

Disability Inclusion Helpdesk, March 2025

Evidence digest focus issue: Disability inclusion in conflict & humanitarian response

Contents

Contents.....	1
The latest evidence and guidance on disability inclusion in conflict and humanitarian response	2
Programming learning and guidance	2
Research	4
The latest evidence and guidance on disability inclusion: Other topics	6
Disability inclusion policy development news	13
About the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk:.....	14

The latest evidence and guidance on disability inclusion in conflict and humanitarian response

Programming learning and guidance

In 2025, a resource titled '***Sectoral Technical Guidance on Ageing and Disability Inclusion***' was published by UNHCR, offering practical guidance on inclusive data collection and accessible, inclusive programming. It covers key humanitarian sectors including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Temporary Settlement Support (TSS), Health, Food Security, Nutrition, Protection, Education, and Livelihoods. The guidance also provides general recommendations and additional resources to support the design and delivery of responses that consider the needs and rights of older people and persons with disabilities.

In March, the Disability & Age Task Force of the Refugee Coordination Forum Moldova published a ***Disability Briefing Note*** highlighting the situation of refugees with disabilities in Moldova, three years after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. With around 127,000 Ukrainian refugees still in the country, the briefing outlines key achievements in 2024, ongoing gaps, and recommendations for improving inclusion and support. It underscores that forced displacement can cause or worsen disabilities, placing persons with disabilities among the most at-risk and disproportionately affected groups in humanitarian contexts.

In January, the Disability Reference Group published a ***Call to Action for Commitments at the Global Disability Summit (GDS) 2025 – Persons with Disabilities Affected by Humanitarian Emergencies***. The document outlines the disproportionate impact of humanitarian crises on persons with disabilities and provides guidance for stakeholders to strengthen inclusion through their GDS2025 commitments. It encourages actions such as implementing the IASC Guidelines, ensuring the participation and leadership of persons with disabilities, particularly those most at risk of exclusion, improving inclusive humanitarian financing and planning, strengthening data collection and use, enhancing coordination mechanisms, and improving access to assistive technology.

In April, UNOCHA published '***Strengthening Disability Inclusion: 2022 Global Guidelines – Guidance Note***'. This note is designed to help Country-Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) managers and teams implement the disability inclusion provisions of the CBPF Global Guidelines. It outlines minimum standards and recommended good practices, aiming to promote harmonised, inclusive approaches across CBPFs while encouraging learning and experience-sharing.

In August 2024, UNICEF published '***Disability Inclusive and Accessible Child Friendly Spaces in Humanitarian Action: Guidance for the East Asia and Pacific Region***'. This guidance offers practical tools to help ensure Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) are accessible and inclusive of children with disabilities, as well as parents or caregivers with disabilities. It addresses the heightened risks children with disabilities face during emergencies and

supports humanitarian actors to remove barriers and promote equal access to CFS programmes.

In December, a ***Disability Inclusion Strategy for the Humanitarian Response in Myanmar*** was published by OCHA, outlining the rationale for a dedicated strategy and assessing the current status of disability inclusion in the humanitarian response. The strategy addresses key gaps in awareness, capacity, and data, and proposes practical actions for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), humanitarian actors, and donors to strengthen disability inclusion. It also provides guidance on how to measure success and monitor progress towards a more inclusive response.

In April, UNICEF published a short guide titled ***Cluster Coordination Essential Actions on Disability Inclusion, as part of its Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Toolkit***. The guide outlines essential actions to embed disability inclusion across cluster coordination systems and processes, covering key activity areas and providing practical resources and examples to support implementation.

In April, the Afghanistan Disability Inclusion Working Group (DIWG) published a ***Guidance Note on Disability Inclusion for the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF)***. The note provides an overview of key terms, outlines key programming approaches, and summarises the 'Must Do' actions from the IASC Guidelines to support disability-inclusive humanitarian response in Afghanistan.

In 2024, UNICEF published ***Disability Inclusive Education in Emergencies: Key Tools and Resources***, a compendium developed with the Global Education Cluster to help frontline responders identify and access key operational resources for planning and implementing inclusive education interventions in emergencies. Organised around the Inclusive Education Systems Framework, the guide highlights tools across both service delivery and enabling environment components to support preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, ensuring children with disabilities are not left behind in crisis contexts.

