Erin Johnson for Room3/CBM Australia

barriers to participation in skills development and paid work, a disability situation analysis was commissioned in 2013. This led to the development and implementation of a Disability Inclusion Strategy 2014 - 16. This strategy focused on addressing barriers to participation of people with disability in mainstream skills development activities, particularly at the provincial level. Funding through the Vanuatu Skills Partnership was made available for a Disability Inclusion Advisor to guide efforts, and a volunteer from DFAT's Australian Volunteers for International Development program was recruited to support the implementation of activities.

As a result, participation of people with disability increased from 3% to 8%, and over 50% of participants with disability reported improved economic circumstances. These successes and experiences informed participatory development of a *Policy for Disability Inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Vanuatu 2016 – 2020*, which charted the way forward for disability inclusive post-school education and training.

In late 2016, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership received additional funding through DFAT's Disability Inclusive Development Fund. With this grant, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership retained its Disability Inclusion Advisor, appointed a full-time local Disability Inclusion Coordinator, and is working with key government and non-government partners to implement the *Policy for Disability Inclusive TVET in*

Vanuatu 2016 – 2020, under the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET).

In line with DFAT's *Development for All* strategy, implementation occurs according to the twin track approach. Efforts utilize both mainstreaming and disability-specific approaches. Mainstreaming activities include supporting public and private training providers to improve their disability inclusion policies and practices, and improving opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in training and work in Vanuatu's three key economic sectors – agribusiness, handicraft production, and tourism. Disability specific activities seek to create demand for disability inclusive post-school education and training, by raising awareness of opportunities, creation of a fund to support reasonable accommodations such as sign language interpreters, caregiver support and transport, and working with partners to strengthen access to assistive devices which in turn enable participation.

How DPOs were engaged in the program

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership has worked in close alliance with Vanuatu's Disabled People's Organisation, Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association (VDPA), over several years towards increasing demand for, and supply of, disability inclusive post-school education and training.

Originally, joint work focused on staff from both agencies working together to lead "road-show" style awareness-raising activities regarding disability inclusive skills development opportunities in communities across Vanuatu. Acting as a referral agency, VDPA connects interested people with disabilities with training opportunities through the MoET provincial Skills Centres, facilitated by the Vanuatu Skills Partnership team. VDPA members and staff speak with families of potential clients with disabilities, to help them understand the opportunities on offer, and provide reassurance regarding safety and other concerns.

Over time, VDPA became a source of advice to the network of provincial Skills Centres and its clients, regarding a wide range of implementation issues – such as the particular reasonable accommodations

for individual clients with disabilities, modifications required to ensure Skills Centres are accessible, and adjustments required to ensure Training Provider venues are accessible and inclusive. VDPA members are invited to attend professional development workshops held for trainers from the skills development sector – at which they share their stories and advocate for change. VDPA's Coordinator is now a standing member of two key skills development sector coordination committees – the Vanuatu Skills Partnership Steering Committee, and the Training Provider Inclusion Improvement Fund Steering Committee.

Recognising the increasing demand for VDPA support and advice, in 2017 the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VDPA signed a new Partnership Agreement. This new agreement formalizes areas of mutual interest, and also commits both organisations to a deeper alliance. Recognising the limits on VDPA capacity to continue meeting requests for advice and support to strengthen demand for, and supply of, disability inclusive skills development opportunities, the Vanuatu Skills Partnership now funds a VDPA Program Officer, as well as an appropriate proportion of VDPA's institutional costs. This latter commitment is made in direct response to the challenges Pacific DPOs often face in securing funds for rent, electricity and similar costs; without which they cannot operate. Utilising the same collaborative approach, the program will also support VDPA to develop its 2018 work plan.

The relationship between the Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VDPA is bi-directional with mutual benefits: enhanced demand for skills development opportunities amongst people with disabilities, improved supply of disability inclusive post-school education and training, and a stronger national DPO.



Partnership: Benefits for the DPO

- Through this partnership, VDPA has built relationships with mainstream training providers, and now has direct access to referral mechanisms which link prospective trainees with disabilities to skills development opportunities.
- Many VDPA members have participated in skills development opportunities, which have enabled several to engage in paid work, and access markets with support from Vanuatu Skills Partnership.
- VDPA has access to funding support for administrative costs and annual work planning activities, which have proved difficult to source elsewhere.
- Vanuatu Skills Partnership works nationally with a range of stakeholders at the community, provincial and national levels. Engagement has built VDPA's profile and relationships at these levels.



