**ENABLING DISABILITY CONFIDENT PROCUREMENT**

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A discussion paper

for the Global Action

on Disability Network

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**ENABLING DISABILITY
CONFIDENT PROCUREMENT**

**Procurement**, for the purpose of the discussion, is defined as:
*The processes managed by the procurement function when commissioning products and services from profit-making enterprises as ‘Contractors’ and their Sub-contractors.*

GLAD members invest billions procuring services and products from a complex range of contractors who:

* Provide consultancy advice from programme strategy to programme design, to vital research & evaluation….
* Design, project manage & build infrastructure projects e.g. transport, hospitals, urban development, technology…..
* Help to innovate new products & services…….
* Manage & deliver human services e.g. crisis management, health, employment & training, education, public health
* Help to strengthen host government systems e.g. social protection, elections…………
* Build the capacity of public policy makers & civil society…..
* And much more …

GLAD members’ procurement leaders are therefore in a strategic position to drive the inclusion of people with disabilities, by introducing disability inclusion specific criteria, and expectations – as concrete and observable as possible - into how they select, manage and evaluate suppliers.

Procurement leaders will also need to ensure that they not only seek to comply with the CRPD where relevant, but that they work to the spirit of the Convention and its purpose where ‘compliance’ has yet to be legally defined in practical terms.

GLAD members may also fund multilaterals and NGOs, who may then in turn subcontract to private suppliers, who may then sub-contract to parties who subcontract again. We will want to look carefully in the future at how to influence this complex ‘arm’s length’ supply chain – however our start point for the Helsinki discussion will be:

**How could GLAD members collectively drive better disability inclusion related processes and outcomes from those private sector suppliers with whom they have direct contractual relationships, such that people with disabilities are both agents and beneficiaries of development and humanitarian action?**

**We start by asking: ‘what would Procurement do differently, at which stage, to maximise its potential to drive practical and observable disability inclusion?’**

**Mobilising the power of procurement
to drive disability inclusion**

**The opportunity is to define and deliver the best practice in procurement which we call ‘disability confidence’. This best practice would include:**

* Routinely asking their internal ‘customers’ to specify the required level of practical, observable disability/accessibility related expertise and deliverables. before commissioning any project from procurement
* Requiring suppliers to explicitly describe the anticipated practical impact on persons with disabilities in every tender and contract.
* Requiring key suppliers to have the disability expertise and track record which ensures that persons with disabilities ‘naturally’ benefit (via funding for mainstream programmes) or ‘particularly’ benefit (via targeted funding)
* Requiring suppliers to use ‘processes’ which because they are directly informed or controlled by people with disabilities are much more likely to deliver the desired outcomes.
* Requiring suppliers to work to explicit practical best practice standards and/or practices and to understand that mere compliance with regulation - and/or mere aspiration towards ill-defined outcomes such as ‘inclusion’ or ‘empowerment’- will not be sufficient.
* Building the capacity of suppliers to deliver the best practice which drives disability inclusion
* Enable procurement to compile compelling evidence relating to their country’s CRPD related performance, as they track both what they require from suppliers and the impact that has on supplier performance – and then to document the impact on disability inclusion of the contracts for which they are responsible.

**Mobilising GLAD’s collective influence:
Opportunities include:**

A GLAD Procurement Toolkit, co-produced with procurement specialists:

A portfolio of GLAD endorsed checklists, tender questions, specifications, best practice indicators, indexes, standards for use when specifying in a tender or contract what is to be delivered – so that the absence of any externally recognised global standards cannot be used to justify exclusive procurement.

The Toolkit could include practical guidance on how to ensure compliance with the CRPD by delivering the procurement best practice goes beyod any mere legal obligation.

This Toolkit could then be hosted on the GLAD Online Knowledge Sharing Platform. Member ‘Requests for Tender and Business Opportunities’ pages could then refer contractors to these resources. (See Appendix 1 for some sample wording/clauses)

GLAD training materials for procurement colleagues on how to insert these new requirements into the Tender process and into contracts in a way which builds supplier capability, goodwill and better outcomes.