In March 2025, Save the Children published an update titled ***'From Ukraine to Afghanistan: Children with Severe Disabilities, Fleeing Domestic Violence, Left to Fend for Themselves as Aid Cuts Stop Cash Assistance Programmes.'*** The report presents powerful case studies showing how cuts to foreign aid have ended vital cash assistance programmes, leaving children with disabilities and their families at risk.

In January 2025, a learning paper titled ***'Lessons on Meaningful Participation in Humanitarian Action'*** from ELRHA was published. It offers key findings and reflections to help humanitarian actors embed meaningful participation into their work. The paper emphasises the value of inclusive evaluation methods, strengthening organisational capacity to measure participation, and providing tailored support from the outset to align with local contexts. It outlines what meaningful participation looks like through two case studies in Indonesia and Ethiopia, explores its added value and enablers, and shares learnings and recommendations on measuring its effectiveness.

In December 2024, UNICEF published *'Disability Inclusion in Action: Lessons Learned and Good Practices from Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Initiatives'*. This collection of case studies highlights disability-inclusive interventions within humanitarian programmes across 15 country offices and 7 regional offices, supported through a partnership with Norway. It showcases practical actions such as improving accessibility in refugee camps and training staff on inclusive practices, demonstrating how targeted funding and approaches can break down barriers and improve outcomes for persons with disabilities in crisis settings.

In January 2025, the Disability Reference Group published a compendium of *19 Good and Promising Practices on Disability-Inclusive Humanitarian Action*, showcasing examples from 2023. Developed by a group of NGOs, UN agencies, and organisations of persons (OPDs) with disabilities, the compendium aims to build evidence on what works to operationalise the IASC Guidelines on Disability Inclusion in humanitarian settings. It targets humanitarian technical and programme staff, offering short, illustrated briefs that highlight the use of the twin-track approach and four must-do actions across sectors, with the aim of enhancing learning, quality, and inclusion in humanitarian response.

In March 2024, the European Parliament published a briefing titled *'Humanitarian Assistance to Persons with Disabilities'*, along with workshop proceedings. The document reviews progress by the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), including the development of disability inclusion guidance and e-learning tools. It highlights the need for further action to strengthen systematic inclusion, such as integrating intersectionality, improving disaggregated data collection and analysis, involving OPDs in programming, and influencing partners to enhance their disability inclusion policies and practices.

In June 2024, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) published *'Case Studies Repository: How to Make Humanitarian Action More Inclusive With and For Persons With Disabilities'*, drawing on experiences from Somalia, Somaliland, and the Syrian crisis response. The case studies cover key themes such as localisation of inclusive humanitarian action, inclusive emergency education, disability-inclusive data collection, capacity development of OPDs, inclusion in internally displaced persons (IDP) settlements, disability-inclusive protection activities, and gender inclusion.

A December 2024 blog post by UNDP, *Advancing Disability Inclusion in Post-Crisis Recovery*, spotlights case studies from Ukraine, Syria, Pakistan, and Vanuatu. It showcases how OPDs are driving inclusive recovery efforts—from Ukraine's NGOs advocating systemic reform and digital accessibility, to Syria's "Isharti" enabling the participation of women with hearing impairments, to Pakistan's collaboration between humanitarian and government actors on basic accessibility, and Vanuatu's inclusive early warning systems and women's resilience programmes following Cyclone Harold.

Research

In March, a humanitarian update titled *'Humanitarian Response by the UN and Humanitarian Partners During Phase One of the Ceasefire'* was published; one of a

series of regularly released reports. The report highlights the severe and escalating needs of persons with disabilities in Gaza. Prior to the conflict, there were already 58,000 people with disabilities; this number has grown, with an estimated 22,500 people injured during the escalation now living with life-changing injuries. Among them are 5,700 children in need of intensive rehabilitation support. In addition, 35,000 children and adults are at risk of permanent or temporary hearing loss. Despite these urgent needs, Israeli authorities have restricted the entry of essential assistive devices including wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, and spare parts for repairs, further compounding the crisis.

In January 2025, Save the Children published a report titled '[Gaza: Explosive Weapons Left 15 Children a Day with Potentially Lifelong Disabilities in 2024.](#)' Drawing on data from the Gaza Protection Cluster, the report estimates that at least 5,230 children were injured by explosive weapons in the first 11 months of 2024—an average of 15 children per day—resulting in injuries likely to cause long-term disabilities. The report highlights that access to necessary rehabilitation is severely limited due to Israeli attacks on hospitals and healthcare workers, as well as restrictions on the entry of critical medical supplies.

