Implementation Tips *for* USAID Partners

Sharing Resources and Knowledge Among the Global CSO Community

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Definitions

Advocacy: A collaborative action that works to influence policies, laws, or institutional and governmental regulations and norms to achieve meaningful improvement in the living conditions and well-being of people and groups.

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG): A United Nations city group established under the United Nations Statistical Commission to address the urgent need for cross-nationally comparable population-based measures of disability. Its mandate is to promote and coordinate international cooperation in the area of health statistics focusing on disability data collection tools suitable for censuses and national surveys.

Medical model: A model that seeks only medical/rehabilitation systems and special services to "repair the broken": the individual with impairment is seen as the problem to be solved and responsibility for disability lies with the person who must be 'fixed'.

Social model: A model that assumes that persons with disabilities are disadvantaged not because of their individual characteristics but as a result of limitations imposed on them by environmental and external barriers. Disability is thus a result of how society is organized.

Advocating for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Q What tools and resources exist to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities?

A Advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities is a collaborative action that works to influence policies, laws, or institutional and governmental regulations and norms to achieve meaningful improvements in the living conditions and well-being of people and groups.

An **advocacy goal** is the desired long-term result of an advocacy effort; it is the change you want to see, such as improved access to education for children with disabilities.

An **advocacy objective** is a specific, short-term result that contributes to a goal, such as raising teachers' awareness of challenges facing children with disabilities and how to improve accommodation.

The following table provides an overview of advocacy for inclusion and recommended factors to consider in developing an advocacy plan.

PROGRAM ELEMENT	ADVOCACY FOR INCLUSION
Level of intended change	Policies, laws, programs, or practices—and their implementation
Target group	Decision makers, policy makers, and/or influential individuals
Objectives	Change policies, laws, programs, and/or practices
Strategies	Focus on policy makers, high-level meetings, public events (e.g., debates or gatherings), and/or media coverage
Indicators of success	Improved quality of life: enhanced participation, access to services, and/or implementation of laws, policies, or practices that enable inclusion

Box 1: International policy and legal frameworks and fora

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): a legally binding international convention that addresses universal human rights in the context of persons with disabilities.

The Conference of States Parties (CoSP): The United Nations hosts this conference for governments to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of CRPD. Governments share reports on their implementation and civil society provides a shadow report.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030: All of the goals within Agenda 2030 apply to persons with disabilities and reflect the guiding principle of Agenda 2030: leave no one behind. In addition, 13 of the 17 Goals are particularly related to persons with disabilities.

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF): The forum, which is hosted by the UN each year, includes reviewing national and sub-national reports on progress towards implementation of the SDGs. These reports are called Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and are aimed at sharing successes, challenges, and lessons learned to support more effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Civil society organizations have the opportunity to write their own shadow reports, which are presented alongside the VNRs.

What is the process for advocacy?

The advocacy circle (Figure 1) shows different steps to navigate the process of advocacy. The starting point is the identification and in-depth analysis of a clear problem or issue - backed up with the collection of evidence - before designing a strategy, implementing activities, and monitoring and evaluating the activities' impact.

It is important to note that advocacy is not a linear process, but should be approached systematically, encompassing the steps in the figure below. Organizations must react and adapt to changing external environments, particularly when advocating in complex situations or in difficult political contexts. Approaches must be flexible to seize opportunities as they appear. However, each step should be planned and analyzed as part of an overall advocacy strategy.

