



# Iraq Festival 2023

**Narrative report**  
**02 to 09 March 2023**

**Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 2,  
Inclusive Education Workshop  
and IADO Board Meeting**

**April 2023**





# Highlights

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# Executive Summary

The occurrence of a Bridge CRPD-SDGs training in a country has eased the leverage and realisation of other trainings, consultations, and workshops in the same place and at the same time: these are referred to as 'Festivals'. This 'Festivals' format has supported a considerable increase in the number of participants who benefit from the trainings, serving the interests of all partners and key stakeholders, enabling reciprocal benefits in terms of costs and service providers. The 'Festivals' format stands as a model of mutual benefit for all organisations involved, increasing our 'value for money'.

Building upon the success of the Module 1 of the national Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq, held in Erbil, in November 2021, and following this 'Festivals' format, the International Disability Alliance (IDA), the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD), the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organizations (IADO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), hosted, in March 2023, an 'Iraq Festival'.

The 'Iraq Festival' took place from the 2nd to the 9th of March 2023, under the leadership of AOPD Chair, Dr Nawaf Kabbara, IADO Chair, Mr Mwafaq Al-Khafaji, and AOPD Director, Ms Jahda Abou Khalil. It was supported by a vibrant team of facilitators from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, with the following trainings:

- a. **National Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq Module 2,**
- b. **Workshop on the CRPD Article 24 and SDGs 4 on Inclusive Education,**
- c. **GDS consultation, and**
- d. **Strategic IADO Board meeting.**

This 'Festival' involved a total of 87 people, including 23 participants, six regional facilitators, resource people, observers, support persons, logisticians, and communication staff. Participants came from 12 Iraq governorates, with 61% being from underrepresented groups, including persons with psychosocial, and intellectual disabilities, autism, spina bifida, deafness, down syndrome, and short stature.

The Bridge CRPD-SDGs Quality Criteria were ensured through the entire 'Festival' with a significant representation of underrepresented groups (62%), youth people with disabilities (38%), women with disabilities (35%) and representants of ethnical minority groups (31%).

The convening power of the strategic partnership between IDA, AOPD, IADO and IOM brought together a critical mass of leaders from the disability movement and a cohort of stakeholders from the UN system, government and INGOs – influencers of the human rights and inclusive development agendas in Iraq. Together, they engaged in an active exchange, debating and sharing their experiences.

The Festival received the invaluable support of the Disabled People Organization Denmark (DPOD), CBM Global, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia (DFAT), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland (MOFA), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The 'Iraq Festival' was comprised of:

## Bridge CRPD–SDGs Module



During the Iraq Module 2, participants learned on how to further develop their skills to act through different key policy areas, including public policies, legal harmonisation, budgeting, data, and the use of UN monitoring mechanisms. A high-level policy exchange session was also offered with key stakeholders.

## Inclusive Education



The main objective of the workshop was to equip Iraqi OPDs with the ground knowledge and skills to advocate for inclusive education, covering the concept of educational systems and different systems, reflecting their importance for learners with disabilities and discussing the national public policy on education.

## GDS consultation




Iraqi participants were familiar with the GDS process, as they had actively participated in the GDS 2022. The consultation session recalled the objectives and history of the GDS and highlighted the importance to use different stakeholders' commitments as an advocacy tool for accountability. Participants reflected on how their national advocacy can influence such a global process.

## IADO Boarding Meeting



IADO Board members examined their partnership with UN agencies, advocacy campaigns to 2023, the importance of communication with the Council of Ministries in the Parliament and with the Human Rights Commission as well as the mobilisation of Bridge CRPD–SDGs Alumni in their own organisations. The outcomes of this meeting will guide their future initiatives and actions.



The 'Iraq Festival' incorporated different adult learning approaches such as simulation exercises, role plays, group work, presentations, case studies, networking exercises and stakeholder exchange sessions, as well as inclusive methodologies such as illustrations, visual aids, traffic cards, sensory breaks, resting areas, and the provision of accessible training materials.

Held for a week, the Iraq Festival was conducted with productive coordination and cooperation between facilitators and participants. At the end of the week, participants evaluated the 'Iraq Festival' as 'enlightening' and stated that it taught them how they must defend their rights. They also commended the fact that this Festival demonstrated how OPDs work together at national, regional, and global levels.

In addition, they appreciated the support from IOM Iraq, whose participation provided a positive exemplar for good practices on successful collaboration and cohesion between OPDs and UN while working together. OPD representatives resolved to use the skills and knowledge that they had acquired at the Festival while working together with different stakeholders towards their goals.

## Challenges, learnings and opportunities

Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq Module 1 was conducted in November 2021. Module 2 was intended to be held in June 2022 in Iraq but was delayed due to security, visa issues and the COVID-19 situation. A crucial consequence of this delay was the large gap between Modules 1 and 2, which led to a disruption in the learning momentum of the participants.

An essential apparatus that IDA believes we can leverage towards filling this gap is the combination of our helpdesk and online learning platform, both of which can be used to engage our alumni as they make the journey from one module to the next. Bridge CRPD-SDGs is established as a catalysing agent for increased mobilisation, community, and capacity building, and creating opportunities for our Community of Practice.

Adjacent to this reflection is IDA's recognition of the need to engage with our Community of Practice between trainings, especially for those who do not speak or communicate in English. The Helpdesk is a perfect tool that will allow us to provide support to them between trainings.

Another consideration in this case is that the GDS Summit 2025 is co-hosted by the Kingdom of Jordan, which may provide more opportunities for persons from the MENA region to engage with.

Our retrospection on this Festival reinforces our thought process that the time is ripe for us to leverage all available tools and modalities to wholly engage the disability community.

# Iraq Training Festival

02 to 09 March 2023



## Iraq Training Festival

### Background

From 9th to 16th November 2021, the International Disability Alliance (IDA), along with its regional member, the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities (AOPD), and their national member, the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organizations (IADO); under an Implementation Agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), hosted the Module 1 of the national Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq, in Erbil.

The result of this successful partnership was the decision to continue and expand the initiative, that resulted in the realisation of a national 'Iraq Festival'.

The realisation of Bridge CRPD-SDGs training Iraq Module 2 facilitated the organisation of the IADO Board meeting, with IADO's leadership participating and benefiting from some technical sessions of the training.



Screenshot of the IOM website displaying an article of the training

Furthermore, it also encouraged the realisation of the Inclusive Education Workshop, reinforcing IADO's current advocacy towards a national inclusive educational system; and it supported the GDS Secretariat to make a national consultation, both as a follow up of the GDS 2022 and in preparation towards the GDS 2025.



# Convening power and leveraging

The Bridge CRPD–SDGs is a capacity building initiative that fosters a more inclusive, accessible, and effective training experience while catalysing strong networking, and providing exposure to high-level advocacy.

The initiative brings together a unique host of leaders (IDA board members and OPD leaders, IDDC organisations), allies, and trainers from the region – experts on the CRPD, SDGs, public policies, and high-level advocacy. It also makes available an equipped team of inclusive logisticians who promote an enabling and accessible learning environment.