In February 2025, an advocacy factsheet titled '[Leaving No One Behind: Persons with Disabilities in the Syrian Humanitarian Response](#)' was published by Humanity & Inclusion. It highlights how over a decade of conflict, displacement, the 2023 earthquake, and reduced funding have deepened the exclusion and vulnerability of persons with disabilities in Syria. Despite making up a significant share of the crisis-affected population, persons with disabilities continue to face severe barriers to survival and access to essential services. The factsheet includes an overview of the humanitarian context, the specific impact on persons with disabilities, and targeted recommendations for the caretaker government, donors, UN agencies, and humanitarian actors to prioritise disability inclusion in response efforts.

In January 2025, an open access book titled '[Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Crises: Robust Human Rights Norms?](#)' was published. The book explores the challenges of recognising and including persons with disabilities in humanitarian contexts, examining how rights-based approaches to disability have been promoted and accepted in international law and practice. It analyses the institutionalisation, translation, and implementation of disability inclusion norms from a multi-level perspective, highlighting the role of actors beyond states, such as OPDs, and calls for greater focus on local processes in international scholarship.

In December 2024, a journal article titled '[Revisiting Inclusion: An Exploration of Refugee-Led Education for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Lebanon](#)' was published. The article explores inclusive education in contexts of forced displacement, where refugeehood intersects with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), gender, poverty, and overlapping forms of discrimination. Based on engagement with a refugee-led, non-formal educational organisation in Lebanon, it revisits inclusion through a bottom-up lens, highlighting the role of refugee educators as cultural actors using engaged pedagogies to humanise education. The article challenges top-down, outcome-

oriented approaches and advocates for a holistic, context-sensitive framework grounded in decolonial feminist epistemologies and critical refugee studies.

In January 2025, the World Economic Forum published *‘Migrants with a Disability: 5 Insights to Understand an “Invisible” Problem’*, highlighting key findings from a Spanish-language report on Venezuelan migrants with disabilities in Argentina and Chile. The report identifies five key insights: disability often drives migration; the migration journey can worsen or create disabilities; migrants with disabilities face additional bureaucratic hurdles; labour inclusion remains limited despite high qualifications, with remote work emerging as a key enabler; and there is an urgent need for better data to inform inclusive policies.

In February 2025, a report titled *‘Assessing Disability-Responsiveness of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)’* was published. Through qualitative analysis of the GCM and related migration documents, the report finds that disability-related issues remain underexplored, with vague provisions and little evidence of meaningful implementation. Although the GCM includes some disability-responsive language, it lacks clarity and fails to address the rights and needs of migrants with disabilities. The report concludes that persons with disabilities are too often framed as objects of protection rather than rights-holders and offers recommendations to strengthen disability inclusion in migration governance.

In November 2024, the European Disability Forum published *‘The Future of European International Cooperation and Humanitarian Action – Insights from Persons with Disabilities’*. Based on consultations and surveys with persons with disabilities and their organisations across Europe, Central Asia, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, the paper outlines 11 overarching commitments to guide inclusive international cooperation and humanitarian action. These include mainstreaming disability inclusion, promoting OPD leadership, advancing inclusive education and employment, strengthening protection in crises, and ensuring consistency in disability rights implementation ahead of the GDS 2025.

The latest evidence and guidance on disability inclusion: Other topics

General

In February 2025, Celebrating Disability published an article titled *‘Advocating for Disability Inclusion in a Changing DEI Landscape.’* The piece explores how growing backlash against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, particularly in the U.S, poses challenges for disability inclusion. It argues that inclusion can and should remain a priority, even without the DEI label. The article offers practical strategies for reframing disability inclusion as a matter of accessibility, legal compliance, productivity, and leadership. It encourages businesses to embed inclusive practices into core operations and culture, rather than viewing them as optional DEI initiatives.

In January 2025, the Business Disability Forum published the ***A–Z of Disability***, a resource offering clear definitions for over 100 key terms related to disability inclusion. Covering topics such as accessibility, adjustments, common conditions, and less-visible disabilities, the guide is designed to help users better understand disability-related terminology.

