



**Submission to the Independent
Review of the Effectiveness and
Efficiency of the Australian Aid
Program
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Information provided by:

Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC)

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Introduction

- The Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC) appreciates' the opportunity to provide comment on aid effectiveness via the current review.
- ADDC is an Australian based, international network focusing attention, expertise and actions on disability in developing countries, building on a human rights platform for disability advocacy. ADDC currently has approximately 450 Members comprising individuals and agencies working in and on inclusive practices relating to disability in developing countries. This includes a broad range of membership from the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPOs), government, academic institutions and individuals representing national and international agencies.

Scope of submission

- For the purpose of the current review, the ADDC will limit itself to comment on aid and development issues relating to disability.
- In relation to the broader aid and development sector, ADDC supports the submissions and recommendations of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).
- ADDC's submission is in response to the Terms of Reference as specified by the Aid Effectiveness Review Panel.
- Whilst the submission takes a specific sectoral view, many of the issues addressed could be applied more broadly to the aid program.

Disability context

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As Foreign Minister Rudd noted in 2010, “Ten percent of the world’s population—an estimated 650 million people—are living with disability and 80 per cent of these people live in developing countries. In Asia and the Pacific region this translates to more than 400 million people, across all communities”¹. Disability is both a cause and a consequence of poverty². Of the world’s poorest people, 1 in 5 have a disability. Hunger, malnutrition, disability and poverty are inextricably intertwined. In poor countries 50% of disability is preventable and 20% of impairments are caused by malnutrition³. Only 2 % of people with disabilities in poor countries have access to rehabilitation and other appropriate services⁴ and persons with disabilities are often excluded from development programs. This results in limited or no access to education, livelihood opportunities, health services and community activities which then reinforce the state of poverty for people with disabilities and their families.

“In 2000 the United Nations Member States adopted the Millennium Declaration and set eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to guide the implementation of the Declaration. The Goals consist of 21 quantifiable targets and are measured by 60 indicators. These targets and indicators do not explicitly mention disability. This oversight risks the continued exclusion of targeted interventions for persons with disabilities in development programmes. However, the UN General Assembly has recently approved five resolutions on poverty and disability that urge the inclusion of persons with disabilities as an important target group on the Millennium Development Goals”⁵

The MDGs will not be achieved without a sustained and comprehensive approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities in development programs (Refer Appendix 1). The poor are disproportionately represented amongst people with disabilities and people with disabilities are disproportionately poor. Reducing poverty is therefore unlikely to be achieved unless the rights and priorities of people with disabilities are addressed.

Australia currently has the opportunity to build on the many strengths that exists within Australia and within neighbouring countries: organisational and individual experience in the disability sector including people with disabilities and Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs). The considerable knowledge, skills and successful national and regional networks and working relationships can be extended and supported. More can be achieved through using a strengths based approach and building on what works well, not just to the disability-inclusive agenda, but for the whole aid program.

¹ Hon. Kevin Rudd. *Development for All. Towards a disability-inclusive Australia aid program 20019-2014*. “Australian highlights-the first two years” p 1.

² Make Development Inclusive. How to include the perspectives of persons with disabilities in the project cycle management guidelines of the EC. A Practical Guide.

³ Thomas, Philippa (2005): *Disability, Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals: Relevance, Challenges and Opportunities for DFID*. Disability KaR Programme. DFID.

⁴ Department for International Development (2000): [Disability, Poverty and Development](#). *DFID Issues*. London, February

⁵ UN General Assembly 3rd Committee, 64th Session, Resolution on Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities, A/C.3/64/L.5/Rev.1, 6 November 2009, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N09/597/90/PDF/N0959790.pdf?OpenElement>.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) also recognises the critical role of development and international cooperation for fulfilment of rights, calling upon States to engage with each other and other civil societies, including DPOs, to ensure people with disabilities are included in both the processes and outcomes of international development⁶. Australia was amongst the first countries to ratify this Convention which came into force in 2008. With the Australian Government's launch of the *Development for All: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014*, and commencement of implementation of the strategy, Australia has laid a foundation to build on: this is still early days and much more is needed before we fully achieve disability-inclusive development.