The occurrence of Bridge CRPD–SDGs training in a country has been observed to ease the promotion of several other trainings, consultations, and workshops. It also considerably supports the mutualization of costs' strategy, benefiting all organisations and participants involved.



*A collage of photos of the Iraq festival*



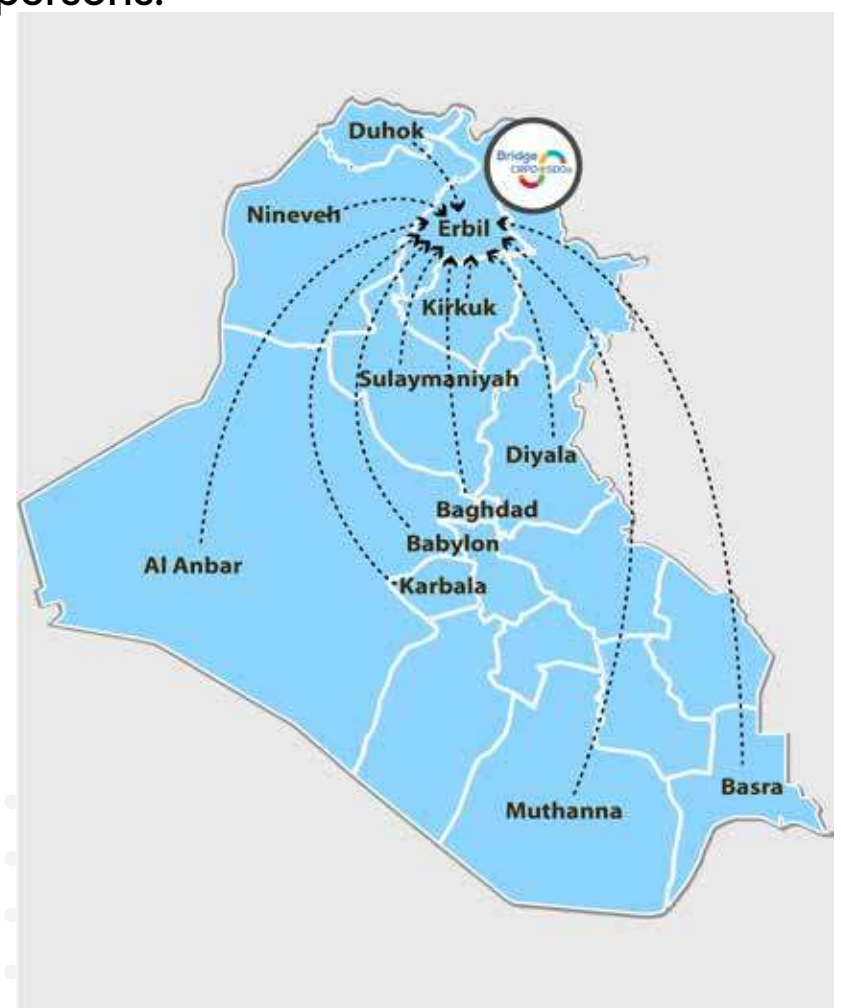
# Participants



Infographic of data segregation of the people who were a part of the 'Iraq Festival'

A total of 87 people were involved in this 'Iraq Festival', of which 23 were participants, six were facilitators, six were resource people, 20 were observers, three were from logistic and communication support, and 29 were support persons.

Participants came from 12 Iraq governorates (out of 19), with 61% being from underrepresented groups, including persons with psychosocial disabilities, autistic people, persons with spina bifida, Deaf people, people with intellectual disabilities, and with short stature. Facilitators were 100% persons with disabilities from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Tunisia, with 50% being from underrepresented groups.



Map of Iraq, where 11 governorates, also known as "provinces" are marked leading to Erbil to indicate the location of the workshop.



A facilitator holding a mic and interacting with a group of participants sitting in a semi circle in a room.

The Bridge CRPD–SDGs Quality Criteria were followed through the entire ‘Festival’ with an outstanding representation of underrepresented groups (62%), youth with disabilities (38%), women with disabilities (35%) and representatives of ethnical minority groups (31%).

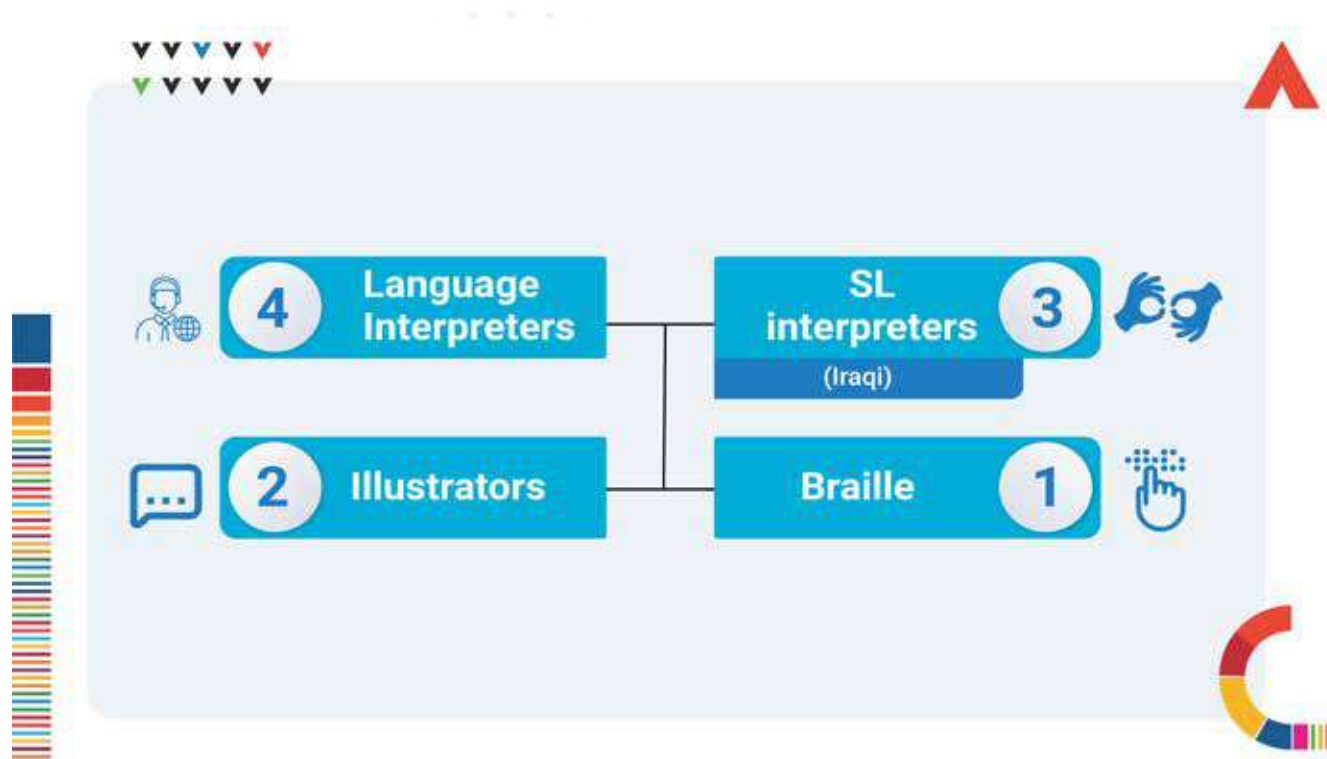
## Inclusive methodology

The training was conducted in Arabic, Kurdish, and Iraqi sign languages simultaneously, making it possible for leaders with disabilities from different governorates and minority groups to follow the training in their own language.



