



DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL: EVALUATION OF PROGRESS MADE IN STRENGTHENING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN AUSTRALIAN AID

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People with disabilities are among the poorest and most marginalised of groups in developing countries. The inclusion of people with disabilities as active participants in development processes benefits families and communities, reduces the impacts of poverty, and contributes to a country's economic growth. When development efforts are not disability inclusive, people with disabilities are likely to be further marginalised, increasing inequality and poverty.

Australia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008. The Convention commits Australia to work in partnership with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) to ensure international development programs are inclusive of, and accessible to, people with disabilities.

Australia was the first donor country to have a strategy to make development assistance disability inclusive. A second, more ambitious strategy, *Development for All 2015–2021*, has maintained Australia's commitment to disability-inclusive development.

This evaluation

The Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) evaluated progress made in making the Australian aid program disability inclusive. Disability inclusion was assessed using a range of data, including Aid Quality Checks which rate performance of aid investments against the two key aspects of disability inclusion:

Disability criterion 1 (D1) The investment actively involves people with disabilities.

Disability criterion 2 (D2) The investment identifies and addresses barriers to inclusion and opportunities for participation for people with disabilities.

Case studies of regional and country investments, data from global programs, and a review of recent humanitarian responses were used to examine how disability inclusion has been achieved and identify enabling factors. The evaluation recommends actions to inform future work to strengthen disability inclusion.



Nelly Calleb, co-ordinator of Disability Promotion and Advocacy Vanuatu (DPA) and some of her colleagues on Espiritu Santo. DPA has been supported by Australia for many years and now has 22 community-based DPO affiliates which advocate for disability inclusion at the community level. DPA is still a small organisation, with only one full-time employee. Nelly reported that requests from development partners, government and others for advice and support were often overwhelming. Photo: CBM Australia

Findings

The Australian aid program has made good progress in strengthening disability inclusion. Disability is now a crosscutting priority for the aid program. About 40 per cent of aid investments and 53 per cent of aid expenditure are disability inclusive for the two disability criteria.

The evaluation found that efforts to strengthen disability inclusion were closely aligned with *Development for All 2015–2020*. Disability inclusion is strongest in the geographic focus areas of the strategy, the Pacific and South-East Asia. Opportunities to improve inclusion in education investments, humanitarian assistance and in making infrastructure for water, sanitation and hygiene more accessible are being exploited. People with disabilities are better able to realise their rights as implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been supported. Leadership from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has made the programs of implementing partners more inclusive. People-to-people links have been fostered through support for networks and coalitions.

Progress made in bilateral and regional programs

- » Most high-value investments are disability inclusive.
- » Inclusion is strong in the Pacific regional program.
- » Many country programs have made good progress in building disability inclusion.
- » Disability inclusion is being mainstreamed in some sectors (Figure 1).
- » Pilots funded by Australia have provided evidence to make other agencies make their programs disability inclusive.

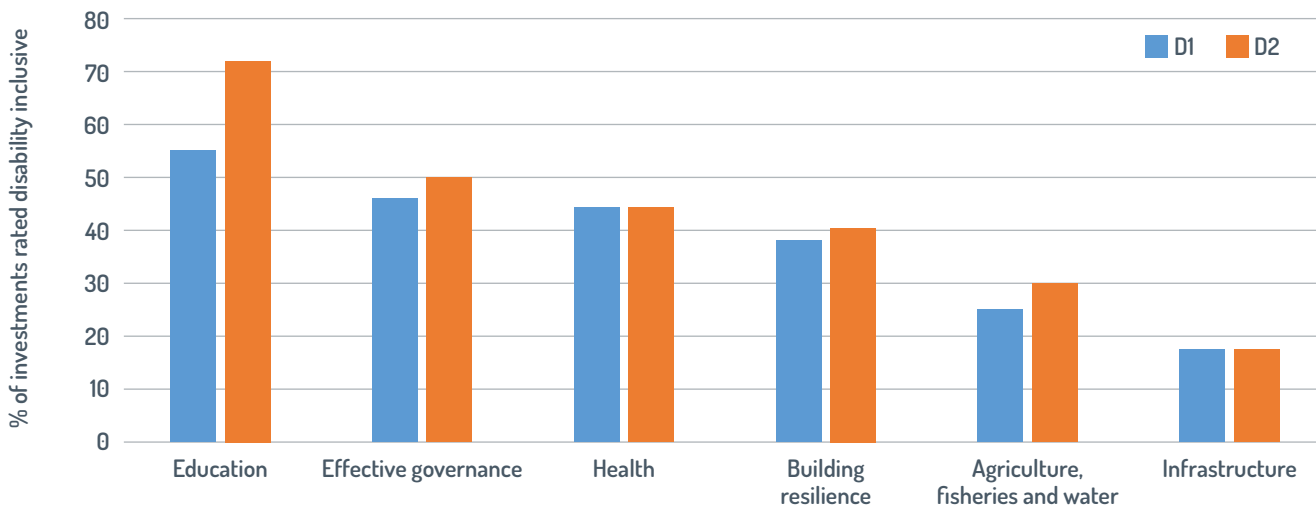
Progress made in humanitarian assistance