Lessons and recommendations

- Partnering with Vanuatu's DPO to raise awareness about disability inclusive skills development opportunities built a solid relationship between Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VDPA, on which additional joint activities could be built.
- Awareness raising activities led by VDPA are much more successful than efforts led by Vanuatu Skills Partnership staff. VDPA staff and members can share the lived experience of disability, which motivates and shifts negative attitudes.
- The provision of funding for a dedicated Program Officer within VDPA, as well as other institutional costs and activities ensures that the DPO has the resources to provide advisory services without distracting from other organisational priorities.
- Engagement of VDPA in key sector coordination mechanisms promotes disability inclusion amongst decision makers, and can influence political change.
- The collaboration between Vanuatu Skills Partnership and VDPA provides an important bi-directional capacity development opportunity.

ENGAGING WITH DPOS TO IMPLEMENT DISABILITY INCLUSIVE WASH PROGRAMMING

LEARNING FROM THE AUSTRALIAN AID-FUNDED CIVIL SOCIETY WASH FUND

Key Summary:

Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) have successfully engaged in five water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects being implemented by World Vision Australia and WaterAid through the Australian Aid-funded Civil Society WASH Fund. Working in very different contexts, each project was able to engage with local DPOs to support disability inclusion within WASH programming, across the program cycle. The roles that the DPOs played varied according to interest, capacity, geographical proximity and scope of the program. Engagement between DPOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) has not only strengthened project outcomes, but has brought benefits for all partners for achieving disability inclusion, and for broader capacity building and networking.

Background

It is widely recognised that people with disabilities are overrepresented in the poorest communities and often face additional barriers to accessing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and programs. Disability-inclusive WASH programming, including involving people with disabilities in programs through their representative disabled people's organisations (DPOs), is crucial to overcoming these barriers. Civil society organisations (CSOs) however, may not have technical knowledge to ensure disability inclusion, or the networks to reach out to people with disabilities. At the same time, local DPOs may not have the capacity, or technical knowledge to confidently support mainstream development agencies or advise on WASH programming.

This case study documents successful interactions between DPOs and CSOs to promote disability-inclusive WASH within the Civil Society Water



Fatima from Timor-Leste with friends from her village. After WaterAid, with disability inclusion support from CBM Australia, installed an accessible water point outside of her home, she now feels more social when people come to visit ©Erin Johnson for Room3/CBM Australia

Sanitation and Hygiene (CS WASH) Fund. The CS WASH Fund is an AUD\$103 million Australian Aid-funded program that has funded 13 CSOs to implement diverse WASH projects in 19 countries across Asia, the Pacific and East Africa during 2013-2018.

In line with its objective to reach the poorest and most vulnerable in addressing WASH needs, the Fund has encouraged a focus on ensuring disability inclusion. World Vision Australia and WaterAid Australia have each implemented projects under CS WASH and sought to address disability inclusion within these by partnering with both CBM Australia and with national DPOs in five countries. These examples here illustrate some of the various ways in which mainstream agencies have worked with DPOs, providing examples to others who might want to pursue disability inclusion in their WASH work.

Projects

The WaterAid and World Vision Australia (WVA) CS WASH projects are being implemented through their corresponding national office partners. World Vision's projects are based in Papua New Guinea (PNG), Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe; and WaterAid has two projects in PNG and Timor-Leste.

The projects are greatly varied, with locations ranging from remote rural villages to urban townships, and covering activities ranging from provision of water and sanitation facilities, to hygiene promotion, to building the capacity of WASH service providers such as local government



and communities to develop and sustain WASH facilities and services.

DPO engagement

All projects have had a strong focus on promoting disability inclusion, including dedicated budget lines and activities. CBM was engaged to support disability inclusion in each project, with strong prioritisation of brokering relationships with DPOs as partners. The nature of DPO engagement in the projects varied due to a number of factors including:

- existing relationships between DPOs, CBM, and CSOs
- the capacity and resources of the DPO
- the inclusion capacity of the WASH program staff
- having a dedicated disability inclusion officer within the CSO,
- the geographic proximity of the DPO to the project sites.