An infographic describing the data segregation of countries





An infographic describing the data segregation of support people who attended the Iraq Festival

Inclusion and accessibility were ensured by an inclusive methodology, illustrators, personal assistants, Braille, and sound technicians. The inclusive methodology was reinforced by illustrations, visual aids, traffic cards, sensory breaks, resting area, and accessible training materials.

The 'Iraq Festival' incorporated different inclusive adult learning approaches through simulation exercises, role plays, group work, presentations, case studies, networking exercises and stakeholder exchange sessions. It also included various feedback mechanisms such as traffic cards, 'moodometers', a daily feedback team, a parking lot, ranking charts, and timekeeping.



# Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq Module 2



*A collage of participants, facilitators and support people attending the training*



# Background

Bridge CRPD-SDGs is an intensive training programme that aims to support organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and disability rights advocates to develop an inclusive and comprehensive CRPD perspective in all development agenda.



*A facilitator on a wheelchair posing in front of artwork created by participants displayed on a pin board*

Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 2 focuses on the CRPD and SDGs; it enables participants to instrumentalise the knowledge they acquired during the Module 1 influence inclusive national public policies.

From 2nd to 8th March 2023, the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq Module 2 was held in Erbil, Iraq, with financial support from the Disabled People Organization Denmark (DPOD), CBM Global, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia (DFAT), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland (MOFA), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 2 was preceded by a facilitators' preparatory day and a preparatory day with participants from underrepresented groups, on the 28th of February and 1st of March 2023 respectively.

# Assignment and exposure to public policies

Between Bridge CRPD–SDGs Modules 1 and 2, participants prepared their assignments to analyse the human rights and development context in Iraq. They each individually drafted a policy brief that analysed a development issue from a CRPD perspective. This work was supported by the facilitators' team.

During Module 2, participants were encouraged to share and present their advanced brief paper. This was an exercise that reinforced the learnings of every Bridge CRPD–SDGs Alumni but also allowed for peer-learning. Additionally, participants were introduced to different elements of public, such as the design of public policies and their inclusive aspects, data, legal harmonization, disability-compliant budget, and inclusive programming.

Participants were encouraged to express their views through interactive activities and sharing practices, including during the Exchange Policy Session with key stakeholders from different organizations. They also discussed discriminating factors and different existing barriers in their national context. Finally, they gained familiarity with the use of different UN monitoring mechanisms, such as the CRPD committee



*A participant in a wheelchair holding a mic and talking*



# Global Disability Summit National Consultation



Participants gathered around and sitting in a semi circle. A facilitator is standing in front and interacting with them



A collage of photos of the Iraq festival



# Background

The Global Disability Summit (GDS) offers a concrete platform for stakeholders to make new, ambitious, and extensive commitments to promote and advance the rights of persons with disabilities, which are critical to achieving real change for persons with disabilities. It is also an international mechanism that brings together relevant influencers with the aim to create global attention to persons with disabilities.

It is a platform where stakeholders can commit to promote and advance disability rights. The GDS is also an advocacy tool that enables persons with disabilities and their representative organisations to follow up on the implementation of commitments made by their governments or different stakeholders in their countries.

The first Global Disability held in 2018 (GDS18) was a historical event for disability inclusion that was co-hosted by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Government of Kenya, and the International Disability Alliance (IDA). The GDS18 inspired unprecedented engagement and generated commitments to action to support delivering Agenda 2030's vision to 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB) as well as existing obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).



Photo from the Global Disability Summit along with a photo of sign language interpreter





The International Disability Alliance, the Government of Norway and the Government of Ghana hosted the Second Global Disability Summit on 15th - 17th February 2022 (GDS2022). The Summit was held virtually due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and to allow for wider participation.



A screenshot of the GDS online event, featuring the host of the event presenting with the background of the GDS logo

The following GDS will take place in 2025 and will be hosted by the Government of Germany and the Kingdom of Jordan along with IDA as the permanent co-host.

## GDS consultation in Iraq

The GDS takes a participatory approach and directly engages with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations by consulting with them in different parts of the world.

This is made possible through IDA's national consultations. As a part of these consultations, on the 8th of March 2023, OPDs in Iraq discussed the commitments made in the previous Summit and shared their views on what they would like to see in the upcoming GDS 2025. This consultation took place as a substantive session to the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq Module 2, with same participants.

## Key discussions

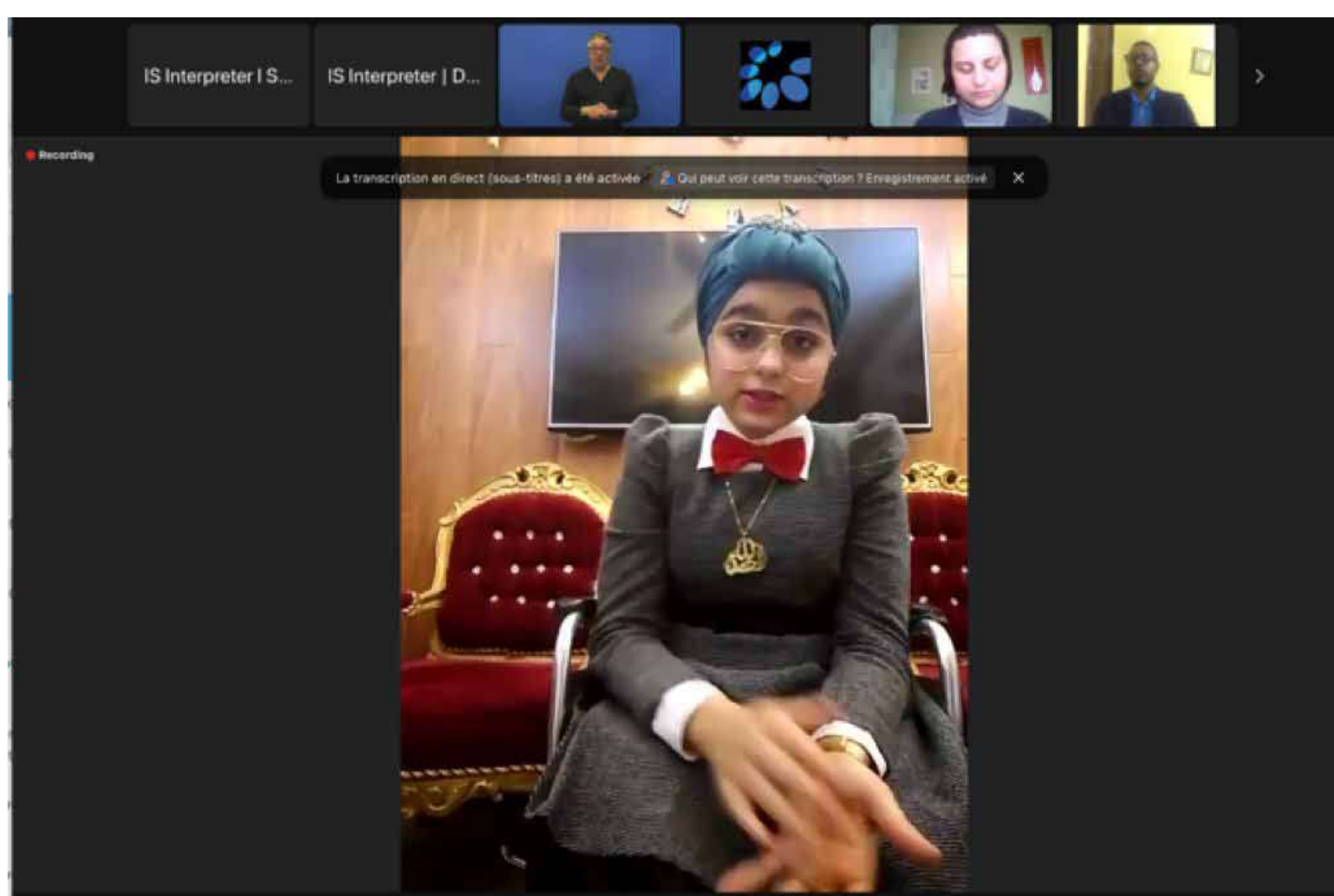
The consultation started with a plenary discussion around the GDS mechanism, including its objective, history, and modality of work. Iraqi participants recalled that they were actively involved in the GDS 22 process, including as part of the GDS Youth. Iraqi OPDs observed that commitments made in 2018 were not renewed in 2022 and no new commitments were made in 2022. Participants also observed that the GDS secretariat is tracking the implementation of this commitment. The role of OPDs in this monitoring process was also highlighted.