In March, the Global Disability Innovation (GDI) Hub and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) published an article titled ***Driving Disability Inclusion Forward: ADB's New Project Targets Accessibility in Banking.*** The article highlights how ADB, with support from the GDI Hub, is promoting disability inclusion across partner banks in Asia by improving access to financial products and adapting internal policies and hiring practices. As part of this effort, **ADB launched five strategic and operational tools** to support banks in advancing financial inclusion and employment for persons with disabilities. These include a self-assessment tool (*Making Progress*), a guide on accessible banking and employment (*Breaking Down Barriers*), a disability inclusion training guide, an accessibility audit tool for branches and offices, and a practical guide on implementing inclusive design. These resources aim to help banks take concrete, practical steps to improve accessibility and inclusion, regardless of their starting point.

In February 2025, a research article titled ***Disability Inclusion or Exclusion? Insights from Rural Community-Based Rehabilitation Stakeholders*** was published. Based on document reviews and interviews with 26 stakeholders, the study explores how community-based rehabilitation (CBR) in rural settings, despite aiming for inclusion, can unintentionally foster exclusion. It identifies three themes—CBR as an assignment, as an irrelevance, and as gains—highlighting a disconnect between inclusive goals and actual practice. The study points to developmentalist ideologies that prioritise economic outcomes over social inclusion, reinforcing ableism and stigma, and calls for critical reflection and realignment of rural CBR with genuine inclusion principles.

In March 2025, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia published ***Disability in the Arab Region 2023,*** the second edition of its flagship report. Based on harmonised national census and survey data, the report presents a regional comparison of disability prevalence, analyses the socioeconomic situation of persons with disabilities, and provides country profiles with key indicators. It highlights persistent disadvantages in literacy, education, employment, and access to services, with rural women with disabilities facing the greatest marginalisation in the Arab region. Despite growing commitments across the region, progress toward disability inclusion remains slow.

In January 2025, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published a report titled ***Human Rights Dimension of Care and Support.*** The report critiques current global care and support systems as unsustainable and rooted in inequality, often denying people's rights, dignity, and autonomy. It highlights the fragmented development of international standards and calls for a comprehensive, rights-based approach that includes those providing, receiving, and engaging in self-care. The report urges States to establish and fund inclusive systems, and calls on all stakeholders, including businesses, to ensure care and support are gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and age-sensitive.

In March 2025, the European Disability Forum (EDF) published an alternative report titled ***'Evaluating the EU's Progress on Disability Rights: Implementing the UN Disability Rights Convention.'*** Prepared for the EU's second review by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Committee, the report analyses how the EU incorporates and applies the CRPD internally and highlights areas of concern. These include gaps in legal harmonisation, inconsistent anti-discrimination laws, barriers to accessibility and freedom of movement, and the continued use of EU funds for institutional care. It also raises issues around the rights of women with disabilities and lack of political leadership for CRPD implementation. The report offers recommendations to align EU policy and practice with CRPD obligations.

Climate justice

In January 2025, OCEAN published a guidance document titled ***'Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI): Ambition Statement and Applicant Guidance.'*** The document provides a comprehensive introduction to GEDSI and outlines detailed requirements for integrating these considerations into OCEAN-funded projects. Aimed at both prospective applicants and current grantees, the guidance includes background information on GEDSI, OCEAN's own ambition and commitments in this area, and specific expectations for embedding GEDSI across the project cycle. It also offers practical strategies for conducting GEDSI analysis, stakeholder engagement, and mainstreaming inclusion, along with a scoring framework (Annex A) and tips for completing application questions (Annex B).

In March 2025, researchers published a systematic analysis titled ***'A Systematic Analysis of Disability Inclusion in Domestic Climate Policies.'*** The study examines how persons with disabilities and their rights are referenced in climate policies across 195 parties to the Paris Agreement. It found that only 41 countries mention persons with disabilities in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), and just 75 do so in their adaptation policies. These mentions are often superficial, lacking concrete measures to ensure inclusion in decision-making or protection from climate-related harm. The analysis highlights a widespread failure to meet international and domestic obligations on disability rights, reinforcing existing inequalities and missing opportunities for more inclusive and effective climate action.

In February 2025, *Dialogue Earth* published a news article titled ***'In northern Nigeria, floods impact disabled people most.'*** The piece explores how increasingly severe and frequent flooding in northern Nigeria disproportionately affects people with disabilities. It highlights the lack of inclusive disaster preparedness and emergency response measures, which leaves disabled individuals particularly vulnerable during climate-related disasters. The article includes first-hand accounts from persons with disabilities, as well as insights from local organisations, underscoring systemic barriers to accessing early warning systems, evacuation plans, and basic relief services. It calls for urgent action to embed disability inclusion in climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies across the region.

