

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Office of Development Effectiveness evaluation of disability inclusion in Australian development assistance – background.

The role of the Office of Development Effectiveness

The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) is an operationally independent unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that measures and reports on the effectiveness of the Australian aid program.

Evaluation of disability-inclusion in Australian development assistance

The Australian aid program has had an explicit strategy focusing on disability-inclusive development since 2008. The current iteration, *Development for All 2015-2020 Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*, is now half way through its term. Recognising that this is an opportune time to assess how well the strategy is being implemented across the aid program, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) requested the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) to include a strategic evaluation of disability in its 2017/18 work plan.

The evaluation is being undertaken in three phases:

Phase 1 assessed the extent of the mainstreaming of disability inclusion in the Australian aid program through desk analysis of disability inclusion in over 400 aid investments, a survey of 80 investment managers and more detailed study of a small number of investments. It identified areas where disability inclusion is strong, and where it can be improved. It found that some sectors, country programs and types of investments have been more disability-inclusive than others. For example, disability inclusion in the health and education sectors is generally good, whereas performance in governance areas is patchy; higher value investments are generally better performing than lower value investments. Factors enabling and constraining disability inclusion in aid investments were also identified. The preliminary findings of Phase 1 have been considered by DFAT and action begun to enhance the capacity of DFAT to deliver a more disability inclusive aid program.

Phase 2 assessed the extent, effectiveness and impact of Australian advocacy for disability inclusion and examined what has been achieved through Australian Government advocacy, and the advocacy of organisations funded by Australia, at the global level (e.g. international fora, multilateral partnerships). The Executive Summary and Management Response are included below. For further information, see the full report *Unfinished business: Evaluation of Australian advocacy for disability-inclusive development* on the DFAT website.

Phase 3 will complement and build on the Phase 1 review to draw out the overarching lessons and provide practical learnings for DFAT on how it can strengthen the inclusion of people with disabilities in aid investments in future. ODE will also be looking at examples of what works towards disability inclusion in DFAT programs in Vanuatu, Fiji, Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

A consolidated report, drawing together the Phase 1 findings and the case studies work, is expected to be published with recommendations by the end of June 2018.

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION OF DISABILITY INCLUSION IN AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PHASE 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

People with disabilities represent some 15 per cent of the global population and are over-represented in the 'bottom billion' of the world's extreme poor. Meeting the needs of people with disabilities is central to achieving inclusive growth, addressing inequality and realising the ambition to 'leave no one behind' that is enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Australian aid program has had strategies to support disability-inclusive development since 2009. The *'Development for All'* strategies of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) have aimed to improve the lives of people with disabilities by making Australian development assistance more disability-inclusive and having broader impacts through advocacy work. Advocacy to shape the policies and programs of bilateral, multilateral and other development agencies has the potential to deliver exponential benefits for people living with disability above and beyond what can be achieved by Australian development assistance.

This evaluation

This evaluation focuses on the global advocacy work of DFAT. It does not directly consider advocacy at the regional, national or sub-national level. Global advocacy work has deployed a range of complementary actions and approaches. This evaluation examines the most significant, in terms of effort and funding, of these:

- Advocacy for disability inclusion in global policy processes
- Building the capacity of other advocates, including disabled people's organisations (DPOs)
- Strengthening the evidence base through improving data collection on disability
- Influencing partner agencies through policy dialogue and funding
- Building and working in coalitions to strengthen advocacy

The evaluation findings are based on the views of a wide range of stakeholders external to DFAT (representatives of DPOs, United Nations agencies, other development and humanitarian organisations and bilateral donors) and DFAT staff. The views of external stakeholders were obtained using a survey (31 respondents) and semi-structured interviews (32 interviewees). The views of current and past DFAT staff were obtained from interviews (24 interviewees). Additional information was derived from review of DFAT and partner documentation and published evaluation reports.

Effectiveness of DFAT's advocacy

The evaluation found strong evidence that DFAT's advocacy has been overall effective. About 85 per cent of survey respondents rated Australia's advocacy as effective or highly effective.

The evaluation identified several short-term outcomes flowing, in significant part, from DFAT's global advocacy. The evaluation found that the capacity of DPOs has grown and continues to grow. DFAT's support has increased the capacity of other advocates, built coalitions and helped crowd-in other bilateral donors. Australian support has contributed to the development of much-needed tools for collecting disability data, the Washington Group Questions, and there is broad consensus supporting their use.