Recommendations

ADDC recommends that:

- the Australian aid program should continue to have the **Asia and Pacific** region as its primary focus (refer a) below)
- an overarching **Inclusive Development Policy** be developed under which all social strategies (disability, human rights, gender and child protection etc.) can be clearly defined and integrated into all aid and development programs (refer d) below)
- an '**Ambassador for Disability-Inclusive Development**' be created at Deputy-Director General level to promote leadership and accountability for disability-inclusive development both within and external to AusAID (refer d & e) below)
- **building capacity of AusAID staff, systems and procedures** for both disability specific initiatives and the mainstreaming of disability-inclusive practices across all areas of AusAID's work is essential (refer c) below)
- the Australian aid program supports partner countries and organisations to **undertake research on the issues which are prioritised by people with disabilities** in different contexts and how best they can be addressed (refer b) below)
- **support is given for Government partners to coordinate data collection on disability** and adapt their national census and statistical processes (refer b) below)
- in all programs focussed on disability-inclusiveness, **an emphasis is given to respectful capacity development processes and culturally appropriate capacity outcomes**. The capacity development methods used should be appropriate for

⁶ UNCRPD <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=259>

individuals, groups and organisations, such as DPOs, and support their own capacity objectives (refer a) below)

- within AusAID, **Disability and Health are separate** and clearly defined both programmatically and in budget allocation (refer d) below)
- the Review report prioritises Australia's commitment to the achievement of development goals which are shared with each partner country (not just the Government, but its people) and which **explicitly include ways to address the priorities of people with disabilities**
- attention to disability issues is included as a priority outcome in **Government partnership agreements** (refer b)below).
- **a disability perspective to be included** in planning, monitoring and evaluation stages in all aid and development activities (refer c) below)
- a greater **investment is required in cross cutting thematic areas** and **a rights-based approach** be adopted for the aid program and strongly systemised within all AusAID programs. (refer b & d) below)
- investment is given to resources for greater DPO capacity building and involvement (refer e) below)
- a **strengths based approach** be adopted for all the aid program to underpin all partnerships, including DPOs and all aid activities (refer c) below)
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks, tools and approaches should **include indicators or** other ways of assessing the effectiveness of development programs in contributing to objectives determined by people with disabilities and their families in impacting on the lives of people with disabilities and their families (refer c) below)
- **universal design** principles should be incorporated into any AusAID supported development infrastructures (refer b) below)
- the **Disability Inclusive Development (DID) unit within AusAID has sufficient resources** to maximise the quality of AusAID's policy and practices in inclusive development (refer e) below)

Response to 'Terms of Reference'

a) The structure of the program

The Australian aid program should continue to have the Asia and Pacific region as its primary focus. Two thirds of the global population of persons with disability live in this region⁷. With the exception of New Zealand, Australia is surrounded by developing countries. This constitutes both an economic and moral rationale for supporting our neighbours.

Australia should strengthen its support for this region, while recognising that each country in the region is different and has different strengths and priorities. It can continue to play a leadership role which ensures sufficient and coordinated aid is available from donors to developing countries and island nations in these regions by coordinating and harmonising efforts with New Zealand and other donors to work most effectively.

AusAID has quickly developed a global reputation for its leadership and contribution to disability inclusive development in the last 3 years. This should be built upon to support further efforts in the region.

The complexities in the implementation of development programs in these regions are numerous and include geographical and cultural distance between countries, island nations and between urban and rural communities. Many people with disabilities in the Pacific are amongst the poorest and many live in rural and remote communities. DPOs in the region are doing excellent work to maximise the achievements of a shared voice on policy, program and service delivery priorities in their respective countries and many service providers are actively supporting individuals and families in urban and rural areas. This should be built on. Many individuals and DPOs have achieved changes in their capacity in recent years, supported by effective partnerships within Australia and other organisations, and their ongoing efforts need to be recognised and continue to be supported.

b) Performance of the Aid Program and lessons learnt

ADDC congratulates the Government on the development and implementation of the *Development for All: towards a disability- inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014* strategy and the progress to date. ADDC also acknowledges the accomplishments of this strategy through the Disability Inclusive Development (DID) unit of AusAID.