- » Funding agreements now require almost all of Australia’s main humanitarian partners to deliver inclusive assistance.
- » Most of Australia’s humanitarian partners carried out a disability analysis, mainstreamed disability and collected disability-disaggregated data.
- » Assistance delivered by non-government organisations (NGOs) was much more disability inclusive than that delivered by other types of partners.



Seng Lawt, a technician at the Myitkyina Physical Rehabilitation Centre run by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Myanmar, modifying a prosthetic limb. Myanmar has endured the world’s longest running civil war and is one of three countries with the most land mines. Australia has supported rehabilitation centres to help people with physical impairments overcome barriers to inclusion. Photo: Kate Sutton

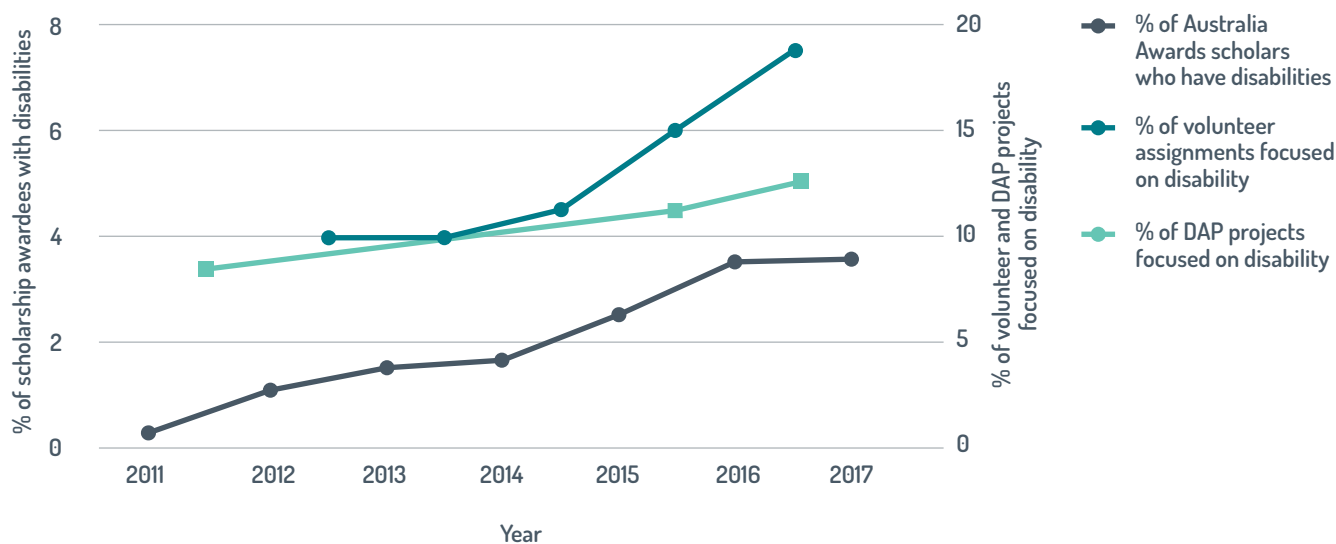
Figure 1: Disability inclusion is stronger in some priority areas



Progress made in global programs (Figure 2)

- » About 60 per cent of projects funded by the Australian NGO Cooperation Program focus on disability.
- » Direct Aid Program (DAP) projects are increasingly disability inclusive and building the capacity of DPOs.
- » More people with disabilities are being awarded Australia Award scholarships.
- » More volunteer assignments are in disability-focused organisations.
- » More people with disabilities are being deployed as volunteers.