A key moment was the session on the upcoming GDS 2025. Participants reiterated their interest to participate in this upcoming Summit to contribute to the process with the perspectives of OPDs in Iraq.

After that, participants explored what their key priorities for the upcoming Summit, in 2025 would be. They expressed a particular interest in the following key themes:

- *Persons with disabilities in emergency and crisis*
- *Inclusive education*
- *Issues of women with disabilities*
- *Social protection, livelihood and employment*
- *Assistive technology*



A screenshot of Saja Muhammed, a youth with disability, sharing her experience during the GDS Youth online event in 2021

*“I have been following the Oslo Summit closely and I was proud that IDA brought OPDs as equal partner(s) in a table during the Summit. I am glad that through the Global Disability Summit our national voices are heard globally “*

*“I am happy to know that as an OPD in Iraq, we can influence such global processes. We had a great participation with key panellists and speakers during the last Summit (GDS main and GDS Youth)“.*

# IADO Board meeting



A collage of photos of the Iraq festival



On 7th and 8th March 2023, the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organization (IADO) convened its Board meeting as a parallel event to the Bridge CRPD–SDGs Module 2, in Erbil, Iraq, with the presence of seven board members.

The meeting covered a wide range of topics, including administrative and managerial matters. The discussions included the continuation of renewing the identity of IADO members, completing the annual administrative and financial reports, and handling of all documents and record of IADO.

During the two-day meeting, the performance of the tasks and projects of the organisation was thoroughly assessed, including the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and plans to launch awareness raising campaigns in 2023.

The meeting emphasised the importance of communication with the Council of Ministries, The Labour and Social Affairs Committee in the Parliament, and the Human Rights Commission regarding the Draft Amendments to the Law no. 38 on the Care of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs of 2013, on the rights of people with disabilities.

IADO board members discussed the possibility of updating the national SDGs report, and addressed the issue of disability classifications based on the outcomes of the meeting that took place in Doha with the Ministers of Labour and Arab Social Affairs.

IADO members also discussed strategies to mobilise Bridge CRPD–SDGs participants into IADO's work to help them apply the skills and knowledge that they developed from the Bridge CRPD–SDGs training. Several participants were chosen to invest in their organizations as trainees and facilitators in various programmes, including workshops, courses, meetings, and dialogues.

The meeting proved to be fruitful and produced outcomes that will serve as a guide for future IADO initiatives and actions.



Group photo of all participants of the Iraq festival 2023



# Inclusive Education Workshop



A collage of photos of the Iraq festival







A collage of photos of the Iraq festival

## Background

On 9th March 2023, IADO, AOPD, IDA and IOM Iraq held the Inclusive Education Workshop, in Erbil, Iraq, as part of the 'Iraq Festival', and followed the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq Module 2, which was concluded on the previous day.

The main objective of the workshop was to equip Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) with the ground knowledge and skills to advocate for inclusive education, according to Article 24 of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDGs 4) and the latest jurisprudence of the CRPD Committee. Participants of the workshop were the same who attended the Bridge CRPD-SDGs training.

# Curriculum and methodology

The curriculum followed IDA's training and materials on Inclusive Education, developed by IDA and its members in 2021. The workshop was conducted simultaneously in Arabic, Kurdish, and Iraqi sign languages. It also followed an inclusive facilitation approach, with a wide range of accessible features and methodologies including group discussions, plenary presentations, sensory breaks, and the engagement of service providers such as illustrators.

## Summary

The workshop highlighted the principles and provisions of UN CRPD, correlating them with ongoing Iraq policies and practices to implement the inclusive education in line with Article 24. The workshop also promoted an in-depth discussion about the Iraqi Educational System, focusing on the concept of inclusive education and reflecting on their importance for learners with disabilities.

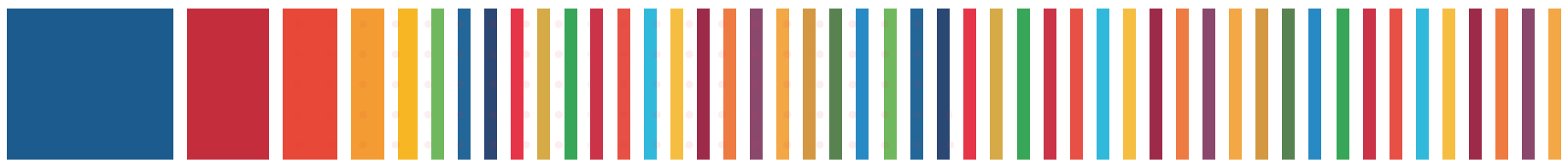
## Conclusion

This workshop stressed the need for OPDs in Iraq to be better equipped with technical knowledge to engage in the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies. The overall evaluation of the training elicited high levels of satisfaction from participants, primarily in regard to the learning, sharing, and networking. They also expressed contentment with the inclusive facilitation methods that were used, the materials that were provided, and the presence of representatives from the most underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities.

**Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq Module 2**  
02-08 March 2023







# Annex 1 – Bridge CRPD–SDGs Training Details

## First Day

### Opening

The Bridge CRPD–SDGs national cycle Iraq Module 2 began with the opening remarks from the Lamia Sabaa Al Qaisi, IADO Board member. She welcomed all participants and appreciated the relevancy of the Bridge CRPD–SDGs training in the context of Iraq. She also acknowledged the approach of Bridge training to strengthen the capacity of organization of persons with disabilities (OPDs).