DPOs engaged in each project are listed below:

Country	Agency	DPO Partner
Papua New Guinea	WaterAid PNG	Assembly of Disabled Persons (ADP)
Papua New Guinea	World Vision PNG	Assembly of Disabled Persons (ADP) and East Sepik DPO (member of ADP)
Sri Lanka	World Vision Lanka	Northern Province Consortium of Organizations for the Differently Abled (NPCODA)
Timor-Leste	WaterAid Timor-Leste	Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan (RHTO)

Zimbabwe	World Vision Zimbabwe	Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Zimbabwe (FODPZ)
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Development of DPO and WASH CSO partnerships

In most of the contexts, there was little or no existing relationship between the WASH CSO or its project staff and local DPOs. This meant that CSOs' initial engagement was largely with CBM who were engaged to provide disability inclusion technical advice to the program design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. To promote leadership and full involvement of people with disabilities and their representative organisations in all activities that affect them, CBM and project staff worked together in each location to identify and engage with DPOs, often leveraging existing relationships through CBM.

In some projects, there was initial confusion about why the project should engage with DPOs, given they had access to CBM advisors. Through engagement with the DPOs though, these attitudes shifted, and relationships deepened and changed over time. For example, in Sri Lanka the DPO was initially only engaged to provide input into the baseline process, but ended up being engaged throughout the project, after program staff recognised the value add the DPO brought to the project.

One DPO, RHTO, considered WASH a strategic priority before the project, while the other DPOs engaged as they considered the project to be a means to achieving other outcomes, or for learning and development purposes. For example, FODPZ in Zimbabwe considered the urban WASH project activities as aligning with their objectives of equalising people's opportunities to public services and amenities.



Roles undertaken by DPOs in the projects

DPO engagement in baseline and other data collection

All five projects engaged with DPOs for the baseline assessments for their projects; either consulting with

DPO engagement in raising awareness of rights of people with disabilities

DPO partners supported WASH projects to conduct awareness raising within communities on the rights of people with disabilities. For example, WaterAid Timor-Leste engaged RHTO (the DPO) members in community triggering processes as often as feasible for the RHTO. They also collaborated with CBM and RHTO to develop videos and flip charts depicting the barriers experienced by people with disabilities in accessing WASH, and how to overcome these. Project staff used these resources to raise awareness within communities, including when DPO members themselves could not be present.

Another example of DPO engagement in awareness raising is from Zimbabwe. FODPZ were contracted to carry out awareness raising on rights directly with people with disabilities and allies in the project areas. This empowered people with disabilities through helping them to understand processes for advocacy, state responsibilities and their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Similarly, NPCODA in Sri Lanka received training from CBM on the CRPD, which they in turn used in their own advocacy and awareness raising activities within communities in Sri Lanka.

Having people with disabilities participating in project activities generally had a major influence on other stakeholders by increasing their awareness of the challenges and rights of people with disabilities in their communities in

relation to accessing WASH, and the importance of inclusion. In Zimbabwe, the local authority included DPO representatives in the Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) steering committee for the WASH program, and went on to introduce a Council-wide disability policy. In PNG the inclusion of the ADP Project Officer, who has vision impairment, in project activities, served to illustrate the capabilities of people with disabilities to the target communities and change discriminatory attitudes. Project engagement in Western Province and interaction with local level disability actors also enabled a three-day workshop, run by the DPO and funded through the project, to support local people with disabilities to form a local-level DPO.

DPO engagement in learning activities

The CS WASH Fund had a strong emphasis on knowledge and learning, with regional and global learning events bringing Fund CSOs together to share ideas. Through their involvement in the projects, various DPO representatives were able to participate in these, including the respective Pacific, Asia and Africa learning events. DPOs also worked with CBM and the WASH program staff to develop reports and research papers. This gave the DPOs exposure to international events and opportunities to network with CSOs and other stakeholders from across their regions, as well as providing a platform to advocate on disability inclusion in WASH programs internationally.

DPOs on disability-inclusive approaches to the process and/or having DPO members participate in activities as research officers and enumerators. For example, in Zimbabwe, DPO representatives were contracted as enumerators. DPO members provided training for enumerators without disabilities regarding how to carry out research activities in a disability-inclusive manner. The activities



included baseline household surveys, interviews, focus groups and infrastructure accessibility audits.