The Australian Government has made a commitment to assist developing countries to meet the MDGs. This also reinforces Australia's commitment to human rights. Recognising the importance of human rights has not always translated into AusAID's recognition or use of a rights-based approach to development or resource allocation. There is now a clear opportunity for the Australian Government to take an explicit rights-based approach to all development work, using the agreed principles and articles included in international conventions as the basis for planning and implementing development programs which are intended to address the rights of all people, and especially women, children, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

⁷ Development for All. P 5

A greater investment is required in cross cutting thematic areas such as the social strategies, including disability (refer c) below for details). A rights-based approach or framework for the Australian aid program needs to be adopted and strongly systemised within all AusAID programs⁸.

Disability is often “invisible” due to many factors, one of which is the absence of disability disaggregated data and insufficient information in each context about which approaches will best work to meet the rights of people with disabilities. Many leaders claim the lack of accurate, relevant data on disability prevalence; type and impact prevents them from making inclusive policies and decisions to provide better services for people with disabilities. There is value in providing Australian support for the collection and analysis of quality data as well as for context-specific research to contribute to the evidence based policies and practices. This data needs to be collected and analysed by multiple sources with preference given to DPOs and people with disabilities in developing countries and communicated in ways which attract leader’s attention. The opportunity must be taken to collect data and undertake broader research within the context of funded activities across sectors. Support for Government partners to coordinate data collection on disability and adapt their national census and statistical processes as well as capacity building for DPOs and people with disabilities in this area should be prioritised.

There is opportunity to include disability as a priority outcome in Government partnership agreements. Australia is in a position to support cross-sectoral disability policies and in doing so meet obligations relating to the CRPD implementation in those countries that have ratified. Many countries have ratified but are having difficulty in implementing; there are many countries with disability policies which are not rolled out. Hence, Australian aid in disability should be harmonised with these local obligations and structures.

Universal design principles should be incorporated into all development infrastructure projects to ensure the environment is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Capacity building of technicians and inclusion of people with disabilities at planning stage is essential.

c) Approach to efficiency and effectiveness

Ensure a cohesive approach to development

While aid can make a significant impact in terms of improving development outcomes for people, aid alone is not enough. There is a need for greater policy coherence across Australian agencies involved in international work in a broad range of sectors that affect developing countries, such as trade, investment, finance, migration, security and climate change. Such policies should support, and not undermine, efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. MDGs cannot be achieved unless people with disabilities are included.

⁸ Cross cutting thematic areas, include disability, human rights, gender, child protection and other marginalised groups

There is a continued need for the aid program to focus on increasing equity of access to development benefits for people with a disability. By starting with a shared understanding of the existing strengths in every context, there is a much greater likelihood that realistic objectives will be set and met. This is a strengths- based approach.

The Government needs to ensure that a 'whole of government' approach is taken promoting agreed development goals. It should do this, for instance, by instituting a criteria-based approach that requires policy-makers in these fields to establish how their decisions promote poverty alleviation, disability inclusive practices, gender equity and sustainable development. Building capacity of AusAID staff, systems and procedures for both disability specific initiatives and the mainstreaming of disability-inclusive practices across all areas of AusAID's work is essential to ensure this outcome.

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks, tools and approaches should include indicators and other tools which can be used to assess the contribution of development programs to the achievement of objectives relating to the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Similarly, budgets should include provision for disability inclusive development so that these initiatives are identifiable within the development programs and reported against.

d) Organisational structure

International leadership and comprehensive approach

Efforts to improve the lives of people with disabilities need to be broadened beyond activity level to include sectoral agencies and national decision makers within the Australian Government: this needs to be maintained beyond the life of discrete activities. Progress in this area needs to be preserved and sustained where AusAID is working in an environment that is not conducive to promoting inclusive practices. There is a need for a mechanism that defines, protects and develops all the social strategies. Social strategies, the cross cutting thematic areas, include disability, human rights, gender, child protection and other marginalised groups. At present there is no cohesive approach to ensuring these areas are consistently included in development activities.