Group photo of some participants and facilitators together



She was followed by Mr Mouwffak Al Khafaj, AOPD Vice-president, that also stressed the importance of Bridge for OPDs in Iraq. He encouraged participants to make the most of it and transform their learning into national advocacy. He mentioned that Bridge training demonstrates how OPDs work together at national, regional, and global levels.



*Yoko Fujimura, Head of IOM Iraq interacting with participants of the training*

Then, Ms Yoko Fujimura, Head of IOM Iraq, welcomed all participants to the training and stressed IOM's commitments to work with OPDs under the spirit of "Nothing About us Without Us". She further thanked and congratulated IDA and AOPD for their outstanding work across the globe in building capacity of the disability movement, particularly, through the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Initiative.



*A facilitator holding a mic and leading a session*



To conclude the Opening Ceremony, Mr Alradi Abdalla, IDA's Senior Officer, explained about the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Initiative, highlighting its importance to build a critical mass of OPD activists to engage in public policy-making processes. He stated IDA's work model to work hand in hand with IDA members and their members. As a result, IDA makes this Bridge Module 2 together with AOPD and IADO. He further thanked and appreciated the support of IOM to the full cycle of Bridge CRPD-SDGs Iraq, which showed good practice on how OPDs and UN agencies work together.

## *Introductory and recap sessions*



*A facilitator holding a mic and interacting with a group of participants sitting in a semi circle in a room.*

Afterwards, facilitators explained accessibility features of the training, debriefed agenda of the week and collected expectation from all the participants, highlighting what would be covered and what was beyond the scope of training.

In the first session – on CRPD recap – in participants got a refresher on the key concept of the CRPD through the 'hot ball' exercise. Following this exercise, they went to a practical exercise on the CRPD articles working to relate them with their life and daily practices.

## **CRPD & SDGs**

During the day, participants and facilitators correlated CRPD articles with SDGs, discussing their importance and how they should work in tandem to strengthen each other. The CRPD provides guidance on inclusive implementation of SDGs in the context of disability while the SDGs influence public policies relating to sustainable development and can reinforce the realisation of the CRPD. Through group discussions, participants made concrete connections between the SDGs and specific articles of the CRPD.



# Second Day



A participant holding the mic to lead the two minutes one article session.


## 2 minutes 1 article

The day started with feedback from the evaluation team followed by a recap of the previous day. In the ‘2 minutes 1 article’ session, a participant presented on the Article 25 of the CRPD on the right to health, stressing the importance of accessible support services in the health sector, including the provision of sign language interpretation. It was followed by a discussion on the health system in Iraq.

*“In Iraq, many health centres were built very early, before the CRPD. At that time, these health centres were more targeted to treat the members of military forces who were injured during the war. Therefore, they run in a charity or medical-based model. Today, we advocate closely with government to run those centres in a rights-based model.”*







Then, the second presentation of the '2 minutes 1 Article' activity was on the Article 21 of the CRPD, on the right to freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information. The participant highlighted the systemic inaccessible communicational system in Iraq, providing an example of the TV channels that do not provide sign language interpretation in its programmes, leaving the entire community of Deaf persons excluded from informational systems. During the discussion, participants suggested that mandatory public policies must be promoted for accessible information; and that the government should facilitate private and public media centres to provide appropriate and accessible services.

## ***Public policies – Introduction***

A brief recap on public policies began by revising the concepts of progressive realisation and immediate obligation, with participants engaged in an activity to identify if the given actions were of progressive or immediate realisation. Participants concluded that, in a general sense, the range of civil and political rights, including the right to not be discriminated must be immediately realisable, while, again, in general, social, cultural, and economic rights can go through progressive realisation.

The exercise was followed by a vibrant discussion about public policies and their diverse components including legislation, regulation, programmes, data, monitoring, and evaluation, among others. Facilitators reinforced that most of the public policy elements would be covered throughout the week of the Bridge CRPD–SDGs Module 2.

Through a following exercise, participants studied specific public sectors and identify Iraqi government entities responsible for designing, implementing, and monitoring different elements of public policy at national, governorates and local levels; and articulated how these government entities were responsible to implement specific elements of different public policies.

## ***2 minutes 1 article***

In the afternoon, a participant presented Article 18 of the CRPD on the rights of persons with disabilities to the liberty of movement and nationality, stressing on the rights of persons with disabilities to migrate from one to another country, which has been neglected in many ways. The following participant presented the Article 5 of the CRPD on equality and non-discrimination, reflecting upon different barriers that create the unequal treatment of persons with disabilities.

# Gender equality



Participants sitting across a round table and engaging in discussion



A participant taking the lead during group discussion

The session on gender equality promoted discussions on daily life situations where gender may define social responses in different ways depending on multiple variables. This led to discussions about intersectionalities and multiple layers of discrimination that are not only based on disabilities, but on gender and sex.

Facilitators and participants also discussed the situation of women with disabilities in both disability and women mainstream movements. Participants concluded that women with disabilities are neither equally represented within the disability movement, nor do they have equal representation in Iraq. Likewise, the issues of women with disabilities are not addressed within women's movement.

*"In general, people with disabilities are discriminated against, but it should be noted that women with disabilities are discriminated due to gender disparity and their disability."*



# Third Day



Multiple groups of participants sitting across round tables and engaging in discussions

The day started with a presentation from the evaluation team on the different aspects of the training thus far, followed by a recap of sessions from the previous day.

## *2 minutes 1 article*

The morning session of 2 minutes 1 article incorporated the presentation of Article 32 of the CRPD on international cooperation, highlighting that international efforts to support Iraqi's development should be conducive to benefit persons with disabilities.

This was followed by a presentation on Article 23 of the CRPD on the right to respect for home and the family. The participant stressed upon the value of raising awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities to get married by their choice, along with raising children.

*"In many families, a woman with disabilities cannot get married because the family believes that, in case she has a child, it would also be a person with disabilities and the family does not want that."*



The third presentation of the morning was focused on Article 20 of the CRPD on personal mobility, emphasising the importance of each person with disabilities to be able to visit anywhere and to travel, with the support that is required. The presenter concluded that therefore, public areas such as airports and hospitals should be accessible to all persons with disabilities and assistive mobility devices should be made available and affordable.

## *Inclusive programming*

During the inclusive programming design session, facilitators highlighted different steps of the programme cycle. These are: planning, implementation, budget, monitoring, and evaluation. The group then discussed how programmes can be designed in an inclusive way, benefiting persons with disabilities. This was followed by an exercise where participants analysed several programmes and debated whether they were inclusive of persons with disabilities. They then proposed clear recommendations for those that were not inclusive to become.

## *Inclusive data*



Participants sitting across a round table and engaging in a discussion

This session started with an in-depth discussion on the importance of data collection, disaggregation, and analysis, particularly to conduct evidence-based advocacy.

The participants then reviewed the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability (WGQ) and discussed its significance in collecting appropriate information about persons with disabilities. After this, data collection procedures such as census, statistical survey and administrative records were also studied.