A set of GLAD endorsed principles and messages which underpin ‘disability confident procurement’. Principles such as:

* “mere compliance with regulations will not be sufficient. Suppliers will deliver best practice or will help us define best practice where no helpful model exists.”
* “systems that work for persons with disabilities work better for everyone”
* it is usually more cost effective and impactful to remove barriers from mainstream programmes than to double up funding via segregated provision.
* ‘Nothing about us without us’ is much more than just a slogan….

Collect case studies which illustrate both successful disability confident procurement and the costs, financial and opportunity, of exclusive procurement. These case studies would ideally name the suppliers, and be widely shared by members, suppliers and key stakeholders.

GLAD training materials for shared influential suppliers on the need for suppliers to meet the changing expectations of the wider international development community – not just those of an ‘isolated ‘customer’

Publish a GLAD guide to: ‘the business and ethical rational for disability confident procurement’ enabling procurement leaders to justify making their suppliers’ disability related performance a priority.

**Next Steps - possible questions to address in stakeholder and thematic sessions**

To take stock.Where and how, when considering GLAD’s priority themes, would members expect private sector contractors to have the most impact in the next 18-24 months – on what kinds of products, services, advice, projects?

What specifications describing desired expertise and specified disability/accessibility related standards or outcomes are members already using, where and how? Which are greatly needed but not available?

Which upcoming ‘contracts’ present as top priorities given potential for high impact on inclusion of persons with disabilities?

Where could GLAD quickly amplify its generic impact via procurement – such as enabling procurement to require suppliers to build to a GLAD endorsed level of accessibility into projects involved with the built environment, infrastructure or ICT.

Would a working party of senior procurement colleagues be helpfulto evaluate the feasibility/usability/appropriateness of the sample Questions listed in Appendix 1 - to agree a definitive list for GLAD endorsement - and to specify what they would need from a GLAD Procurement Tool Kit?

**APPENDIX 1**

**Disability Confident Procurement**

**Sample questions for procurement to insert at key stages of the procurement process for mainstream and for targeted projects.**

**Describe your disability/ accessibility specific expertise** and previous experience in delivering ‘disability inclusion’ as it relates to this tender.

**Provide examples of where and how you have delivered similar mainstream or targeted programmes of work which succeeded in benefiting significant numbers of people with disabilities.**

**How will you measure both the quality and extent of involvement of people with disabilities** in all stages of the program cycle, and the equality of outcomes for people with disabilities – and what are the implications for how you will undertake this work?

**Clarify how and when you will meaningfully engage people with disabilities as expert advisors, potential users, valued citizens, stakeholders and potential sub-contractors,** to ensure that the needs of people across different genders, ages, geographical locations and impairment types are considered – and the disability specific obstacles they encounter addressed -at all stages of the program cycle.

**Describe how you will budget for and provide accessibility and reasonable accommodation** support for individuals as required to facilitate participation of people with disabilities at all stages of the program cycle.

**Built environment related contracts:** what best practice standards will you use to ensure that whatever we are building is as accessible and usable by as many people as possible – noting compliance with local building codes will not be sufficient. We would expect to see a 3-5-year Access Management Plan to ensure continuous improvement.

**ICT contracts:** what best practice and recognised standards on accessibility and usability will you use?

**Education contracts:** what best practice standards relating to inclusive education will you use and how, noting compliance with local education regulations will not be sufficient.

**With existing suppliers:** what do we (the funder and the contractor) need to do over the course of this and future contracts, to ensure that together we have maximised the benefits for persons with disabilities - given our target group/s will naturally have persons with disabilities within it, and given that they will remain particularly disadvantaged unless we remove disability specific obstacles.

**How have you invested internally** in delivering disability best practice inside your organisations, as an employer, provider of goods and services, and corporate citizen?