These short-term outcomes have, over the past couple of years, led to important intermediate outcomes. The nexus between disability and development is increasingly accepted by a broad range of organisations as a legitimate, and necessary, component of development discourse. People with disabilities and their organisations now have greater voice, and are increasingly central drivers of disability inclusion. Advocacy has helped transform

policies of the United Nations system, UN agencies and other organisations. Disability inclusion is now an integral part of humanitarian and development frameworks.

The evaluation found little evidence that advocacy has made the development practices of DFAT's partners and others more disability inclusive. This is not unexpected given that policies have only recently become more inclusive and implementation of new frameworks and policies will take time. Further, it remains to be seen if changes in development policies and practices will translate into the key high-level outcome of improvements in the quality of life for people with disabilities.

Factors influencing effectiveness

The evaluation identified factors that have helped make DFAT's advocacy effective. One key factor was Australia's credibility as an advocate. All survey respondents felt Australian advocacy was either credible or highly credible. This credibility is based on well regarded domestic disability policies and the '*Development for All*' strategies. DFAT has embraced and modelled the principle of '*Nothing about us without us*', aligning Australian advocacy with best practice. Credibility also stems from advocacy being consistent, strong and sustained for many years. DFAT's advocacy was viewed to be strong as it crossed many levels of DFAT's engagement, including at the political and ministerial levels, as well as senior management levels. Supporting 'talk' with funding and actions also built credibility.

Advocacy has also been effective as DFAT, by and large, partnered with the right organisations, used the most appropriate approaches and strategically used relatively small amounts of funding to address the most important and pressing needs. Many partners viewed the way in which DFAT built coalitions and worked in partnership with DPOs as highly effective. The effectiveness of Australian advocacy also reflects the efforts of DFAT staff, who were seen by partners as highly committed and informed. Staff members of the Disability Section in the Development Policy Division in Canberra have engaged broadly, developed strong relationships and are well respected. The strong commitment and dynamism of DFAT staff at Australian missions in Geneva and New York also helped produce strong results.

Where DFAT's advocacy was assessed as less effective, the contributing factors appeared to be a stop-start approach to engagement, partly driven by changes in key personnel, mixed signals over priority setting, and a failure to pick the right partners or build the necessary coalitions.

Value for money

The evaluation found Australian advocacy provides good value for money. Investments are relatively small, and funds have been used strategically to leverage other funding. Only about 0.2 per cent of Australia's ODA funding in 2016-17 was directed to global advocacy for disability inclusion. Australian advocacy has changed the approaches and policies of development agencies, which will improve disability inclusion across their work. Australian support to build the advocacy of DPOs will help protect gains and drive further work.

Australian leadership

The evaluation found that Australia is seen and valued as a leader in disability-inclusive development. About 40 per cent of survey respondents felt Australia had shown significant leadership and just over 40 per cent thought Australia was a highly influential leader. In some contexts, DFAT is seen to be the leading advocate for disability inclusion and is the go-to partner for engagement, intellectual input and funding. As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Australia has committed to upholding and promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly in relation to the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Development Agenda. Working closely with likeminded states, multilateral organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs), Australia has promoted a rights-based approach to disability-inclusive humanitarian action, education systems and social protection schemes.

There is evidence that DFAT's international advocacy work has been innovative and provided a model for others. DFAT has demonstrated leadership through a willingness to take risks, such as being the first supporter of progressive initiatives like the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA). It has had an ambitious agenda, including promoting reform in the operations of UN agencies. DFAT has led and strengthened collective advocacy by supporting other advocates and fostered cooperation by building and working in coalitions.

Future work

Improving disability inclusion is a generational project – it requires changes in beliefs and attitudes. Recent progress has come about after more than a decade of advocacy. The successes flowing from DFAT advocacy work are not fully secured and still have to be translated into more inclusive development practices that will improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. Continued advocacy and leadership by Australia will help to push development partners to work to operationalise inclusive development policies and meet the commitments they have made. Advocacy needs to be sustained to ensure hard-won advances are not lost and that progress continues. Australian advocacy for disability-inclusive development is, therefore, just as necessary now as it was 10 years ago.

The evidence reviewed in this evaluation strongly suggests that Australia should continue to be a leading advocate for disability-inclusive development. If DFAT were to pull back from its advocacy work, it could undermine the successes achieved. This would have negative consequences for Australia's standing, 'presence' and reputation more broadly.

The evaluation identified some areas where opportunities to advocate for disability inclusion have not been sufficiently exploited. Advocacy has not been prioritised or sustained in engagement with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Advocacy for disability inclusion has been inconsistent in global education programs, with opportunities missed in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). There is also scope for advocacy to improve disability inclusion in global health programs.

The evaluation found that support for the Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) should be stopped, as work has not progressed as expected and the Division has stalled overall progress in use of the Washington Group Questions to collect disability data.