*“Data is key for the disability movement in order to address systemic inequality that persons with disability still face.”*



# Fourth Day



To start the day, the evaluation team summarised their constructive discussion and daily review with the facilitators on the previous day sessions.

## 2 minutes 1 article

The first presentation of the day was on Article 22 of the CRPD on the right to respect for the privacy of persons with disabilities. The participant linked this article with the data session from the previous day, reinforcing that privacy is also related to data, so while collecting any data, the mechanisms to maintain individual privacy should be ensured.

The presentation that followed focused on Article 16 of the CRPD on the right to freedom from exploitation, violence, and abuse. The participant laid special focus on the widely spread practice of persons with disabilities begging and recommended that measures



must be taken to stop the abuse and exploitation of persons with disabilities by making them engage in begging.

The next presentation also built on the data session of the previous day, as it was focused on the Article 31 of the CRPD, on the duty of States Parties regarding statistics and data collection. Another presentation highlighted the Article 27 of the CRPD on the right of persons with disabilities with regards to work and employment. This brought up discussions on the quota system in Iraq that features in the law but is not observed being implemented in practice.



A participant with Down syndrome presenting his session through his artwork

The final presentation from this morning was on Article 24, of the CRPD on inclusive education. The participant presented this article using an illustration that featured how education should happen in an inclusive setting.

## *Legal harmonisation*

Participants discussed the States obligations under the CRPD and the national legal system structure, including an in-depth review of how the legislation is made in Iraq. In Iraq, every law is accompanied by guidelines (a decree). Each ministry has its own guidelines for implementing any law. The group worked with existing disability-focused and mainstream laws, analysed, and deliberated in a plenary session whether each law was compliant with the CRPD. The key message from this exercise was the States' obligation and the importance of having meaningful consultations with persons with disabilities and OPDs while drafting laws that may impact the lives of persons with disabilities.



# Fifth Day



Three participants sitting across a round table engaging in a discussion

Per the usual welcome practice, participants shared the constructive daily evaluation of the previous day and started the session on 2 minutes 1 article.

## *2 minutes 1 article*

The first presentation focused on Article 4 of the CRPD on the general obligations of States. The presenter explained that States Parties are accountable to ensure and advance the fulfilment of fundamental freedoms and human rights of persons with disabilities.

The following presentation highlighted Article 15 of the CRPD on the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, emphasising the difference between Articles 15 and 16 of the CRPD. They explained that when the violence is committed by state actors, it is addressed under Article 15, and if it is committed by non-state actors, it is featured under Article 16.

This was followed by a presentation on Article 9 of the CRPD on accessibility. The participant stressed that Iraq should establish standards and guidelines to implement the different elements of accessibility such as building codes, transportation, websites, etc.

The last presentation of the morning focused on Article 19 of the CRPD on the rights of persons with disabilities to independent living and being included in the community. The presenter underscored that persons with disabilities should be provided with community-based support services to be able to live independently in their communities. During the plenary discussion, participants stressed upon the provision of assistive technology and personal assistance to guarantee independent life.



## *Inclusive budgeting*

The session commenced with a discussion on the importance of budget as a key component of public policy to realise the rights of persons with disabilities. The discussion further covered the inclusive budget cycle, process, outcome, as well as building CRPD-compliant budgets.

Participants shared how the budget process is implemented in Iraq, highlighting that the Council of Ministers receives the budget priorities from all relevant parties, and then forward it to be decided by the parliament.

Then, participants simulated a 'pitch session' between ministries and OPDs with representative members of OPDs advocating before different ministries to feature the disability agenda within the ministerial budget. A key outcome of the session was participants realising the importance of strategic planning and data.

*"It is key for OPDs to track the national budget to figure out whether it is CRPD compliant or not. Based on that, we can drive our advocacy."*



# Sixth Day



A participant holding the mic during to lead the two minutes one article session

The day started with the constructive daily evaluation of the previous day and with the session on 2 minutes 1 article.

## *2 minutes 1 article*

The first presentation focused on Article 26 of the CRPD on the duties of States Parties to provide measures for the habilitation and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The participant emphasised the paradigm shift that the CRPD provides to move from purely medical approach to an interdisciplinary approach.

The next presentation was on Article 30 of the CRPD on the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport. The presenter highlighted the importance of making sports and leisure activities in facilities accessible for all.

The next participant presented Article 8 of the CRPD about raising awareness using media with messaging that is in line with the human rights-based approach. In the plenary, participants agreed that this can change stereotyped and conventional narratives about disability.

The last presentation of the day was on Article 12 of the CRPD, on the rights of persons with disabilities to equal recognition before the law. Participants recalled that there are many laws in Iraq that deny the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and stressed upon the amendment of such laws.

## UN monitoring mechanisms



A facilitator leading a discussion with participants sitting on chairs in a semi circle

A stand-alone session was dedicated to the UN monitoring mechanisms. Four main UN mechanisms were introduced, namely the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the Special Procedures under the Human Rights Council, and the Treaty Bodies, with a focus on the CRPD Committee. Facilitators and participants together built a matrix to explain the mandates, working procedures and scope of each of these mechanisms.

A practical exercise simulated a State review under the CRPD Committee to show the work modality of the Committee using constructive dialogue. The group was divided into groups of CRPD Committee members, States and OPDs representatives. For this exercise, participants used a real sample from the Iraqi State report that was used for the CRPD Committee processes.

*"I learned how the constructive dialogue between the CRPD Committee, and a State delegation is organised."*




## Public policy exchange



This was a hybrid session that promoted direct conversation with relevant stakeholders both with stakeholders in person and others joining online from distance.

The 'in-person' round was conducted with the presence of Ms Sana Jada Salem, from Massalla, Ms Sana Abdulwahab, from Save the Children, Mr Amar Tariq, from the British Council, Mr Mickael Raid, from Un Ponte Per, and Mr Said Satar, from Humanity and Inclusion (HI Iraq).

Each representative shared an overview of their organisations and their respective mandates. Additionally, they presented their engagement and work on the field of inclusion and, eventually, with persons with disabilities. The representatives then invited stakeholders and OPD representatives to share their experiences on inclusive practices, ongoing and upcoming programmes, and other related topics.



There is great value in OPD and NGO representatives to build processes to complement each other's work. Being exposed to each other's work and processes provided participants with perspectives on how their work could be more inclusive (as NGOs) and more mainstreamed (as OPDs).

According to stakeholders, the session also helped them discover how their work and programmes could be made more inclusive. At the end of the session, the stakeholders expressed their interest in further interacting and collaborating with the OPDs to aid with formulating disability-inclusive programmes.

***"I learned from the OPDs, and I expressed my interest to consult with them to better design our upcoming projects."***

Representative of Un Ponte Per

***"We are interested to closely consult OPDs representatives regarding our new project on vocational training to make it inclusive of persons with disabilities."***

Representative of Massalla

In the virtual round, the group welcomed Ms Sara Minkara, the U.S. Special Advisor on International Disability Rights in the U.S. Department of State, who shared her journey and experience as a person with disability. She also stressed upon the right-based opportunities of persons with disabilities for their independent living. During the discussion with Sara, participants shared that capacity building programme for OPDs such as the Bridge CRPD-SDGs Initiative supported them to engage in policy-making processes in Iraq. They conveyed that keeping such initiatives alive will change the power dynamics between OPDs and relevant authorities.