The World Vision projects each engaged the DPOs as implementing partners in ‘disability assessments’. CBM played a technical support role and trained DPO officers in data collection methods as well as basic WASH processes. In Zimbabwe, CBM advisors provided in-country support to FODPZ, whilst in Sri Lanka, NPCODA independently collected disability-specific survey data with limited remote support. In PNG, ADP partnered with the WVPNG Monitoring and Evaluation Officer to carry out focus group discussions with people with disabilities outside the formal baseline processes, with support from CBM to develop focus group tools. These activities were often the first field activities carried out by the DPOs in WASH, leading to a steep learning curve for both WASH program staff and DPOs.

The WaterAid projects carried out rolling baseline household surveys as they entered new communities, with DPOs (and CBM) providing input into these processes. In PNG, an additional disability situational analysis was conducted with DPO leaders, which provided information to shape programming, as well as to feed into WaterAid and the DPOs’ advocacy.

Engaging DPOs in the baseline surveys and disability assessments helped to build trust with people with disabilities amongst communities. In some cases, for example in Zimbabwe, the DPO’s existing relationships with its members and communities enabled the project to reach more people with disabilities, as well as extending the DPO’s range for its own outreach. By contrast, in the World Vision PNG project the DPO had not visited target villages before. The ADP project officer however, as a person with a disability, was more easily trusted by community members with disabilities and thereby more able to obtain valuable information about their WASH needs

and priorities. This information was not only useful for the project, but helped the DPO expand its understanding of the needs of people with disabilities in remote rural settings.

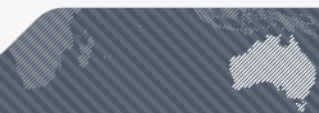


Fatima from Timor-Leste now has access to safe water and sanitation thanks to WaterAid, supported with disability-inclusive training from CBM Australia © Erin Johnson for Room3/CBM Australia

Impact on organisations

Benefits to DPOs

- **Strengthened capacity:** For several of the DPOs, engagement in the WASH projects has had a clear positive impact on their functioning and ability to achieve their broader goals. In Sri Lanka, funding through the project enabled NPCODA to establish and staff a small office. NPCODA representatives felt they had increased their own technical capacity, including research skills for example, which could be used in other projects. The DPO identified training needs, which were met through the project. These included training in organisational capacity delivered by World Vision Lanka, and training on the CRPD delivered by CBM. This has helped to strengthen its long-term capacity and ability to conduct rights-based advocacy in the region.
- **Broader reach to more people with disabilities:** Including DPOs in monitoring, evaluation and research activities enabled them to capture evidence on the local situation for people with disabilities, which supported their broader advocacy and representative work at the strategic level. FODPZ reflected that in Zimbabwe, the funding and logistics provided for the disability assessment enabled them to visit locations and meet people with disabilities that



they could not have otherwise reached. This benefit was shared by other DPOs, including in PNG, where the Port Moresby-based ADP Project Officer was able to visit remote villages as part of the project mid-term review. This increased his understanding of these contexts and the specific challenges faced by people with disabilities in such remote areas. Similarly in Timor-Leste, the WASH team conducting household surveys often came across people with disabilities at home who were unknown to disability services and in need of support. The team would refer them to the district RHTO representative who could follow up with linkages to rehabilitation and equipment services.

- **Increased profile and connections:** DPOs gained access through the projects to local authorities and services, and a platform through which to influence not only WASH outcomes, but also raise awareness of the needs of people with disabilities generally. For FODPZ, involvement in the project also helped to raise the profile of the DPO, and the organisation has now built long-term relationships with local authority leaders and is regularly invited to community meetings or policy consultations and asked to run trainings.

Benefits to CSOs working in WASH

- **Strengthened project outcomes:** The relationships improved the outcomes of the specific WASH projects by ensuring they reached their target audiences of the poorest and most vulnerable people.
- **Strengthened organisational capacity:** The CSOs reported increased understanding of disability inclusion and confidence of staff in being able to support disability inclusion, both within the individual projects and in wider organisational approaches. Learnings from the WASH projects have stimulated agencies to review their organisational approaches to disability inclusion, and to look to incorporate the disability inclusion approaches piloted within CS WASH into other projects. For example, World Vision Zimbabwe gained a much deeper understanding of the challenges facing people with disabilities, as well as issues of disability rights and the

DPO/disability movement more broadly and as a result have developed a disability policy to guide disability inclusion within all work of the office.