Figure 2: Disability inclusion has increased in global programs



Progress made in building the capacity of disabled people's organisations

- » The key principle, 'Nothing about us without us', has been embraced.
- » Capacity building for DPOs has been a component of all programs reviewed and has been effective.
- » Some partner DPOs are now high-capacity organisations that are informing development programs.
- » The increased capacity of DPOs has enabled them to work in partnership with DFAT.
- » Partnerships with DPOs have built the understanding of disability within DFAT.

Nurul commented: *'The DFAT program gave us the authority and support to develop, implement and achieve our vision and we are confident that we will survive without DFAT support eventually.'*

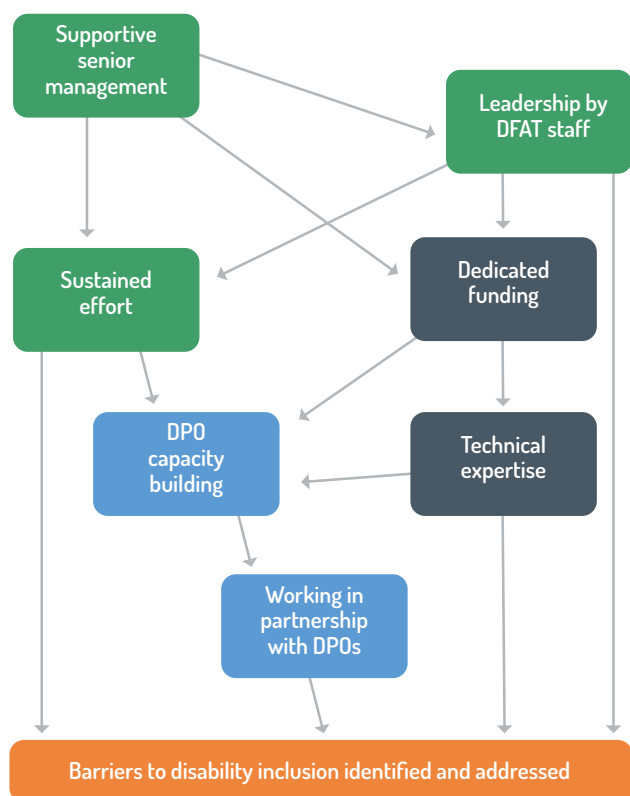


Nurul, Director of *Sentra Advokasi Perempuan Difabel dan Anak (SAPDA)*, which advocates for the rights of people with disabilities, women and children. The bilateral programs in Indonesia have provided SAPDA with core funding since 2013. Working in DFAT programs has extended SAPDA's networks from Yogyakarta to the national level and improved its organisational and management systems. SAPDA reported it is now seen as a 'trusted organisation' able to access other grant funding. Photo: Karen Ovington

Work needed to strengthen disability inclusion

Although good progress has been made, it is still the case that less than half of Australian aid investments are assessed as disability inclusive. The achievements made, and knowledge gained to date, will underpin further work to make Australian aid more inclusive. This evaluation found that when there is a focus on disability inclusion and efforts are sustained, Australia's development and humanitarian assistance has become more inclusive.

Factors enabling disability inclusion



Andini Mulyawati (back), a Senior Program Manager and disability focal point for the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, and Purwanti (front), Advocacy Manager for *SasanaInklusi* and *Gerakan Advokasi Difabel* Indonesia. Andini credits her experience in working with people with disabilities as having increased her understanding of disability, saying: *'I had an interest in disability as I completed a course on disability at college but working with people who have disabilities is what has made me appreciate why disability inclusion is so important.'* Photo: Karen Ovington

Evaluation recommendations

This evaluation makes the following recommendations:

1. Australia should continue to commit to disability-inclusive development as a human rights and aid priority and build on progress to date.
2. DFAT should continue to prioritise DPO capacity building.
3. DFAT should maintain a mechanism which provides DFAT and, where appropriate, partner agencies with ready access to quality disability-inclusive technical assistance and work to improve its effectiveness.
4. DFAT should increase the knowledge and understanding of disability-inclusive development within DFAT.
5. DFAT should improve disability inclusion in areas where this evaluation has found it to be relatively weak.

ODE is a unit within DFAT which monitors the quality and assesses the impact of the Australian aid program. The full report including the management response is available at dfat.gov.au/ode