***"The stakeholder session was amazing, and the dialog was very positive. We observe that the stakeholders wanted to stay in touch with all participants."***



# Seventh Day

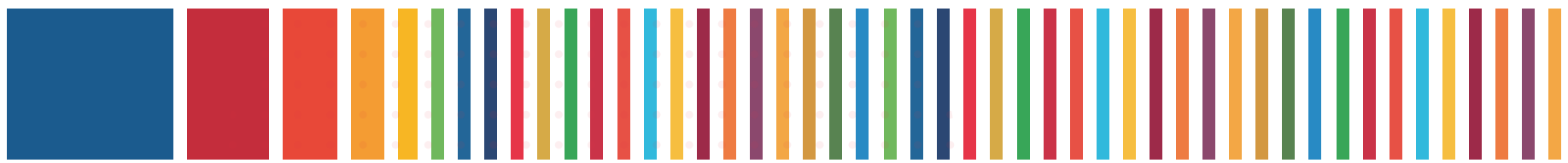
The seventh day of Bridge CRPD SDGs started with feedback on the meeting with stakeholders. Participants accentuated on their learnings of how to communicate and networking with different stakeholders.

## *Inclusive disability movement*



Collage of participants engaging in an exercise by binding their hands with a string

The final session of the training was an exercise on solidarity and steps towards reinforcing the Iraqi disability movement. This exercise aimed to create an environment in which participants and facilitators commit to each other, creating a network between participants and facilitators.



## Annex 2 – Workshop on Inclusive Education – Details

On 9th March 2023, IADO, AOPD, IDA and IOM Iraq held the Inclusive Education Workshop, in Erbil, Iraq, as part of the 'Iraq Festival', and followed the Bridge CRPD–SDGs Iraq Module 2, which was concluded on the previous day.

### *Importance of inclusive education*

Participants engaged in a discussion on the purpose of education. They related the importance of education to consequences such as the establishment of adequate standards of living, the right to work and employment, and all rights linked to the dignity of the human person. They inferred that low inclusive educational system directly impacts the lifespan of persons with disabilities, concluding that education is linked to the entire trajectory of life. Hence, they summarised, that when a person is segregated at the beginning of one's life, that exclusion persists all lifelong.

### *International frameworks*

Likewise, participants reinforced that education is a crucial way to learn of their rights, therefore, advocacy and awareness raising towards the right to inclusive education is critical. The session further covered discussions on the frameworks of inclusive education related to other human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

It promoted reflections on how these frameworks reinforce each other and how they should be used to support the realisation of inclusive education systems for all persons with disabilities.





# Diverse educational systems

This discussion led to the session where participants discussed existing different types of educational systems that are availed by persons with disabilities. These were segregated, integrated and inclusive educational systems. Participants discussed each educational system in detail and reflected on the benefits and disadvantages of each. In conclusion, most participants agreed on the preferred system being the inclusive educational system as it involves all students under one roof with appropriate and quality inclusion, accessible methodologies and required accommodations.

## Transformation needed

The groups reflected deeply on what would be needed to realise a holistic approach of inclusive education for all, with particular attention to specific roles of different duty bears and stakeholders. The group simulated an annual plan to implement the inclusive educational system in Iraq, focusing on four groups of duty bears and stakeholders; namely, the Ministry of Education, the local educational administration, school management and a local teachers association. Some of these ideas are summarized as follows:

Inclusive Educational Public Policy			
Ministry of Education	Local Education Administration	School Management	Teacher association
Develop a policy to ensure that all students learn together in an inclusive and quality.	Profile a disaggregated list of all people that should be within the educational system.	Develop a strategy to address the existing barriers to students within their schools.	Emphasise on Inclusive Education curriculum

## Budget Allocation

<i>Ministry of Education</i>	<i>Local Education Administration</i>	<i>School Management</i>	<i>Teacher association</i>
Budget Allocation to implement inclusive education.	Follow up the construction of accessible school infrastructure.	Plan to provide individualized support to all students.	Plan awareness raising session on disability for students as well as parents.

## Implementation

<i>Ministry of Education</i>	<i>Local Education Administration</i>	<i>School Management</i>	<i>Teacher association</i>
Implement a "Zero Rejection" policy and train teachers on inclusive education.	Follow up to the implementation of the "Zero Rejection" policy.	Implement the disaggregated data collection method for students.	Peer support among to exchange experiences and good practices

## Accommodations & Learnings

<i>Ministry of Education</i>	<i>Local Education Administration</i>	<i>School Management</i>	<i>Teacher association</i>
Develop an accessible curriculum for all.	Modify the examination process to be accessible for all.	Provide support for teachers to be more qualified on managing inclusive classes.	Promote learning exchange among teachers and with other associations.



## Public policy components

Participants then discussed how to implement inclusive education public policies by analysing its components. This would include existing laws (with guarantee of non-discrimination and the provision of reasonable accommodation), adequate budgets, public officers training, monitoring of the public policy, inclusive, accurate and reliable data collection and analysis, and evaluation of the policy.

## Learnings and evaluation

This workshop introduced the concept of inclusive educational system, emphasising the importance to have all learners together under an educational system inclusive and of quality for all, including all persons with disabilities. Participants reflected that, in Iraq, the concept of inclusive education is not new, but that OPDs must be better equipped with technical knowledge to engage in public policies.

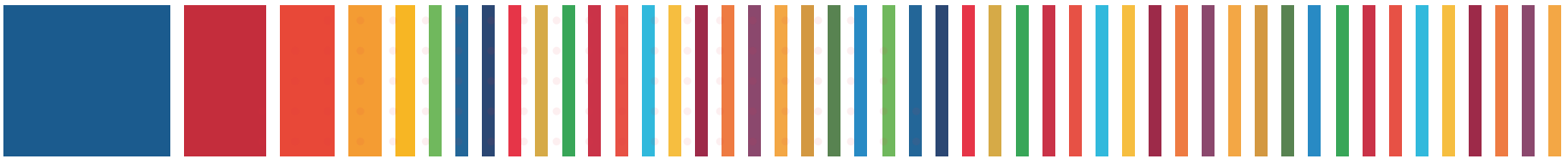
The overall evaluation of the training yielded full satisfaction from participants, predominantly in the areas of learning, sharing, and networking. They stressed the collaboration between IDA and IOM to conduct this training, stating that it was successful as a way for OPDs to be more equipped on the practical use of the CRPD and the SDGs. They shared that this training was a milestone for them to be equipped to deal with the government and relevant stakeholders.

They also stated that the cooperation and collaboration between IADO and AOPD to promote disability inclusion and accessibility through this training was successful to reinforce the capacity of OPDs. From this training, it is expected that more awareness raising will be promoted on disability inclusion and accessibility agenda in laws and to promote empowerment of OPDs across Iraq.

