



Social Development Direct (SDDirect) Capability Statement on Disability Inclusion – March 2025

About us

- SDDirect has extensive experience providing guidance on disability inclusion across sectors. Through the FCDO [Disability Inclusion Helpdesk](#), we support the generation of a rigorous evidence base on 'what works' to deliver results for people with disabilities. The Helpdesk also provides technical and training support to ensure that data and evidence is used to drive further action and investment in disability inclusion.
- We promote disability inclusion through our broader work, including our work on [gender-based violence](#), [infrastructure](#), [safeguarding](#), [equal education and child protection](#), [governance and inclusive societies](#), and [women's economic empowerment](#).
- We take a rights-based approach to disability inclusion and apply a gender and intersectionality lens in everything we do. Working with organisations of persons with disability (OPDs) is central to our approach and essential to promote the approach advocated by the disability rights movement: "nothing about us without us".
- We work to promote disability inclusion in our workplace and operations. SDDirect is a Disability Confident Employer, and we have an active Disability Inclusion Working Group that reports to our executive management team.

Examples of our work:

The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk is funded under the Disability Inclusive Development programme (2019-2025), a six-year £29.25 million programme funded by FCDO which aims to deliver tangible outcome to improve the lives of people with disabilities, to generate a significant and rigorous evidence-based on 'what works' to deliver results for people with disabilities and to ensure data and evidence is used by the global community and governments to increase action and investment. The Helpdesk provides research and advice to FCDO and other UK government departments on disability inclusion in policy and programming. SDDirect's team of in-house experienced researchers work alongside over 85 senior disability inclusion experts with experience across different themes, sectors and geographies to provide advice on disability inclusion in development, education, FCAS and humanitarian settings. SDDirect has recently delivered queries on the blue economy, value for money good practices, disability inclusion and AI, and the integration of disability inclusive safeguarding practices in programming.

Examples of Helpdesk queries

Knowledge Product: Disability Inclusion and Sector Deep Dive Training, Mar-24 - Apr-24

The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk produced a series of knowledge products for FCDO during 2023 and 2024, which focused on Disability Inclusion in Education, Humanitarian, and Social Protection. The product consisted of two training modules and tailored guidance note for FCDO staff. The guidance note was action-oriented and included case study examples.

People with disabilities in the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response, September 2021

The Helpdesk produced an evidence review, which considered the risks and impacts of the current Afghanistan crisis for people with disabilities in Afghanistan; the risks and impacts of the current Afghanistan crisis for Afghan refugees with disabilities moving in the region; and the ways in which the humanitarian response can be disability-inclusive.

Examples of Queries

Safe and ethical data collection on disability inclusion in Gender Based Violence (GBV) Programming- Nov 2023

The Disability Inclusion Helpdesk developed a guide on safe and ethical data collection on disability inclusion in GBV programming. The guide provided challenges and risks associated with data collection and case studies of how well this has been done in programming.

Disability inclusion in climate justice frameworks and environmental and climate risk assessment processes – June 2023

This query considered how disability inclusion is integrated into climate justice frameworks and environmental and climate risk assessment processes. It concludes with key considerations for ensuring people with disabilities are included in analysis of risk and do no harm in climate, energy, and environment programmes.

LINKS – Powering Economic Growth in Northern Nigeria – FCDO, 2018-2023

The Nigeria LINKS Programme was a **£67.5m, seven-year programme funded** by FCDO. It sought to support the development of a vibrant and diversified economy in the three key northern Nigerian states of Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa, collectively acting as a powerful engine of northern economic growth. LINKS aim was to raise the incomes of at least 3,000,000 people in northern Nigeria, support the creation of 100,000 full time equivalent jobs, and contribute to a 15% rise in potentially taxable private sector revenues. SDDirect was part of the delivery consortium together with Coffey International Development (TetraTech), KPMG, Dalberg, Phillips Consulting and IFC. Our team **developed a GEDSI and disability inclusion strategy for the programme, as well as designed and delivered an online training on disability inclusion tailored to LINKS areas of activities and to the context (North Nigeria)**. As part of the wider GEDSI mainstreaming tool, we also **designed a Disability Inclusion guide**, which included questions, examples of sector and guidance on when to apply and how to use the tool.

