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**Update on Bridge CRPD-SDGs Training Initiative**

February 2020

**Snapshot 2019**

2019 was a very intense and lively year for the **Bridge CRPD-SDGS Training Initiative** with a significant investment in underrepresented groups and women with disabilities, regional and multi-countries cycles, strengthening of the Bridge material into other languages (including French, Portuguese, Arabic and Swahili) and the first Pilot Module 3 on the Article 11 of the CRPD.

* **3 regional cycles**

- Middle East and North Africa (9 countries, in Arabic and English),

- French-speaking West African (12 countries, in French and Portuguese), and

- Asian multi-countries cycle (8 countries, in English, Nepali, Tamil and Laos).

* **1 national cycle** in Tanzania, in Swahili and English;
* **1 Training of Trainers** (9 countries, in French and Portuguese);
* **1 pilot Module 3** on the Art 11 (20 countries, in English, Spanish, Arabic, & Bahasa).

In total, between January and December 2019, 374 people[[1]](#footnote-1) were reached from 51 countries. 49% of those were women with disabilities and 42% were from underrepresented groups; and 86% of the facilitation teams being persons with disabilities themselves (38 out of 44 facilitators).

The financial investment in Bridge was around 788K USD in total, with an average of $210 investment per person, per day, which included simultaneous language interpretation, captioning, Braille, materials, learning support and Sign Language interpretation.



**Bridge Training of Trainers (ToT) Module A 2019**

Geneva, Switzerland, 8 to 15 March 2019

15 trainees successfully completed the training, with a total of 37 people being involved with the training. This training featured simultaneous interpretation in French - Portuguese, as this ToT was an opportunity to support building the team of facilitators for the futures Bridge African French- and Portuguese-speaking country cycles. Financial support for this ToT was provided by IDA (the Department for International Development - DFID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland - MOFA and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - DFAT), the international disability and development consortium - IDDC (Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark - DPOD & Light for the World - LFTW) and the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund (DRAF); with support from the Centre d'Accueil de la Genève Internationale (CAGI). Further info at [www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/Bridge-ToT-Geneva-2019](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/Bridge-ToT-Geneva-2019)

**Bridge CRPD-SDGs Pilot Module 3 on Article 11**

Beirut, Lebanon, 20 to 27 June 2019.

This was the first global Bridge training specifically on Art 11 of the CRPD, with the participation of representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs) and humanitarian actors. The training was comprised of 28 participants, 11 co-facilitators and inclusion support team members, who brought a wide range of experiences from DPOs and humanitarian actors, as well as 3 observers, 16 support people including interpreters, sign language interpreters and guide-interpreters, and 4 logistical and communication support persons; all from 30 countries (participants from 20 countries and co-facilitators and support people from 10 different countries, in a total of 30 countries) and 5 regions around the world.

It was organised by IDA and its members, in particular the Arab Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD), and the IDDC and their members, in particular CBM, Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD) and HI. This Pilot also received financial support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Bridging the Gap Project.

The training was facilitated in English with simultaneous interpretation into Spanish, Bahasa Indonesia and Arabic, and 3 different national sign languages; with participants and co-facilitators from different groups of persons with disabilities, including persons with intellectual disabilities, deaf-blindness, psychosocial disabilities, cerebral palsy, albinism and Deaf people, among others. You can read more at [www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/BridgeLebanonMod3](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/BridgeLebanonMod3)

**Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 1 Tanzania**

Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, 22 to 28 July 2019.

The training brought together 15 participants from diverse impairment groups and geographical locations within the United Republic of Tanzania, including persons with low vision and blindness, physical disabilities, Deaf persons, people with deafblindness, intellectual disability, psychosocial disability, participants with albinism, and also with small stature.

This was organised by the Tanzania Federation of Disabled People’s Organizations (SHIVYAWATA), ADF, IDA and CBM with support from Inclusion International and World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry; and financed by CBM through the National Lottery Community Fund and NAD (Norwegian Association of the Disabled). Further info at [www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/bridge-tanzania-module1](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/bridge-tanzania-module1)

**Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 2 Middle East and North Africa (MENA)**

Cairo, Egypt, 3 to 9 October 2019.

The 30 participants representing organisations of persons with disabilities from nine countries of the region brought with them a wide range of experience, and included people with intellectual disabilities, deafblindness, cerebral palsy, Deaf people, albinism, physical disabilities, visual and hard of hearing.

The **Module 2** was organised by the Arab Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD) and IDA with IDDC support, in particular from the Disabled People's Organisations Denmark (DPOD), CBM and HI; and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, through the [IDA-CBM-HI Article 11 Project](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/inclusion-art11-consortium), and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

**Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 1 French-speaking West African countries**

Niamey, Niger, 2- 8 November 2019

The selected 31 participants from 12 different countries of Francophone West Africa represented a wide range of organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and self-advocate activists, including persons with intellectual disabilities, psychosocial disabilities, physical disabilities, albinism, leprosy, people with cerebral palsy, visual and hearing impairments.

This Module 1 was organized by the West African Federation of Associations of People with Disabilities (WAFOD), an ADF member, with the support of IDA and Humanity and Inclusion (HI), through the financial support of the European Union; DPOD, CBM, LFTW, Belgian Development Cooperation, DFAT and MOFA Finland. Further information at [www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/bridge-francophone-2019](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/bridge-francophone-2019)

**Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 1 Asian multi countries**

Kathmandu, Nepal, 28 November to 5 December 2019

This Bridge Module 1 involved a total of 78 people, including 30 participants, 09 facilitators with disabilities, 10 observers, 26 support people (including captioners, guide interpreters, international sign interpreters, illustrator and learning support people), 3 logistical and note taking support, and the Bridge coordinator, all from 19 countries (participants from 8 countries, with co-facilitators and support people from 11 other countries), including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Laos, Nepal and Sri Lanka. This Bridge Module was facilitated in 4 spoken languages, 03 national Sign Languages - including tactile sign - and on International Sign.

This cycle is also supporting members of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) to strengthen their Bridge team of facilitators with the presence of 2 participants from Fiji and 1 from Vanuatu.

It was organized by IDA and its members (in particular the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and Inclusion International (II), the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and its members (in particular the Disabled People’s Organization Denmark - DPOD, CBM and HI), along with Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI) Asia-Pacific, with financial support from the Open Society Foundations, CBM Switzerland, DPOD, MOFA Finland and DFID - through the [Disability Inclusive Development - DID Programme](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/did-project).

**Lessons learned, challenges and way forward**

The Bridge CRPD SDGs Training Initiative is ‘**For, By and With persons with disabilities’.** This is at the heart of Bridge - a training of persons with disabilities by, at the least, a majority of persons with disabilities themselves. The Initiative works cross-disability, with attention to intersectionality and underrepresented[[2]](#footnote-2) groups; in an inclusive, enabling environment and methodology that values participants’ expertise and that has peer accountability and learning.

**Increasing non-English resources**

In 2019, the Bridge Initiative witnessed increased demand from DPOs from non-English-speaking countries for substantive material and training. Therefore, efforts were made to embrace participants and facilitators from diverse languages, including in the Training of Training (ToT). All Bridge Cycles in 2019 served as a platform to build new generations of Bridge facilitators from non-English speakers.

**Reaching even more diverse disability activists**

Bridge also reached more disability activists from the Global South. Therefore, more disability activists are embracing common advocacy messages on what it means for programs and policies to be CRPD compliant, progressing towards leaving no one behind by reaching the furthest underrepresented first.

**Organizing national Bridge cycles by the Bridge Alumni**

The year has seen interest by Bridge Alumni to directly spearhead processes to have in-country Bridge trainings. The first generation of Bridge alumni leading on Bridge cycles autonomously with only distance mentoring is in place, which is a key step in the upscaling and ownership of the Bridge initiative. This is a clear show of how the training has supported them in their advocacy and their desire to include other activists with disabilities through the same. DPOs are increasingly using Bridge training materials and methodologies as a reference in their various trainings and engagements across regions.

**Pilot Bridge Module 3 Art 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**

The realisation of this Pilot Bridge was a milestone during the year. For the first time, humanitarian actors and DPO representatives from the 5 continents had training, learning and sharing – together, helping humanitarian actors to tap into the knowledge within the disability movement and for DPO representatives to contribute to disability inclusive practice in humanitarian situations.

**Training platform and peer support hubs**

The Bridge training also emerged as a solid space and resource into which IDA and IDDC members could organise their own workshops side by side with Bridge modules. For instance, ADF made its Inclusive Education workshop in Niger back-to-back with the Bridge Module 1 French-speaking West African countries. DPOD hosted a CRPD-SDGs Workshop for Nepalese DPO members just before the Bridge Asia 2019, while the WFD hosted their training for Deaf Bridge Alumni just after the same Bridge.

All these trainings benefited from a pool of trained Bridge facilitators adapting Bridge content and methodology to the specific context of these trainings. Increasingly, Bridge acts as a catalyst to stimulate exchanges among constituencies of the disability rights movement, creating synergies as well as mutualising some of the logistics costs.

**Creating solidarity among disability activists**

All Bridge cycles maintain very dynamic Listserv groups, creating solidarity and stimulating peer exchanges through online platforms to learn from each other, mentor, share opportunities, and create linkages for further policy influencing. This led to Alumni to work together at national and regional levels, amplifying voices for inclusion. Bridge Alumni disability activists have been at the forefront in documented national, regional and global advocacy events with advocacy based on the paradigm shift that is foreseen by the CRPD.

**Influencing public policies and programmes**

Overall, the Bridge Initiative kept strengthening the capacity of DPO activists to engage in advocacy initiatives, including CRPD and SDGs’ reports. Clear outcomes of the Bridge Initiative reported during 2019 were the direct involvement of Bridge Alumni in training public offices, such as judges in Niger, or in constituting part of the Technical Working Group on Disability Statistics, in Kenya. In addition, the Bridge Initiative was contacted by an Innovation Fund seeking for technical experts among the Bridge Alumni of the Module 3 on the Art 11. Two DPO representatives from the Global South were selected to review proposals submitted through their grants on Innovation Challenges, including on issues regarding in WASH and GBV programming.

**A space for women with disabilities as disability rights activists**

Thanks to the Bridge Quality Criteria, Bridge women Alumni had practiced collective activism within and beyond the Bridge Initiative, which has served as a catalyst to ensure the strengthening of the cross-disability movement. It provides an opportunity for groups that are not as strongly represented in the disability rights movement, such as women with disabilities, to network and organize advocacy on issues of common interest. For instance, women participants at the Bridge Art 11 organised an evening session to prepare the AWID International Forum 2020. Thanks to support from several partners, many women who are Bridge Alumni were present and active at the Beijing +25 civil society consultation in Addis Ababa.

**International cooperation**

Bridge training plays a key role in linking disability activists with global platforms, donor communities and other international agencies, thereby bringing in a variety of opportunities to build upon for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

**Accountability towards CRPD implementation: all human rights for all persons with disabilities**

Overall, engaging in the process of accountability on CRPD - SDGs implementation has given most disability activists a platform to look into possible avenues of uniting together to better address the common needs of different categories of persons with disabilities across the globe. This is also visible in the growing willingness and capacity of constituency-based DPOs to lead on cross-disability initiatives, such as the recent leadership demonstrated by the World Blind Union to coordinate a cross-disability representation at the World Urban Forum. Unity and mutual accountability can also be seen through consultations organised by RIADIS and Inclusion International to ensure inclusion of underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities in monitoring of the SDGs.

**Challenges**

Over the year, some challenges remained. For instance, Task Teams in some Bridge cycles faced challenges ensuring, including pressure by male DPO leaders, in ensuring the participation of at least 40% of women with disabilities. In others, it was difficult to ensure the presence of at least 40% of underrepresented groups as participants, for instance, it was sometimes not possible to find persons with deafblindness despite all efforts made including by reaching out to WFDB and Sense International as IDA and IDDC members. These challenges were overcome by close communication among members of the Task Teams, the Bridge Coordination and IDA and IDDC members, and a strong respect by the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Quality Criteria by the Task Team leaders.

Another challenge faced was the increased bureaucratic processes and barriers for participants in the Global South in getting Swiss visa to the ToT Module A, which takes place in Geneva, in March, every year, which coincides with the CRPD Committee March session. Five (05) participants were unable to attend in 2019 due to the delayed response from the Embassies in African countries (Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo). To overcome this challenge, the IDA secretariat will start the administrative process of visas earlier in the next years.

Also, the planned Bridge Module 3 on Article 11 in Amman was impacted by the lack of Jordanian diplomatic representations in the Global South, which led to having it to be moved to Cairo, Egypt. Bridge MENA Module 2 was impacted by the unstable situation in Beirut, Lebanon. It had to be postponed and eventually was also held in Cairo, Egypt. Both events inflated the costs of Bridge Art 11 and MENA 2, adding stress to the teams, and dissatisfactions regarding communications. Both modules were only possible thanks to the great support from AOPD and the commitment from the logistics team.

In 2019, we also observed that charity and medical models still influence decision-making and funding of disability policy and programming, which means that more energy has to be used through Bridge to challenge those views and practices that do not lead to inclusion of persons with disabilities. For instance, advocacy for inclusive education still faces challenges in environments where States are funding segregated education. Disability advocacy would benefit from using data collection tools that would allow for international comparability for the SDGs, for example the Washington Group Short Set of Questions for censuses. However, this methodology is sometimes questioned even by disability activists who advocate for methods to collect data on disability which are proven to lead to underreporting. In order to challenge the influence of these old-fashioned models, the Bridge team has reinforced the Module 2 and has further invested in the dialogue with external stakeholders during the policy exchange session.

Though the Bridge training is attaining such popularity and demand among IDA and IDDC member and partner organizations, there is still a gap with regards to human resources to meet this demand – especially from the secretariat, which comprises of the Bridge Coordinator supported by Bridge fellows and the IDA logistics team. Consolidation of Bridge training and learning materials and adapting them into a variety of accessible formats to reach more activists is a remaining challenge that we are intending to address in 2020.

**Way forward**

The Bridge Coordination team conducted a survey to understand how the Bridge Alumni is using acquired knowledge and networks to influence public policy in their countries and regions. The analysis of the responses was published in 2019. Now, the Coordination Team is conducting a second survey to continuously learning how the Initiative impacts the Bridge Alumni after their training.

In January 2020, a review of the Bridge initiative as well as a review of the pilot Bridge Module 3 Article 11 took place in Kenya, attended by representatives of IDA and IDDC member organizations, alumni and facilitators. The review emphasized the value of both these trainings as well as some of the challenges seen by the various stakeholders, with concrete recommendations and commitments to guide the way forward. We hope to share the consolidated set of recommendations shortly.

From February to June 2020, the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Initiative is being assessed by an independent evaluator contracted by IDA, with the support from several IDDC members.

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***Our sincere thanks to all agencies, organisations and persons that supported the Bridge CRPD-SDGs initiative in 2019 allowing us to make real changes in the lives of people with disabilities - directly impacting the disability movement - around the world!***

**Upcoming Bridge CRPD-SDGs training modules**

**2020**

January - Tanzania Module 2 & Bridge Review Workshops on Bridge Module 3 on Art 11 and overall Bridge Initiative,

7 to 14 Mar - CRPD Compliance workshop to IDDC and Inclusive Futures partners

26 Mar/2 Apr - Bridge Kenya Module 1

28 May/4 Jun - Multi countries West Africa Module 1 – Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia (English countries)

End of June - West Africa French countries Module 2

Aug/ Sep- Multi countries Asia Module 2

September - Bridge Art 11 regional (Tbc)

October - Training of Trainers Module B & Bridge Kenya Module 2

November - Multi countries West Africa English Module 2

December - Bridge MENA Module 1

**2021**

March - ToT Module A, Geneva

April - Bridge Latin America Module 1

June/July - Bridge MENA Module 2

August - African Portuguese speaking countries cycle Module 1 (Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Equatorial Guinea)

Sept/Oct - Training of Trainers Module B

October - Bridge Art 11 regional (Tbc)

November - Bridge Southern Africa English speaking countries Module 1 (Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe)

Nov/ Dec - Bridge Latin America Module 2

Note: National cycles in India, Ethiopia and Timor-Lest are currently being explored

**2022**

February - African Portuguese speaking countries cycle Module 2

March - ToT Module A, Geneva

May - Bridge Central Asia Module 1 (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan)

June - Bridge Southern Africa English speaking countries Module 2

September - Bridge Art 11 regional (Tbc)

October - ToT Module B

December - Bridge Central Asia Module 2

The majority of these cycles still need to have the funds secured. Kindly, contact the Bridge Coordination in case your organisation wishes to further support the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Initiative.

Updated information on Bridge at [www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/bridge-crpd-sdgs-training-initiative](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/content/bridge-crpd-sdgs-training-initiative), including narrative and financial reports.

For more details, please contact the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Coordinator **Tchaurea Fleury** at tfleury@ida-secretariat.org. For IDDC members, you may also contact the co-chairs of the IDDC DPO Partnership Task Group, **Yetnebersh Nigussie** at y.nigussie@light-for-the-world.org, and **Ruby Holmes** at r.holmes@hi.org.

1. This includes 193 participants and facilitators, 154 support learning or inclusion people and 27 observers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Under-represented groups are generally persons with less voice or visibility in decision making processes. The disability movement, like other social movements, is not homogenous. There are some groups that have traditionally been less included or harder to reach such as: persons who are deafblind, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with autism. It can also include women, children, older people and indigenous persons, as well as faith, ethnicity, caste, class, sexual orientation or gender identity minorities. This will be different in different countries and contexts (Adapted from CBM’s Accountability Tool, with learning from Bridge CRPD-SDGs). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)