Participants also highlighted the remarkable representation of underrepresented groups in the training. They welcomed the opportunity to include representatives from the most underrepresented groups to share their potential with the Iraq disability leaders, linking them with the programmes of different organisations and incorporating their perspectives into the disability agenda.

*“The workshop gave us insight on how to work closely with educational institutions and relevant government authorities in order to make them clear on the key aspects and features of inclusive education ”*

*“This training helped us to understand our right to inclusive education in line with CRPD. I didn’t know I had this right before ”*



## Annex 3 – Social Media

[twitter.com/IDA\\_CRPD\\_Forum/status/1631190064494686209](https://twitter.com/IDA_CRPD_Forum/status/1631190064494686209)

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[twitter.com/IOMIraq/status/1633781987491061760](https://twitter.com/IOMIraq/status/1633781987491061760)

[twitter.com/IOMIraq/status/1633804901259137025](https://twitter.com/IOMIraq/status/1633804901259137025)

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7056316965996367872>

<https://www.facebook.com/InternationalDisabilityAllianceIDA/photos/a.592272817517974/6091269107618290/>





## Annex 4 – List of participants

### *Participants*

1. Mr Abd Shareef Shareef Farhan, Anwar Fallujah Association for the Deaf, Fallujah
2. Mr Abdulsaheb Al Bayati, IADO, Diyala
3. Mr Ahmed Al Barakat, IADO, Muthanna
4. Ms Alaa Al Nuaimi, Gathering of the Disable, Baghdad
5. Mr Ali Khalial, Association of Short Stature, Kirkuk
6. Mr Asaid Mohammad Kareem Al Bahadli, IADO, Baghdad
7. Ms Ayat Fadel Ghazal Alhamdani, Association of the Deaf, Baghdad
8. Ms Esra Ahmed Muhammad Mahdi, Union of the Blind of Iraqi Kurdistan, Sulaymaniyah
9. Mr Ibrahim Ahmed Brizad, Association of the Deaf, Erbil
10. Mr Jumaa Salih Sanger, Beautiful mind, Kirkuk
11. Mr Kader Redwan, Zain Association, Erbil
12. Ms Khabour Muhammad Ali, Association of the Blind, Duhok
13. Ms Lamia Sabaa Al Qaisi, Disability Gathering in Iraq, Baghdad
14. Ms Marwa Shihab Eldin Marwa, Association of the Deaf, Baghdad
15. Mr Nazar Barjas, Sinjar Organization for Persons with Disabilities, Nineveh
16. Mr Osman Yassin Al Kenani, Iraqi Al-Sarraj Association for the Blind, Karbala
17. Mr Saeed Chich Waheed, Kassar Qamah Duhok Association, Duhok
18. Ms Saja Muhammad Qassem, Disability Gathering in Iraq, Baghdad
19. Mr Sajjad Razak Kerdah Ali Al Hilali, Hayy Al-Imam, Babylon
20. Mr Sarour Yousif Nasar, Union of the Blind, Basra
21. Mr Yadgar Karim Pirdawd Karim Union of the Blind and Visually Impaired, Erbil
22. Mr Youssef Sami Abdul Aziz Hammoud, IADO, Muthanna
23. Ms Zainab Jalal Ahmed, Disability Gathering in Iraq, Baghdad

## Facilitators

24. Mr Adnan Ali Fawwaz Kafraini, Jordan
25. Mr Alradi Adballa, IDA, Sudan
26. Ms Hajar Ismaeel Wayss Wayss, Iraq
27. Mr Hashim Khalil Ibrahim Al Azzawi, IADO, Iraq
28. Mr Imededdine Ouertani, IDA, Tunisia
29. Ms Weam Elfadol Elttom Ibrahim, Sudanese National Union of Deaf People, Sudan

## Resource people

30. Ms Haneen Mohammed, IOM, Iraq
31. Ms Jahda Abou Khalil, AODP, Lebanon
32. Mr Mofaq T Hashim Al Khafaj, IADO Board, Iraq
33. Mr Nawaf Kabbara, AOPD, Lebanon
34. Ms Sara Minkara, SAIDR, USA
35. Ms Tchaurea Fleury, IDA, Brasil

## Observers

36. Mr Abdul Husain, IADO Board
37. Mr Abdullah Akoya, IOM
38. Mr Ali Nasrat, IADO Board
39. Mr Amar Tariq, British Council
40. Mr Ban Abdulkareem, IOM
41. Ms Gentjana Gjergil, Save the Children (ECW)
42. Mr Hogir Aldoski, IOM
43. Mr Jim Buttery, British Council
44. Mr Kamil Abbas Husain, IADO Board
45. Ms Mariam Madhat, British Council
46. Ms May Mohamed Fadhil, IADO Board
47. Mr Mickael Raid, Bridge to (UN Ponte Per)
48. Mr Mohamed Takleef, IADO Board
49. Mr Muslat Muslat, IOM
50. Mr Nazar Kadom, IADO Board
51. Mr Said Saltar, Humanity and Inclusion
52. Mr Salim Ali, IADO Board
53. Ms Sana Abdulwahab, Save the Children
54. Ms Sana Jada Salem, Al Mesalla
55. Ms Yoko Fujimura, IOM



## Support people

56. Mr Abdelali Qais Hiam, Personal Assistant
57. Mr Abdulrahim Abdalla, Personal Assistant
58. Ms Albanen Al Hammood, Personal Assistant
59. Ms Chedlia Ltaief, Personal Assistant
60. Ms Fatima Mtjebel, Personal Assistant
61. Mr Finjan Jassim Tariq, Personal Assistant
62. Ms Haifa Aljumaili, Sign Language Interpreter
63. Ms Halbeen Mohamad, Personal Assistant
64. Mr Hamad Tahseen Khalil, Personal Assistant
65. Mr Hamid Hamou Abbas, Sign Language Interpreter
66. Mr Hoger Ltaif, Language Interpréter
67. Ms Huda Alsafar, Personal Assistant
68. Mr Humam Mazin, Personal Assistant
69. Ms Ibrahim Sundus, Personal Assistant
70. Mr Issa Mohamed Husain, Personal Assistant
71. Mr Jameel Mushtaq Abdullah, Language Interpréter
72. Mr Khalil Amoun, Personal Assistant
73. Mr Khalil Faris, Personal Assistant
74. Ms Leza Lezaewe, Illustrator
75. Mr Marsami Ali Al, Sign Language Interpreter
76. Mr Mohammed Al Obaidi, Personal Assistant
77. Mr Mohammed Jamal, Language Interpreter
78. Mr Mohanad Khafai, Personal Assistant
79. Mr Mohmood Hazim, Personal Assistant
80. Mr Mustafa Aziz, Braille Technician
81. Mr Rafat Renas, Personal Assistant
82. Ms Raghda Husain, Personal Assistant
83. Mr Salim Saman, Language Interpreter
84. Ms Sonia Basheer, Illustrator

## Logistics and Communication

85. Ms Djina Milic, Logistic support, Serbia
86. Ms Huda Nuraddine, Note-taker, Iraq
87. Mr Mohamed Sajad, Logistic Support, Iraq