Figure 1: Advocacy Circle

Source: Humanity and Inclusion
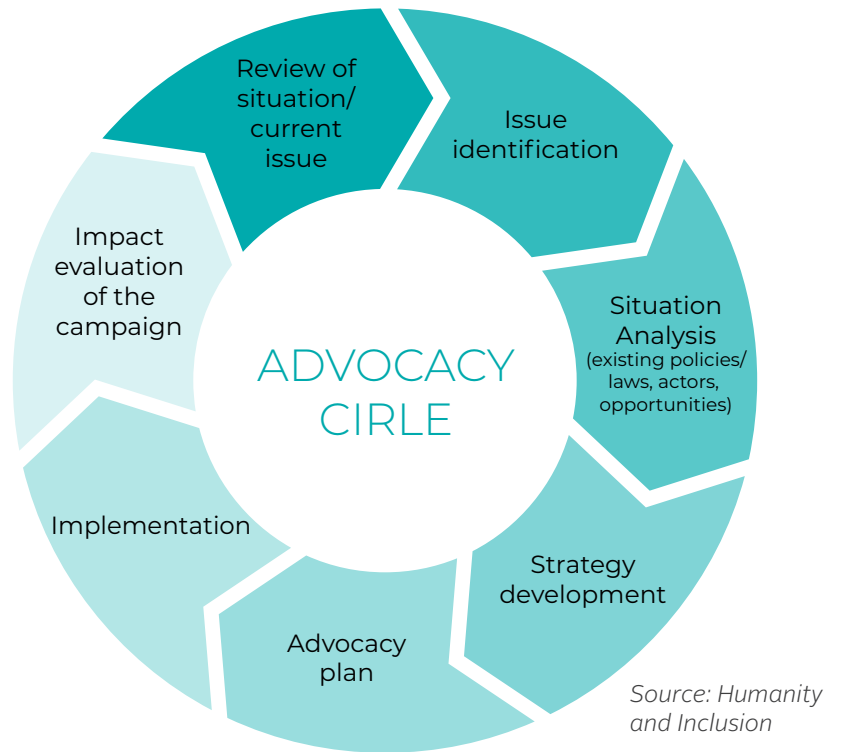
Practical international frameworks to advance disability rights advocacy

Existing international policy and legal frameworks (see Box 1) can and should be used as tools to advance advocacy efforts related to persons with disabilities. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Agenda 2030 set international standards that can inform advocacy plans.

Civil society can raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities and advocate for their rights by:

- Using the CRPD as an advocacy tool, reminding governments that are treaty parties to follow internationally-recognized standards of disability rights and inclusion.
- Participating in SDG forums and platforms, including the HLPF.
- Using reporting and monitoring mechanisms – such as the VNRs, the Universal Periodic Review, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - to hold governments accountable to commitments made in the SDGs and to human rights treaties they have ratified.

At the country level, as stakeholders, persons with disabilities have a role in the oversight of government commitments to the SDGs.

Partnerships for advocacy

Creating partnerships as part of your advocacy efforts can strengthen your efforts by creating a stronger voice. Sharing expertise with other organizations and individuals can fill existing gaps in your advocacy efforts. It is important to make sure your organization's partnerships include persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) to make sure you are amplifying their voice rather than speaking on their behalf. For more information on partnering with OPDs, see the *Implementation Tip* on Partnering with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities for Inclusive Local Development. Separately from OPDs, below are two examples of partnerships and their benefits.

PARTNERSHIP	POSSIBLE BENEFITS
Partner with government ministries	• Increases access to justice through legal proceedings for protection and defense of disability rights • Increases knowledge of country-level national laws and disability policies • Promotes awareness of gaps in laws and policies that can assist in the creation of stronger legislation • Helps to ensure that CRPD is being properly implemented and that the SDGs and Agenda 2030 are in compliance with the CRPD
Partner with civil society organizations	• Enables you to identify existing programs in your communities to avoid duplication and strengthen collaboration • Organizations can partner with disability-focused organizations working on similar topics to ensure their programs are being inclusive and being accesssed by persons with disabilities

Resources

BRIDGE CRPD-SDGs Training Initiative

The 2030 Agenda—Introductory Toolkit for Persons with Disabilities

Toolkit for DPOs—Voluntary National Reviews

Inclusive Local Development: How to implement a disability approach at local level

Disability Data in Humanitarian Action

The Disability Data Portal

Women Enabled International's Accountability Toolkit

Women and Young Persons with Disabilities: Guidelines for Providing Rights-Based and Gender-Responsive Services to Address Gender-Based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Training Package on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Your organization can also pursue partnerships and collaboration on advocacy through various structures, defined as follows:

- **Coalitions** often have formalized structures and involve joint work by a disparate group of civil society organizations or other actors around a single major event, a set of related issues, or a broad campaign. A coalition usually involves long-term relationships and an agreement by members on a platform.
- **Alliances** generally involve shorter-term relationships between members and focus on specific objectives. Since they are limited in terms of duration and goals, alliances tend to be less demanding on members and less formalized than coalitions.
- **Networks** tend to be loosely organized, flexible associations of people or groups that come together around a common concern or interest or undertake periodic joint initiatives. They foster the sharing of information and ideas.
- **Peer Groups** may work together as members of a community towards a common goal. They may include adults, children, or those with a common interest/concern.