A comprehensive approach that strategically articulates these social, strategies, derived from a human rights platform, to influence the rest of the aid program must be developed and underpin all development activities.

An overarching **Inclusive Development Policy** needs to be developed under which all the social strategies can be clearly defined and integrated into all aid and development programs.

Australia has a key role as a contributor to the achievement of disability-inclusive development, and needs to work collaboratively with others in partner and donor countries to maximise the achievement of sustainable benefits and provide opportunities for leadership in

this area. Effective leadership is the third core outcome under *Development for All*⁹. It involves: modelling good practice in disability-inclusive development; forging strategic partnerships to leverage action; building political and senior agency leadership in regional and international forums and strong Australian advocacy to increase the priority of disability in development.

To ensure Australia maintains its international reputation, it is recommended that an **'Ambassador for Disability-Inclusive Development'** be created at Deputy-Director General level to mainstream disability as a cross-cutting issues across AusAID and to promote leadership and accountability for disability-inclusive development both within and external to AusAID.

ADDC fully supports the Government's commitment to initiatives that prevent disability or reduce occurrence (e.g. Avoidable Blindness Initiative, Mine Action), however to ensure that people with existing disabilities have access to services and are include in mainstream development initiatives, disability must be separated from health within the AusAID structure and budget. This will assist to clearly define the needs of both areas, ensure funding is allocated proportionately and quarantined from health expenditure.

e) Appropriateness of current arrangements

ADDC is appreciative of the latest report from the AusAID DID team on *"Achievement highlights- the first two years"* and acknowledges the outcomes within the report.

The DID unit needs to have greater support to open and maintain dialogue with sectoral authorities on disability issues. This team also needs resources to ensure disability related technical skills are integral across AusAID and other agencies involved in aid and development work, and that inclusive practices are applied across AusAID.

Including a disability perspective is relevant for all poverty reduction programs. Including a disability perspective from planning stages will ensure that the situation analysis will be more comprehensive, improving the possibilities for creating a program framework that addresses poverty alleviation in an inclusive and equitable manner¹⁰.

Involving DPOs, both domestically and in developing countries, in the review and evaluation of the broader aid program will ensure that voices of people with disabilities are heard and practitioners are more likely to consider inclusive practices. Investment into resources for DPO involvement will need to be factored in. The DPO input will then influence future

⁹ T May-Teerink, 'A Survey of Rehabilitative Services and People Coping with Physical Disabilities in Uganda' (1999) 22 *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research* 311-316 and Department for International Development (2000): [Disability, Poverty and Development](#). DFID Issues. London, February.

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, *Development for All: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014* (2008) 4 and 25.

planning of the aid program to take into account a greater focus on disability inclusive development.

Since the 2010 election, the role of Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance has been lost. This now means that it is more difficult for disability issues to be afforded sufficient attention at political and policy levels. As introduced in the last section, an **'Ambassador for Disability-Inclusive Development'** at Deputy-Director General level will be an appropriate and effective way to promote leadership and accountability for disability-inclusive development both within and external to AusAID.

Conclusion

The Australian Government's decision to increase the official development assistance budget to 0.5 per cent of gross national income by 2015–16 is highly commended. We recommend that the Review outcomes contain a clear vision that outlines the Australian Aid Programs priorities with specific reference to the development objectives shared by Australia and partner countries.

Australia is a global leader in disability-inclusive development. However, this is only sustainable with a strong commitment to building upon the work to date and ensuring that disability is recognised as an integral part of a human rights approach to quality inclusive development practices. It is also vital that this is supported within the AusAID organisational structure and resources. A more comprehensive approach to cross cutting thematic social strategies is critical for the delivery of sustainable development.