- **Ongoing relationships:** The relationships built up within the CS WASH projects are also enduring beyond these individual projects. For example, in Sri Lanka, the MoU between the agencies now covers other projects in Northern Province. Other international NGOs have also started collaborating with NPCODA. In PNG, the existing relationship allowed engagement by WVPNG with ADP during development of a (successful) project concept for the Water for Women Fund, which is succeeding CS WASH. There has been recognition of the need for strong DPO capacity to support successful disability inclusive WASH programming and World Vision and WaterAid in PNG have agreed to co-fund a position within ADP to work solely on WASH within their upcoming new projects.

Challenges

While the DPO engagement in the CSO projects was overwhelmingly positive, some contexts required ongoing communication and support to ensure the arrangements ran smoothly. In cases where DPOs were contracted to implement activities on a larger scale than they had managed previously, CSOs were required to provide additional support. In some cases, the pressure of project implementation at times is likely to have impacted upon the DPOs' ability to focus on their other core activities, such as advocacy. DPOs are generally small, under-resourced and are often largely run by volunteers. Meanwhile CSOs often have strict expectations around their administrative processes that can be unfamiliar to external organisations such as DPOs. Some DPOs were unfamiliar with the CSOs' administrative, finance and reporting systems and processes, and expectations had to be clearly discussed and moderated on both sides.

These experiences highlighted the importance of ongoing communication between organisations even after an MoU has been formulated, and being able to revisit this if necessary. For example in one project, World Vision recognised that grassroots and less established DPOs can face challenges such as limited access to accessible transport, phone



credit and office space, and in later years it was negotiated that the project would help address these issues by supporting the DPO via a communication budget.

Not all DPOs had a strong understanding of gender and child rights, so to achieve an integrated inclusion approach, some DPOs required capacity development in these other areas.

These experiences also showed the importance of recognising that each organisation has areas in which they have either extensive or more limited expertise—for example DPOs may be new to partnering with mainstream agencies, just as CSOs may be new to disability inclusive programming—and the partnership is intended to be mutually beneficial.

High-level lessons and recommendations

- Take a flexible approach – these experiences illustrate that the ways that DPOs and CSOs engage are context-dependent and that a variety of approaches can be successful. Take the time to ensure each organisation is committing to roles that match their priorities and capacity.
 - Seek other expertise, such as from disability focused CSOs to meet needs not met by DPOs. For example whilst DPOs are often skilled at auditing accessibility, sometimes additional technical expertise are required for the design of accessible infrastructure and hygiene solutions.
 - Engage a dedicated inclusion advisor who knows both the DPO and CSO. In addition to assisting with inclusive program design and ME&L, advisors can broker and translate information between parties, collaborate to help determine suitable roles for the DPO, and support DPO technical programming capacity.
 - Appoint a dedicated inclusion staff member within the project (even if this is only part of their role), who is the contact point for the DPO and coordinates all the inclusion work, allows for good communication and coordination. They may also assist disability inclusion work to be implemented within a broader inclusion approach.
 - For long-term DPO-CSO engagement, an MoU is useful in establishing the parameters of the relationship, clarifying the expectations of both parties and setting out conditions to ensure the collaboration benefits both organisations. The role of a DPO may evolve over time, and indeed a phased approach to partnering can be very useful. There should be capacity to absorb this within the MoU.
- Recognise and engage DPOs as key agents of change - this can be successful in raising awareness within communities about the need for disability inclusion, and in helping partners to identify barriers to inclusion and develop strategies to address these.
 - Model an inclusive approach at the strategic level, this demonstrates and generates respect for the knowledge and skills of people with disabilities, and ensures representation of their needs and interests from the top down.
 - Look for opportunities to share learnings within organisations and the sector; often the achievements in WASH programs around disability inclusion can trigger interest in other program areas of organisations, other project partners or agencies outside the project.
 - Investment in urban-based DPOs can assist in increasing their reach to people with disabilities in rural areas through projects, with benefits for both project outcomes and the ability of DPOs to support rural populations.
 - Commit to strengthening capacity. Providing training and capacity building opportunities (particularly for transferrable skills that DPOs can apply in other projects) can strengthen engagement and create new opportunities for DPOs. Likewise, investing in program staff learning about disability inclusion, and often advocacy, from DPOs, means they also transfer these skills to other programs.
 - Consider integrating gender and disability inclusion capacity development and advice, which strengthens the quality of inclusive programming, and also provides good cross learning between gender and disability advisors, CSOs and DPOs.





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