Syria Education Project, FCDO, 2022 – 2027

As part of a Chemonics-led consortium, SDDirect is contributing to the SEPII Programme in Northwest Syria. The project aims to create **more inclusive and effective education systems, with a particular focus on marginalised groups of children**. SDDirect's team provides **lead technical advice** on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Disability Inclusion and Child Protection. We ensure that child protection is prioritised in and around schools and that the root causes of child abuse are addressed at the systems and community levels.

Cities and Infrastructure for Growth – Myanmar and Zambia, FCDO, 2018-2025

The CIG programmes promoted inclusive growth and transformational change by supporting sustainable cities, efficient infrastructure investment and sound economic decision-making. As Gender and Social Inclusion lead, SDDirect provided **quality, strategic, cross-cutting gender equality & social Inclusion** advice and guidance with practical, targeted support for the CIG Myanmar / Zambia teams and programmes. This included providing **disability inclusion expertise** to support Zambia's energy transition plan.

Disability Inclusion Topic Note for the CDC ESG Toolkit (2021)

SDDirect produced content on **disability** to provide online guidance to investors as part of CDC's environmental, social and governance (ESG) toolkit. The [disability inclusion topic note](#) addressed the intersection of disability inclusion and impact investment and provided guiding principles on disability inclusion informed by research as the cornerstone for measuring and evidencing ESG impact. SDDirect's **research and data analysis approach** was participatory engaging representatives of national business and disability networks and representatives of disability-focused NGOs and incorporating insights from grassroots groups in a way that would be well received by a business audience. The disability inclusion topic note has prompted CDC to further review disability inclusive employment.

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Analysis: Providing Expert Support for FCDO UK Posts in Africa, FCDO (2022-2023)

SDDirect was contracted directly by FCDO to provide technical GEDSI expertise to a number of Posts in Sub-Saharan Africa. The GEDSI analyses are critical to help FCDO posts' planning and prioritisation of GEDSI objectives, including mainstreaming, in their strategy development and action planning – Posts in the region are now required to develop Equality Action Plans and report back on the Inclusion Principles outlined in the Africa Strategy, on an annual basis. FCDO Posts that were supported through this contract included Kenya, DRC, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Sahel. The pilot analysis took place in Kenya and was focused around its key pillars 1) upstream threats, 2) resilient and productive economies, 3) human development 4) climate and humanitarian, 5) open societies, and 6) people to people. One of the priorities identified in pillar 3 (human development) was to analyse the GEDSI dimensions of birth registration. The analysis included both primary and secondary data collection and involve consultations with a range of civil society organisations including women's' rights organisations and organisations of persons with disabilities.

Evaluation of WHO Policy on Disability - December 2024

The Evaluation of WHO Policy on Disability was funded by WHO Evaluation Office to assess to **what extent WHO has implemented its Disability Policy and Action Plan in alignment with UNDIS objectives** and with a focus on the achievement of results, including in each of the four core areas and at overall strategic level. The evaluation also **identified factors that hinder or support the ability of the organisation to meaningfully integrate disability inclusion** in the four core areas of the Action Plan. SDDirect also **formulated findings, conclusions and recommendations** which will inform implementation of the WHO's Policy on Disability and future reviews. Furthermore, the evaluation will identify ways to strengthen WHO's organisational leadership to protect and advance the rights of persons with disabilities. The evaluation used a mixed-methodology approach, including a desk review of documents and data and key informant interviews and focus group discussions with over 90 respondents.

Resource and Support Hub, Eastern Europe – FCDO, April 2022 – October 2023

[Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub is a global programme](#) that aims to support lesser resourced civil society organisations and non-governmental agencies in the international aid sector to strengthen their safeguarding policy and practice. The Safeguarding Hub for Eastern Europe provided direct support to civil society organisations between April 2022-October 2023, with 3 national hubs in Moldova, Poland and Romania. As part of the programme, [researchers undertook an evidence review](#), which focused on the safeguarding situation in Ukraine, Poland, Moldova and Romania. It looked at the risk factors that impact people's safety and risk to harm, including from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH); the evidence towards the scale of harm caused by the humanitarian community; and considered how effective their approaches are at reducing harm and SEAH risks. As part of this research, these topics were examined in relation to people with disabilities in detail.

Key staff working on Disability Inclusion at SDDirect



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