Advocacy through data collection

Accurate data is critical for analyzing needs and promoting change. Governments require quantitative evidence to realistically assess the number of people that may not be accessing services. Collecting quantitative data may lead to the identification of a higher number of persons with disabilities which could motivate governments and other actors to assess the needs of persons with disabilities and include them in programs and services.

CRPD Article 31 on statistics and data collection requires states to collect information (including quantitative data) to form and implement policies. The SDGs also stress the importance of data disaggregation—including by type of disability. For the first time in history, persons with disabilities are clearly included in a universal and ambitious plan of action.

However, data is often still not being collected or disaggregated by disability, mainly due to a lack of standardized methodology (logistical) and lack of understanding (attitudinal). Organizations can use questions from the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to ensure data is collected appropriately and disaggregated by disability.

What is the Washington Group on Disability Statistics?

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) is a United Nations city group established in 2001 under the United Nations Statistical Commission. Its goal is to develop and test tools to

collect internationally comparable disability statistics and help actors to better identify persons with disabilities. The Washington Group Questions (WGQs) were designed to generate reliable and comparable data on persons with disabilities during national-level data collection exercises. In humanitarian actions, the WGQs can be used to identify persons with disabilities to ensure their inclusion in all programming.

Introduction to the different question sets
The group has developed several tools, including standardized questions about disability.

- **The Washington Group Short Set (WGSS)** consists of six questions and is the most widely used set (see Figure 2).

- **The Washington Group Short Set Enhanced (WGSSE)** includes the short set questions and three questions on upper body functioning, anxiety, and depression.

- **The Washington Group Extended Question Set on Functioning (WGESF)** includes 39 questions. It expands on the WGSS with questions regarding the use of assistive devices/aids, functioning with and without the use of devices/aids where applicable, and additional domains of functioning such as upper body, anxiety, depression, fatigue, and pain.

- **The Washington Group Module on Child Functioning (WGCFM)** is specific to the needs of children aged 2-17 and was developed in conjunction with UNICEF.

Figure 2: Washington Group Short Set

Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?	Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?	Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?	Do you have difficulty with self-care such as washing and all over dressing?	Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example, understanding or being understood?

Potential benefits of incorporating the WGQs
Beyond supplying critical data, the process of implementing the WGQs can foster a better overall understanding of disability and inclusion in an organization. It increases field staff's knowledge of the social model of disability (see Definitions) and promotes a rights-based approach to programs that is more beneficial to those with disabilities.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Humanity & Inclusion for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip.*

Guidelines for using the WGQs

The following guidelines are important when using the WGQs in data collection:

- Ensure that enumerators are prepared to interact with individuals. Make sure they are familiar with the questions and understand them clearly.
- Ensure that all project staff understand when the questions can be used appropriately and their purpose. For example, the questions should not be used to diagnose disability.
- Ensure that staff know that currently there are shortcomings in identification of psychosocial disabilities. A question set on mental health is being developed.
- Ensure that staff have the contextual understanding of the WGQ.
- Ensure that enumerators use the questions exactly as they are written and never skip a question or guess the answer. Similarly, never use a screening question and/or refer to "disability" or "medical condition." Detailed information on how to administer the question sets appropriately is available on the WG website.
- Always use questions verified on the WG website; translations of the questions are available.
- Ensure that your data collection tools and management information system can be adapted to use the WGQs.
- When training staff on the WGQs, ensure that you provide training around disability awareness and inclusion. Learning resources on WGQs are available on Humanity & Inclusion's website.
- Ensure that data collectors are trained to ask questions sensitively.
- Ensure that data analysis is adequately planned and supported.
- Promote the participation of and accountability towards persons with disabilities and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in efforts related to data collection and decision-making processes.