In March 2025, IMPEL Consultancy published a blog titled *'Inclusive Climate Justice at the Global Disability Summit 2025: An Opportunity for Change.'* It highlights findings from upcoming research based on data from over 21 civil society organisations (CSOs) and OPDs, which identifies data gaps and emerging practices for inclusive climate action. The blog outlines priority areas for GDS2025 commitments, urging stakeholders, from researchers to government, to embed disability inclusion in climate finance, policy, and programming, and to partner with persons with disabilities to drive meaningful change.

In February 2025, a blog was published entitled *'No Planet Without Us: Disability Ingenuity and Climate Justice.'* The piece reflects on how disability knowledge, practices, and ways of being offer vital contributions to climate justice. It argues that disabled people's lived experience of navigating inaccessibility and uncertainty equips them with skills essential for climate adaptation and collective care. The blog calls for recognition of disability ingenuity as central, not peripheral, to just climate futures, and urges climate movements to move beyond inclusion towards transformation led by persons of disabilities themselves.

Digital

In February 2025, the GDI Hub published a post titled *'Changing lives through AI,'* announcing the launch of a new Centre for Digital Language Inclusion. Supported by Google.org, the Centre is collecting non-standard speech data for native African languages to improve access to inclusive communication technology for persons with disabilities. It aims to create open-source datasets, tools, and models to support local innovators in building accessible apps. Building on a pilot in Ghana, the initiative also includes training and community-building across Africa, helping ensure that Automatic Speech Recognition technology can serve all types of speech.

In February 2025, *ABC News Australia* published an article titled *'How AI and new technologies are revolutionising my ability to work.'* It shares personal accounts of how emerging technologies, such as AI-powered captioning, text-to-speech tools, and virtual collaboration platforms, have transformed the ability to work and communicate for persons with disabilities. The article highlights the opportunities and barriers of accessible tech to reduce barriers, support independence, and enable more inclusive workplaces.

Education

In March 2025, Inclusive Futures published a report titled *'Finding and Enrolling Children with Disabilities in Schools: Lessons in Identification and Outreach.'* Drawing on education projects in five countries—Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria and Tanzania—the report highlights the vital role of outreach and identification in enabling children with disabilities to access education and support services. It shares practical lessons from trialled approaches, including home visits, community events, and collaboration with OPDs and government authorities. The report emphasises the importance of centring families and children in the process and outlines six practical actions for making education projects more inclusive.

In March 2025, Inclusive Futures published a report titled ***‘Centring Children with Disabilities in Teaching: Lessons from Inclusive Futures’ Education Projects.*** Based on work across five countries, the report explores how teachers can be better supported to deliver inclusive education. It highlights the need for training, mentoring, and collaboration with OPDs to build teachers’ confidence and skills. The report also emphasises the importance of school-wide inclusion efforts, such as peer integration, safeguarding, and support teams and outlines five practical steps that education providers can take to improve teachers’ skills and knowledge in inclusive pedagogy.

In 2025, Humanity & Inclusion published a factsheet titled ***‘Beyond Access: Ensuring the Continuity of Education for Adolescent Girls with Disabilities.’*** Based on a qualitative study conducted in Nepal, Rwanda, and Senegal between July and August 2024, the factsheet draws on interviews with 117 rights holders including adolescent girls with disabilities, to explore the barriers they face in accessing education. It also includes perspectives from parents to deepen understanding of these challenges. The publication aims to inform advocacy across education, child protection, gender-based violence, and disability sectors, promoting more inclusive and equitable education systems.

In February 2025, a systematic review titled ***‘Effectiveness of Interventions for Improving Educational Outcomes for People with Disabilities in Low- and Middle-Income Countries’*** was published. Based on 28 studies, it found that while some interventions improved skills like literacy and numeracy, most focused on individual support rather than broader inclusion. The authors call for a twin-track approach supporting children with disabilities directly while also mainstreaming inclusion at the school and system level. Confidence in study findings was generally low due to weak study designs.