APPENDIX 1



Australian **Disability+Development** Consortium



Millennium Development Goals

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger



The world will not alleviate extreme poverty if the rights of people with disability are ignored. Of the estimated 650 million people with disability worldwide, 80% live in developing countries², and 82% live below the poverty line. Disability and poverty are mutually reinforcing. People with disability and their families represent a substantial proportion of the poor, especially the extremely poor.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education



This is the only 'absolute' goal—however 90% of children with disability in developing countries are not in school. It will be impossible to achieve MDG 2 unless development efforts explicitly reach children with disability. Of the 115 million children not attending primary school in the developing world, some 40 million are children with disability. Many children with disability do not have access to basic assistive devices, and even those with mild to moderate impairments, without appropriate support face grade repetition or dropout.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women



Women and girls with disability face multiple discrimination and disadvantage. The target of eliminating gender inequality in all levels of education by 2015 will not be reached without considering the needs of girls and women with disability. Poor women and girls with disability have the least power in society. Women and girls with disability are at even greater risk than women and girls without disability of all forms of violence: at home, in their community and in institutions³

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality



In the developing world mortality for children with disability under five can be as high as 80%. Children with disability are at greater risk of dying, not only because of life-threatening medical conditions or lack of access to public services but also because in many cultures they are neglected or sometimes even left to die. Often this results from the intense stigma associated with disability.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health



More than 10 million women a year develop disability and long term complications as a result of pregnancy and childbirth. Obstetric fistula is especially stigmatising yet preventable. Women with disability are more likely to be victims of sexual abuse, putting them at greater risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Better maternal health and nutrition can reduce the numbers of children born with preventable impairments.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases



To effectively address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the entire population, including people with disability, must be reached. However efforts frequently do not include or are not accessible to people with disability, putting them at higher risk. People with disability have at least the same level of risk of HIV/AIDS as people without disability. The misguided but prevalent belief that having sex with a person with disability is safe because they are not sexually active, or that sex with a person with disability is a method of curing HIV/AIDS, means including people with disability in the fight against AIDS is critically important.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability



Environmental risks, such as contaminated water and natural disasters, lead to various types of impairment; inaccessible environments prevent people with disability from taking part in economic and social activities. One of the key indicators for this goal is the proportion of the population with improved water and sanitation – provision of accessible toilets can make the difference between whether a child with disability can attend school and people with disability can participate in employment and wider social affairs. In reconstructing infrastructure that has been affected by natural disasters, following principles of universal design can ensure barriers preventing people with disability from participating in the social and economic activity of the community are not re-erected.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development



A 'partnership' implies inclusion, which means everyone. Article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires that people with disability be included in all phases of development cooperation, planning, implementation and evaluation. The UN, multilateral banks and donors have a role to play in ensuring development responds to and promotes the rights of people with disability⁴. The United Nations General Assembly has called on Governments and UN bodies to step up efforts to include in their assessment the extent to which people with disability are able to benefit from efforts to achieve the MDGs⁵; AusAID is committed to taking a leadership role in this area, and working in partnership with others to highlight the need for development to be disability inclusive in order to be truly effective and to ensure that all people are able to benefit from Australia's international development assistance.

Sources:

1 Albert, B (undated) Lessons from the Disability Knowledge and Research Programme 2003–2005, Disability Knowledge and Research,; International Disability and Development Consortium, <http://www.includeeverybody.org/disability.php> ; Guernsey, K, Nicoli, M & Nino, A (2006) Making inclusion operational: legal and institutional resources for World Bank staff on the inclusion of disability issues in investment projects, World Bank, pp. 7–9 & Appendix 3, Box 6; see also <http://go.worldbank.org/G2UGT4F6R0>.

2 United Nations (2008) Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda, (E/CN.5/2008/6) www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/e-cn5-2008-6.doc

3 See Pacific Sisters with Disabilities Report, footnote 16 citing Cockram, J. (2003), Silent Voices; ESCAP (1995), Hidden Sisters: Women and Girls with Disabilities in the Asia-Pacific Region; Lene, D. (2004), Status of Women with Disabilities in Samoa; Nongabatu. S. (2005), Women in Solomon Islands; Radtke, D. (2005), Beijing + 10; Sands, T. (2006), Voice of Our Own; Tawake, S. Forum Reports, 2003 and 2004.

4 The United Nations has formed an interagency support group to promote the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in international cooperation and development efforts – see the UN Interagency Support Group Joint Statement of Commitment to the CRPD

5 Resolution A/C.3/64/L.5/Rev.1, adopted 6 November 2009, United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-fourth session Third Committee Agenda item 61 (Social development).