Recommendations

The evaluation makes four recommendations to secure and build on progress:

	Recommendations
1	 DFAT should continue its international advocacy for disability inclusion and as part of this: Shift the focus of advocacy in global processes to supporting the implementation of and monitoring international commitments Continue to support the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) to build the capacity of DPOs in Pacific countries and to increase country level implementation of the CRPD Continue to monitor its overall engagement with people with disabilities and their organisations to ensure that this engagement is effective. This should include a questioning of who is the 'us' in 'Nothing about us without us'.
2	 DFAT should continue to support Australian leadership for disability-inclusive development, including by: Supporting innovative work in areas of key need Working to identify what disability inclusion looks like in practice, including in humanitarian response and disaster risk reduction Beginning the analysis, thinking and consultation that will inform the next 'Development for All' strategy.
3	 DFAT should identify and use opportunities to advocate for disability inclusion in its operations by: Systematically examining global and regional development partnerships, with an initial focus on high value global and regional investments with the World Bank and ADB, to identify opportunities for renewed advocacy for disability inclusion Examining sectoral strategies to test their alignment with the '<i>Development for All</i>' strategy Ensuring consistency in DFAT advocacy for disability inclusion across key Posts Increasing staff awareness that disability inclusion is a cross-cutting priority.
4	DFAT should act decisively and end funding to the Statistics Division of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for work on disability statistics

Summary

DFAT welcomes the findings of the Office of Development Effectiveness' (ODE's) evaluation of Australia's international advocacy for disability-inclusive development, and the opportunity it provides to refocus and build on existing advocacy efforts. The evaluation provides valuable insights and recommendations that build on DFAT's inclusive approach as outlined in Development for All 2015-2020 -Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program.

While focused on global advocacy, the report's recommendations are broadly applicable to DFAT's advocacy on disability inclusion at regional and national levels. The report is an opportunity to reflect on our work to date and how we can adjust our advocacy efforts so that they translate into greater on the ground improvements in the quality of life for people with disabilities – particularly in our region.

DFAT commits to continuing its role as a leading disability advocate. We will work to bring other partners on board, recognising that achieving better life outcomes for people with disabilities will require ongoing efforts by both Australia and other partners.

DFAT agrees with recommendations one, two and three. These recommendations support and validate the approaches and directions that DFAT is currently undertaking. DFAT strongly supports maintaining an inclusive approach so that the voices of people with disabilities remain central to our international advocacy and development efforts. DFAT will continue to raise issues of inclusion in our dialogue with humanitarian partners, UN agencies, development banks, bilateral partners and key regional organisations on emphasising the importance of meeting international commitments such as the UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We will advocate for our bilateral and multilateral partners to invest more time and resources into efforts to increase disability inclusion within their programs of work.

DFAT disagrees with recommendation Four. Immediately ending funding to UN Statistics Division would pre-empt an existing performance management process to improve the outcomes of this underperforming investment. Should improvements not be demonstrable by the end of the current program cycle, a process of termination of the Partnership will commence.

The action plan identified in the management response will be overseen by DFAT's Disability Section (DS) and implemented by the following DFAT areas: Development Policy Division (DPD), Humanitarian, NGOs and Partnerships Division (HPD), Pacific Division (PAD), Multilateral Development and Finance Division (MDD), Multilateral Policy Division (MPD) and all Pacific Posts, together with DFAT Posts at UN New York, UN Geneva and Washington DC.

Responses to each recommendation

Response	Action Plan	Responsible area and timeframe
Recommendation 1 DFAT should continue its inte and as part of this:	rnational advocacy for disability inclusion	
• Shift the focus of advocacy in global proce commitments	esses to supporting the implementation and monitoring of interna	ational
Agree. DFAT agrees that with the adoption of numerous international commitments (and connected regional commitments) it is timely to shift the focus of our advocacy towards support for the implementation and monitoring of these commitments to improve disability inclusion. Key commitments that we will focus on include: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), Sendai Framework and the World Humanitarian Summit outcomes.	 DFAT will increasingly focus its international advocacy on supporting the implementation and monitoring of disability inclusion in key international and regional commitments, including by Promoting a disability inclusive focus in the formulation of UN and other partner strategies, work programs and resource allocations, including setting targets and indicators for accountability Contributing to a disability-inclusion strategy and lobbying for the collection of disability disaggregated data within the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) Supporting the development of global guidelines on implementation of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action ('Disability Charter') Building the capacity of persons with disabilities, and their representative organisations, to engage with humanitarian organisations to promote good practices Promoting disability inclusion in data collection and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Continuing to advocate that the inclusion of persons with disabilities be recognised in any new international or regional commitment, for example the Global Compact on Refugees and Migrants. 	HPD, MDD (GLB), UN New York, UN Geneva, DPD (DIS), ongoing

• Continue to support the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) to build the capacity of DPOs in Pacific countries and to increase country level implementation of the CRPD

Agree. DFAT has a current (2017-2020) funding partnership with PDF. PDF is DFAT's key regional DPO partner in the Pacific. DFAT will consider other options for building the capacity of DPOs in Pacific countries and increasing country level implementation of the CRPD, as opportunities arise.

DFAT will continue to leverage its partnerships with the InternationalDPD (DIS), PAD andDisability Alliance (IDA), Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (DRAF) and CBMPacific Posts, ongoingAustralia to support the capacity building of the PDF and other DPOs inPacific Island countries.

PAD, Pacific Posts,

PAD, Pacific Posts,

ongoing

ongoing

DFAT will collaborate with Pacific DPOs to advocate for the implementation and monitoring of the CRPD and the Pacific Framework for Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PRFPD).

DFAT will look to further support the capacity building of Pacific DPOs by meaningfully engaging with DPOs in the delivery of disability inclusive aid programing in the region.

• Continue to monitor its overall engagement with people with disabilities and their organisations to ensure that this engagement is effective. This should include a questioning of who is the 'us' in 'Nothing about us without us'.

Agree. DFAT is committed to engaging meaningfully with people with disabilities and their representative organisations, so people with disabilities continue to participate and benefit from development and humanitarian efforts. DFAT acknowledges that disability is part of the human condition and manifests itself differently for all individuals. It is highly influenced by context and environment, and the availability of reasonable accommodations can enable participation in all aspects of life. DFAT recognises that some groups are more at risk of marginalisation and this has implications for who we need to engage with to enable the continued inclusion of all people with disabilities.

DFAT will:

	•	maintain a focus on supporting capacity building of DPOs at international, regional and national levels.	DPD (DIS), Development Posts, ongoing
S	•	undertake an assessment of its engagement with DPOs at international, regional and national levels with a view to identifying any gaps and further opportunities	DPD (DIS) by August 2018
ē	•	draw on advice from existing partnerships with IDA, DRAF and PDF to identify groups to include in advocacy and development efforts.	DPD (DIS), ongoing DPD (DIS)
it	•	continue to take targeted actions to include in its development efforts people with a diverse range of disabilities.	Development Posts, ongoing

Response	Action Plan	Responsible area and timeframe		
Recommendation 2 DFAT should continue Austra	Recommendation 2 DFAT should continue Australian leadership for disability-inclusive development including through:			
• Supporting innovative work in areas of ke	ey need			
Agree. DFAT agrees that Australia's leadership on disability-inclusive development should continue to support areas of key need where Australia has a comparative advantage. These currently include advocacy, DPO capacity building and supporting global capacity on disability data.	DFAT will continue supporting DPO capacity building and global capacity building on disability data. As part of the process for developing the new Development for All strategy, DFAT will begin discussions, including by consulting with the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network and PDF and through the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD, to identify key global and Indo- Pacific regional needs that could be supported. This process will assist with identifying innovative ways of working and areas of key need.	DPD (DIS), HPD, and Development Posts ongoing DPD (DIS) by July 2018		
• Working to identify what disability inclusion looks like in practice, including in humanitarian response and disaster risk reduction				
Agree. DFAT agrees that its global advocacy efforts need to move beyond promoting disability-inclusion to helping to demonstrate how, in practice, to deliver disability inclusive development and humanitarian action.	DFAT will develop and disseminate to external partners, including through the GLAD Network, good practice examples to support advocacy on disability inclusion. DFAT will continue to provide staff with guidance on what 'good practice' inclusion of people with disabilities looks like in advocacy efforts, aid programming, public diplomacy, humanitarian responses and disaster risk reduction. This guidance will support the inclusion of people with disabilities in program design, monitoring and evaluation, policy dialogue, advocacy and partnership development.	DPD (DIS) initially by July 2018 then ongoing DPD (DIS) initially by June 2018 then ongoing		
	DFAT will increasingly include in future partnership agreements an expectation that development and humanitarian partners identify, document and share examples of good disability inclusion practice.	MPD, MDD, DPD, HPD ongoing		