In January 2025, a resource titled ***‘What We Can Learn from Families of Children with Disabilities About Inclusive Family, School, and Community Engagement’*** was published. It presents evidence and learning structured around four key recommendations: positioning families as allies to encourage collaboration, working collectively to break down barriers, investing in relational trust, and creating space for intentional conversations on building strong partnerships between families, schools, and communities.

In January 2025, a toolkit titled ***‘Supporting Families to Become Conversation Leaders on Inclusive Education’*** was published by Inclusion International. Designed for families of children with intellectual disabilities, it offers practical tools, strategies, and guidance to support advocacy at the community level. Developed with input from grassroots family groups, the toolkit includes resources for vision building, advocacy, progress monitoring, and real-world examples from Kenya, Benin, Nicaragua, and Peru.

Health

In January 2025, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published ***‘Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities: Guide for Action’*** to support Member States in integrating disability inclusion into health systems. The guide is designed for ministries of health to lead on inclusive policy implementation, with active involvement from persons with disabilities and

their organisations. It outlines 10 strategic entry points and provides context-specific guidance to identify and overcome barriers to health services, promoting a gender-transformative and intersectional approach across national, local, and regional levels.

In March 2025, Impel Consultancy published an analysis titled ***'A Closer Look at Global Disability Summit Health Commitments.'*** This reviews the number and focus of health-related commitments made at GDS2022 and sets out suggested commitments for GDS2025 across stakeholder groups in terms of disability inclusion. These include proposed actions for civil society, governments, OPDs, donors, multilaterals, the private sector, and academia—ranging from conducting disability analysis and resourcing inclusive health strategies to ensuring accessible services, inclusive training, and equitable research practices. The analysis offers a foundation for developing stronger, more coordinated health commitments at the upcoming summit.

In February 2025, the Missing Billion Initiative published a report titled ***'Investing in Health Justice: Increasing Visibility of Funding Dedicated to Making Health Systems Inclusive for People with Disabilities.'*** Using OECD data, the report establishes a baseline of disability-relevant health funding and reveals ongoing underinvestment in inclusive health systems. It calls for improved data tracking and provides a framework of good practices to support funders in designing more inclusive programmes and addressing the disability health outcome gap.

In January 2025, *Frontiers in Pediatrics* published a scoping review titled ***'Telenursing on Primary Family Caregivers and Children with Disabilities.'*** The review examined 11 studies on telecommunication-based nursing interventions for children with disabilities in home care settings. While various approaches such as teleconsultation, monitoring, and education were identified, few studies focused specifically on telenursing, and evidence on implementation, assessment tools, and safety remains limited. The review highlights a need for further research to evaluate the effectiveness and practical application of telenursing for children with disabilities and their families.

In March 2025, a cross-sectional analysis titled ***'Healthcare Access Among People With and Without Disabilities: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the National Socioeconomic Survey of Chile'*** was published. Using 2022 survey data, the study compared healthcare utilisation, coverage, and access barriers between people with and without disabilities. It found that persons with disabilities were more likely to experience health problems and use healthcare services, but had lower coverage for adult check-ups and Pap tests. They also reported more barriers to access, highlighting ongoing health inequities and the need to mainstream a disability lens in Chile's health system.

Infrastructure & cities

In March 2025, GDI Hub published a **series of reports on inclusive cities**, based on qualitative research conducted since 2020 across six developing cities: Ulaanbaatar, Varanasi, Surakarta, Nairobi, Freetown, and Medellín. Working with 11 local partners, the research explored the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, analysed policy

contexts, and examined implementation practices among urban professionals. The findings were synthesised into a **Global Comparison Report** and a **Global Action Report**, highlighting common themes and city-specific insights. Individual city case study reports are also available for download.

Older persons with disabilities

In March 2025, ELRHA published a report titled '**Gap Analysis: Identifying Opportunities for Innovation in Disability and Older Age Inclusion (DOAI)**.' Developed with Policy Impact Lab, the report updates ELRHA's 2020 analysis and explores how humanitarian responses can better include persons with disabilities and older people. Based on research and consultations in Kenya, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and the Philippines, it identifies persistent barriers to accessing services, limited engagement in decision-making, and overlooked intersectional needs. The report also highlights opportunities for innovation in DOAI, such as mobile aid delivery, improved assistive technology, strengthened accountability, and practical tools to help operationalise inclusive humanitarian action.

