­Social protection in Africa: a new path towards inclusion

Policy dialogue conference

**Draft Concept Note**

An initiative of the European project Bridging the Gap II in partnership with the UNPRPD/ILO/UNICEF inclusive social protection program, the International Disability Alliance and the African Disability Forum

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Online sessions

Introduction

Social protection can be defined as the set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need specific care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2007; Devereux & Barrientos, 2008; Fontenau, Vaes & Van Ongevalle, 2017).

People with disabilities live experiences that frequently reduce their access to and/or demand for social protection services: limited resources, discrimination, traditional social norms preventing use of services, visibility, inaccessible programmes, lack of transparency etc. Proven links between disability and poverty suggest that development programmes and policies that are not disability-inclusive will leave persons with disabilities behind. Evidence clearly indicates that persons with disabilities are more likely to live in poor households, have limited access to employment opportunities, and have lower education enrolment and attendance rates, as well as wide regional discrepancies.

However, Social protection has a key role in supporting the participation and inclusion of all persons with disabilities. Across the life cycle, social protection systems should use all instruments available to:

* ensure income security;
* ensure coverage of disability-related costs;
* ensure effective access to health care, assistive devices, and community support services;
* improve access to services across the life cycle, such as childcare, education, vocational training, support with employment.

The incidence of the covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the difficulties for persons with disabilities in accessing social protection services, yet generating growing interest in (new) inclusive measures[[1]](#footnote-1). Social dimensions of vulnerability can be barriers to accessing secure livelihoods and essential services. In this context, social protection programmes are crucial to improve living standards and access to services, ensuring inclusive and equitable development outcomes. Mainstreaming disability into social protection implies making adjustments in the design and implementation of programmes and policies in order to address the specific vulnerabilities associated with disability.

The right to social protection is enshrined in Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) which recognises the “right of persons with disabilities to social protection and to the enjoyment of that right without discrimination on the basis of disability”[[2]](#footnote-2). The Convention, therefore, gives a clear rationale for a disability inclusive social protection policy. It promotes social protection systems inclusive of persons with disabilities able to facilitate active citizenship, social inclusion and community participation. The Convention calls on States parties to ensure that persons with disabilities receive equal access to mainstream social protection programmes and services as well as access to specific programmes and services for disability-related needs and expenses such as support services.

The variety of actions which could promote an enabling environment for persons with disabilities is manifold and varied, due to the systematic exclusion they experience at all levels of society: improving access to education through programmes which promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools (inclusive education); improving access to health services through early intervention programmes and increased provision of rehabilitation services and supportive devices; improving access to employment through skill development and vocational training programmes.

Against this background, Bridging the Gap, ILO, UNICEF, UNPRPD, IDA, and ADF organise a two-day policy dialogue conference on the topic of inclusive social protection in Africa, aiming to generate experience and expertise sharing, as well as to enhance coordination, cooperation and commitment for inclusion in line with the provisions of the UN CRPD.

Objectives

The overall objective of the conference is to initiate a policy dialogue on inclusive social protection in Africa involving the main continental public players.

The specific objectives are:

* to share good practices and experiences on inclusive social protection in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Sudan and other African countries.
* to reflect on the challenges and opportunities deriving from the covid-19 pandemic.
* to propose new solutions and commitments for inclusion, also with the involvement of the organisation of persons with disabilities and the international donor community.
* to propose a path for future action and related accountability mechanisms.

Target audience

* National institutions of the participant countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Sudan, others)
* Regional and national organisations of persons with disabilities
* Development practitioners (for instance: bilateral agencies, EU delegations, UN agencies/funds/programmes)
* African Union, CEDEAO, UEMOA

Non-exhaustive list of suggested readings for the participants

* 2019 International Labour Organisation (ILO) - Building social protection floors and comprehensive social security systems: [“WORLD SOCIAL PROTECTION REPORT 2017 – 19”](https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=54887). ([French](https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=54922), [Spanish](https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=54912)).
* 2019 Development Pathways: [“Building Inclusive Social Protection Systems for Persons with Disabilities”.](https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Disability-overview-report-2019April07.pdf)
* 2018 Development Pathways: [“Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities”](http://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Annotated-bibliography-FINALpdf.pdf).
* 2017 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA): [“Strengthening Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities in Arab Countries”](https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/strengthening-social-protection-persons-with-disabilities-advance-copy-en.pdf).
* 2015 United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: [“Statement on social protection floors: an essential element of the right to social security and of the sustainable development goals”](https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=50857).
* 2015 International Labour Office & International Disability Alliance: [“The technical meeting on inclusive social protection for persons with disabilities”](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_566528.pdf).
* 2012 International Labour organisation (ILO) - [Social Protection Floors Recommendation](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R202).
* Humanity and Inclusion (HI): [“Good Practices for the Economic Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Developing Countries”](https://www.iddcconsortium.net/sites/default/files/resources-tools/files/2011_good_practices_guide_en_final.pdf).
* International Disability Alliance (IDA): “[A Report on the Social Protection Response to COVID-19 for Persons with Disabilities, South Asian Region.”](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida_south-asian-region-report_02-02-2021_2.pdf)
* CBM Disability-Inclusion: [Livelihood](https://iddcconsortium.net/sites/default/files/resources-tools/files/cbm_disability_inclusion_-_livelihood.pdf).
* International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) - [Livelihood Resources and Tools](https://www.iddcconsortium.net/resources-tools/livelihood-resources-tools).
* [Humanity and Inclusion (HI) - Social Inclusion and Employment](https://hi.org/en/livelihood).
* [UNICEF – Social protection and Livelihood](https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/index_65315.html).
* [Joint statement: Towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities](https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/resource/joint-statement-towards-inclusive-social-protection-systems-supporting-the-full-and-effective-participation-of-persons-with-disabilities/).
* Project [“Making it Work”](https://www.makingitwork-crpd.org/our-work/examples-miw-good-practices-and-projects).
* [Initial overview of specific social protection measures for persons with disabilities and their families in response to COVID 19 crisis](https://gladnetwork.net/search/blog/resources-social-protection-and-covid19-response), UNPRPD, 2020
* BtG & Cote, [The Unsteady Path](https://bridgingthegap-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/The-unsteady-path.-A-pilot-study-by-BtG.pdf), 2020

1. See UNPRPD [here](https://gladnetwork.net/search/resources/information-social-protection-and-persons-disabilities-covid19), and [here](https://gladnetwork.net/search/blog/resources-social-protection-and-covid19-response). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-28-adequate-standard-of-living-and-social-protection.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)