	DFAT will support the development of global guidelines for implementation of the Disability Charter.	HPD, DPD (DIS) and UN Geneva 2017-20
Beginning the analysis, thinking and cons	ultation that will inform the next 'Development for All' strategy.	
Agree. DFAT agrees that preliminary work on the next Development for All strategy should commence with sufficient lead-time to enable consideration by Government before the current existing strategy expires. DFAT notes that development of the existing strategy, which is current until 2020, occurred over an almost two-year period.	DFAT will draft a roadmap to guide consultation and the development of a new Development for All strategy. This will include the reviews and assessments proposed in response to other recommendations.	DPD (DIS) by May 2018

Response	Action Plan	Responsible area and timeframe
Recommendation 3: DFAT should identify and us	e opportunities to advocate for disability inclusion in its operation	ns by:
	onal development partnerships, with an initial focus on high value B, to identify opportunities for renewed advocacy for disability in	
Agree. DFAT acknowledges that there are likely to be untapped opportunities for further advocacy within its global and regional development partnerships. DFAT will continue to advocate and work with the World Bank and ADB, to identify opportunities for increased consideration of disability inclusion.	 DFAT will review all multilateral strategic partnership agreements to assess how effectively they address disability inclusion and identify when and how to upgrade them. DFAT will include disability and gender as standing agenda items in its annual high-level consultations with UN agencies, World Health Organisation (WHO) and development banks. DFAT will continue to support improved disability inclusion in basic education through the Global Partnerships for Education through the Global Partnerships for Education through the Global Partnerships for Education through the the Department of Health, will identify opportunities for renewed advocacy on disability with the WHO, including through the annual World Health Assembly. 	MPD, MDD and DPD (DIS) by June 2018. MPD (IOB & GLB), MDD (BFB/RBS) and DPD (HPB) ongoing MPD (IOB) & MDD (GLB) ongoing DPD (HPB) ongoing
• Examining sectoral strategies to test their	alignment with the 'Development for All' strategy	
Agree. DFAT notes that many of its current sectoral strategies were developed prior to or concurrent with the development of the current Development for All strategy and as a consequence may not effectively address the cross-cutting issue of disability inclusion.	As sectoral strategies are reviewed, and the drafting of new versions commences, they will be assessed for consistency with Development for All and for opportunities to strengthen their alignment. DFAT will include consideration of disability in the terms of reference for	DFAT owners of strategies ongoing
• Improving consistency of DFAT advocacy	evaluations reviewing the implementation of DFAT's sectoral strategies.	ongoing

	Agree. DFAT agrees that there is scope for more consistent advocacy on disability inclusion by Posts that engage with: the UN, global funds, international financial institutions and other international organisations.	DFAT will identify entry points, and develop common messaging to shape consistent engagement with UN partners, WHO, Global Partnership on Education (GPE) and the development banks, including through Executive Board agenda items, country program documents, strategic plans, partnership agreements and other relevant negotiations. DFAT will continue to advocate for disability inclusion across the UN system. This includes through peace and security, humanitarian, human rights and development forums, including both formal and informal meetings, as well as through the administrative and management activities of the UN Secretariat. DFAT will also support advocacy for disability inclusion through treaty bodies and nominations of Australians to key bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.	HPD, DPD, MPD, UNNY, UN Geneva, Washington DC, and Suva Posts (regional) ongoing MPD, UNNY, and UN Geneva ongoing
• Increasing staff awareness that disability inclusion is a cross-cutting priority.			
	Agree. Staff awareness of disability inclusion as a cross-cutting priority is key to identifying and acting on opportunities for advocacy and implementation of	DFAT will provide Ministers and the Secretary with opportunities to convey to DFAT staff that disability inclusion is a cross cutting priority as reflected in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper for Australia's	DPD (DIS) ongoing

cross-cutting priority is key to identifying and acting on	convey to DFAT staff that disability inclusion is a cross cutting priority as
opportunities for advocacy and implementation of	reflected in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper for Australia's
disability inclusion. This is particularly so at key DFAT	international engagement in human rights development and
posts and in areas of the department that manage	humanitarian action.
relationships with global and regional partners	DFAT will strengthen efforts to build staff capability in disability inclusive
	development including through the introduction and strengthening of
	existing programs offered by the Diplomatic Academy.

DFAT's Humanitarian Strategy (2016) recognises that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is an important cross-cutting priority for humanitarian action. DFAT will continue to raise staff awareness, through training humanitarian officers in Canberra and at Post and through ensuring disability inclusion is a key criterion for evaluating our humanitarian programming and partnerships.

DAC (CMG)

ongoing

Response	Action Plan	Responsible area and timeframe
Recommendation 4: DFAT should act decisively and end funding to the Statistics Division of United Nations Department Social Affairs for work on disability statistics		
Disagree. DFAT notes that the partnership we has been identified as an investment requiring improvement.		DPD (DIS)