Social protection

In January 2025, *Disability Policy Insights* published a policy brief titled '**Rethinking Disability Social Protection Policy**.' The brief examines the current state of disability-related social protection and outlines why inclusive approaches are essential. It offers practical recommendations for reform, including adopting disability assessments that reflect individual needs, moving away from one-size-fits-all benefits, and developing in-kind programmes to cover key goods and services like assistive technology and transport. It also calls for removing outdated eligibility criteria, involving persons with disabilities in policy design, and ensuring accessibility throughout benefit application and delivery processes. Additional resources are provided to support implementation.

In January, the Digital Convergence Initiative (DCI) released a resource outlining **Systems Standards for Disability Rights (DR) and Social Protection (SP)**. The standards focus on interoperability between Disability Registries and Social Protection Management Information Systems (MIS), providing examples of the types of information each system may require from the other. The aim is to support more inclusive social protection by improving coordination and data sharing for individuals with disabilities applying for or holding official disability status under national laws.

Women and girls with disabilities

In February 2025, a report titled '**Activists From Strength: What You Need to Know to Be a Disability and Gender-Inclusive Funder**' was published by Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Action (UAF-FA) and Women Enabled International (WEI). Based on consultations with gender-diverse disability rights activists across the Middle East, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe, it outlines key funding challenges, such as lack of core and flexible funding, complex applications, and limited rights-based support. The report offers practical

recommendations for funders, including simplifying processes, improving communication, adjusting criteria, and actively engaging with OPDs.

In February 2025, *Made in China Journal* published an article titled '[Gender and Disability in China: The Rise of Female-Led Disabled Persons' Organisations](#).' The piece explores the growing role of women-led OPDs in China, highlighting how these groups are creating space for disabled women to assert their rights and challenge both gender and disability-based discrimination. It discusses how these organisations are navigating structural constraints while advancing intersectional advocacy and building community support networks.

In February 2025, the European Disability Forum published a position paper titled '[Gender Stereotypes Against Women with Disabilities](#).' The paper highlights how harmful myths, stereotypes, and a lack of understanding contribute to discrimination and abuse, particularly impacting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls with disabilities. It outlines common stereotypes and offers recommendations for effectively challenging and eliminating them.

Disability inclusion policy development news

A February 2025 article by the Disability Justice Project, [Disability Aid Disrupted](#), explores the devastating consequences of the U.S. government's decision to halt over 90% of USAID contracts and \$60 billion in foreign assistance. The piece highlights how this funding freeze has severely affected persons with disabilities worldwide, including the suspension of education and employment programmes in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and India. Case studies from the Disability Justice Project (DJP) community members illustrate how critical services such as Deaf education initiatives, cash transfers, and inclusive health programming, have been abruptly shut down, placing disabled individuals at greater risk of poverty, displacement, and mortality. The article underscores growing concern that people with disabilities, already facing systemic exclusion, are being further marginalised by sudden aid withdrawals.

A February 2025 webinar hosted by Disability Rights International and U.S. International Council on Disabilities (USICD), [US Foreign Policy and Funding Cuts: Understanding the Impact on the Global Disability Community](#), highlighted the devastating global fallout of US aid cuts. Speakers reported halted disability programmes, job losses, and rising risks for persons with disabilities in crises like Ukraine and the DRC. The cuts are not just financial but ideological, with organisations reporting pressure to avoid terms like "inclusion" or "DEI." With limited prospects for restored funding, panellists called for urgent collective action: documenting impacts, engaging Congress and media, building broad coalitions, and preparing for legal and strategic advocacy ahead of key budget deadlines and the GDS.

A February 2025 press release from Humanity & Inclusion UK, ['Disabled people are at the greatest risk from aid cuts'](#), warns that the UK's sudden 40% reduction in its aid budget poses a serious threat to persons with disabilities in crisis settings including those near

frontlines in Ukraine, landmine survivors in Syria, and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The statement recalls a parliamentary inquiry showing that disabled people, particularly women and girls, were hardest hit by previous UK aid cuts. It urges the government to learn from this and act urgently to mitigate harm. Highlighting concerns in Gaza, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, Humanity & Inclusion calls on the UK to publicly reaffirm its commitment to disability inclusion and explain how it will shield the most at-risk populations from the worst effects of these cuts.

About the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk:

The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk provides research and technical assistance on disability inclusion to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office as part of the Disability Inclusive Development Programme. All our published reports are available on [our website](#). Contact us via: enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk