

Annual Report Year 1
Promoting Access and Inclusion for Displaced Populations with Disabilities
International Rescue Committee, Inc./Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)
Grant Agreement 60983

Part 1: Review of implementation to date – 7th November 2011 to 6th November 2012

In the reporting period, the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) has made positive progress in implementing the activities as described in our Activity Proposal. Specifically we have implemented the following activities towards each of our defined objectives.

Objective #1: Pilot Change in Practice

In the last year, WRC has worked in partnership with UNHCR's Division of International Protection in Geneva to develop a workshop curriculum on *Disability Inclusion in Programs for Refugees and Displaced Persons*. This workshop is designed for UNHCR staff, their implementing partners and community organizations, including Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), and supports stakeholders to:

- Recognize protection concerns and capacities of refugees and displaced persons with disabilities in their given contexts;
- Apply the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) and UNHCR *Guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities* to their programs and sectors;
- Identify strategies to promote access and inclusion for persons with disabilities in key activities of their programs; and,
- Design action plans to promote disability inclusion in their work sectors in collaboration with key stakeholders.

These workshops have been piloted in New Delhi, India; Kampala and Hoima, Uganda; Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh; Damak, Nepal (through complementary funding from another donor); Mae Hong Son, Thailand and Jijiga, Ethiopia (through AusAID funding), reaching over 270 humanitarian actors and community members. A total of 75 stakeholders in Thailand and Ethiopia attended these workshops as a result of AusAID support, with additional workshops planned in Mindanao, Philippines in November, 2012.

Training materials from these workshops, including a generic PowerPoint presentation with instructions for facilitators, were submitted by UNHCR as a resource for the United Nations Inter Agency Support Group on the CRPD, with plans to also make available on the Global Protection Cluster website in the future. UNHCR is also using these pilot workshops to inform the development of a self-study, e-learning module on persons with disabilities by their Global Learning Centre. This module will be part of a wider training package on social exclusion, which will support the implementation of their Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) policy.

Objective #2: Capacitate local Disabled People's Organizations in target countries

In all three locations where AusAID has funded workshops—Mae Hong Son, Thailand; Jijiga, Ethiopia; and Mindanao, Philippines—WRC has reached out to DPOs through a variety of networks

to identify their interests and engage them in our work with refugees. We have faced significant challenges in engaging host country DPOs in workshop design and facilitation, and post-workshop technical support. We found that in the target countries in question, Ethiopia and Thailand, the DPO movement had very little (if any) awareness of refugee issues or the situation of refugees with disabilities in their countries. In both cases, national DPOs were unable to connect us to interested local organizations operating in the vicinity of the refugee camps, and expressed that they lacked capacity to outreach to the refugee camps due to competing priorities.

In response to this challenge, we have adapted our activities to focus more on awareness raising among the disability movement. In this reporting period, we started collaboration with Disabled People International Asia Pacific (DPIAP) and University of Sydney to promote awareness of refugee issues among the DPOs in the Asia region. We have done this by calling for expressions of interest from DPOs in the Asia region to attend a workshop linked to the upcoming *Creating New Futures* conference being hosted by the University of Sydney. We also co-hosted a side event with the Australian Mission at the 5th Conference of State Parties to the CRPD in September this year. With support from AusAID we were able to facilitate the participation of the Regional Development Officer from DPIAP in this side event, among many others, raising the awareness of refugee issues with all stakeholders and calling on the inclusion of refugees in CRPD processes.

Objective #3: Assist UNHCR roll out its global disability guidance

Throughout this reporting period, WRC has made significant progress in the development of a “rollout strategy” for the UNHCR Guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement (hereafter referred to as the Guidance). The activities undertaken under this objective include:

- Collecting information through field assessments, trainings and questionnaires from UNHCR country programs and their partners on what supports they need to implement UNHCR’s Guidance.
- Collecting information through field assessments, trainings and questionnaires from disability stakeholders, including DPOs, on their needs and capacities to engage more with UNHCR and refugees with disabilities.
- Consultations and planning meetings with the UNHCR Community Services team in Geneva, conducted by phone and in person.
- Drafting a working document entitled “*Global Implementation of UNHCR’s Conclusion on refugees with disabilities and other persons with disabilities protected and assisted by UNHCR, No 110 (LXI)–2010*” which integrates both field and headquarters findings on the activities required to successfully implement the Guidance globally over the next two years.

This document has received extensive input from the Community Services team at UNHCR, and is now awaiting wider organizational endorsement, at which point UNHCR will seek funding to implement the proposed activities over the next two years.

All country programs have received the Guidance, and WRC have been supporting selected country operations to define the actions they wish to undertake to implement this guidance. We

have successfully supported six country operations—India, Uganda, Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal and Ethiopia—to design action plans for the implementation of the Guidance in their given contexts through our training and action planning workshops and ongoing distance technical support.

Objective #4: Analyze, document and share lessons learned

All the activities under this objective are planned for Year 2 in the project. We are already capturing information from UNHCR headquarters and country operations on the implementation of the Guidance, and the results of workshops in all countries where we work. A notable example is the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, which reports including refugees with disabilities in their draft shadow report for the CRPD following participation in our workshop. Globally, there are currently 22 UNHCR country operations implementing actions relating to persons with disabilities, and some 33 country operations have already included disability indicators in their Country Operations Plans for 2013.

Objective #5: Advocate for change globally

Despite all these activities being planned for Year 2 of the project, we have already started using key lessons and experiences for advocacy at global levels with key target audiences. Most notably, we have already had the opportunity to present on our work in a number of international forums including:

- Fifth International Shafallah Forum on Crisis, Conflict and Disability: Ensuring Equality in January 2012;
- U.S. Department of State Leadership Conference on International Disability Rights in May 2012;
- Annual UNHCR NGO Consultations in Geneva in July 2012;
- Civil Society Forum at the 5th Conference of State Parties to CRPD at the United Nations in New York in September 2012; and,
- Side event at the 5th Conference of State Parties to the CRPD entitled “*Ensuring the CRPD Is Working for Refugee Women and Children*”.

Part 2: Implementation strategy and work program for the coming period – 7th November 2012 to 6th November 2013

Objective #1: Pilot Change in Practice

With support from AusAID, WRC will be conducting workshops in Mindanao, Philippines in November 2012, after which we will focus on the provision of distance technical support and monitoring the implementation of action plans. Whilst we have been unsuccessful in identifying DPOs to monitor implementation of action plans in the sites funded by AusAID, we have designed a monitoring process using follow-up questionnaires to stakeholders. This will be complemented by field assessments to evaluate impact for persons with disabilities in the next reporting period (see Objective #4).

Expected outputs and results

- Disability inclusion workshops are conducted in Mindanao, Philippines (Quarter 5)
- Service providers in each of the three target countries start to modify their programs to promote greater access and inclusion (Quarters 3-6)

Objective #2: Capacitate local Disabled People's Organizations in target countries

In the next period of the project we still aim to provide sub-grants to two DPOs based in Asia to undertake activities relating to refugee issues. The upcoming DPO workshop in Sydney will provide a basis for DPOs to learn more about refugee issues, share ideas and identify concrete actions for implementation in their own countries. We propose to then select two DPOs for sub-grants through an application process. Hence, sub-grants may not be confined to the countries specified in the AusAID proposal, as we feel greater progress can be made by prioritizing support for DPOs with interest, ideas and demonstrated commitment. In Ethiopia, we have found that despite the absence of DPOs in the Jijiga region, there are fledgling Disability Associations in each camp. Here we propose to provide a sub-grant to a local NGO to build the capacity of these organizations to play a more significant role in program planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Expected outputs and results

- Facilitate a workshop, hosted by the University of Sydney, for DPOs from Asia in conjunction with the Creating New Futures conference (Quarter 5)
- Identify two DPOs from Asia and a local NGO from Jijiga for sub-grants (Quarter 5)
- Sub-grants are provided and inclusive of responsibilities, roles and outputs (Quarter 5)
- Monitoring mechanism is implemented to capture lessons learned from grantees in all three sites (Quarter 8)

Objective #3: Assist UNHCR roll out its global disability guidance

In the next period of the project, WRC will continue to advocate to UNHCR to endorse, resource and implement the “rollout strategy” to operationalize their Guidance across all country operations. This will be achieved through coordinated advocacy at UNHCR Headquarters, as well as ongoing distance technical support to selected Country Operations. It is anticipated that, with the support from AusAID and other funders, we will provide direct technical support to at least eight country operations by the end of the project.

Expected outputs and results

- The “rollout strategy” as described in the draft document “Global Implementation of UNHCR’s Conclusion on refugees with disabilities and other persons with disabilities protected and assisted by UNHCR, No 110 (LXI)–2010” is endorsed organizationally by UNHCR (Quarter 5)
- UNHCR identifies suitable funding sources for the implementation of the Guidance (Quarter 6)
- Ongoing distance technical support is provided to all country operations with which we have piloted workshops (Quarter 5-7)

Objective #4: Analyze, document and share lessons learned

As planned, we will conduct follow-up field visits to two of the pilot site locations. Sites for follow-up field visits will be selected based on an analysis of the action plans developed from the workshops and distance consultation with UNHCR country offices on progress in implementation. The purpose of these visits will be to assess how the guidance is being implemented, what barriers to implementation exist, what successes have been achieved, and the impact the guidance is having on the lives of refugees and displaced persons with disabilities. Follow-up field visits may not be confined to the countries specified in the AusAID proposal, as we wish to select sites with the greatest potential to contribute to knowledge gaps on disability inclusive practice. We will also capture information from UNHCR headquarters and other country operations by:

- Reviewing UNHCR policies and strategies for inclusion of persons with disabilities
- Monitoring how many countries are considering persons with disabilities and including persons with disabilities in country operations plans
- Monitoring results of pilot trainings – this is done immediately following a workshop, and then at 6-12 months post training through either a questionnaire or a field visit
- Mapping DPO interest and engagement in refugee issues in South Asia and South East Asia
- Collecting examples of good practice according to the Guidance

Expected outputs and results

- Two follow-up field assessments are completed (Quarter 6 & 7)
- Monitoring mechanism is implemented to capture information from UNHCR Headquarters and other country operations (Quarter 5-7)
- Lessons will be documented in a policy/practice brief and widely disseminated to the humanitarian community, including UN agencies, international and local NGOs and donor and host governments, and also shared with listservs, relevant websites and portals, and through journal articles (Quarter 7 & 8)

Objective #5: Advocate for change globally

WRC will continue its advocacy and communication campaign focused on improving access to all services for persons with disabilities in crisis-affected areas throughout the world. The campaign will be based on learning captured in pilot countries and UNHCR guidance rollout. Key stakeholders within the humanitarian community will be targeted, including UN agencies, international and local non-governmental organizations, and donor and host governments.

Expected outputs and results

- Key stakeholders identified among donor, policymaker and practitioner communities (Quarter 5);
- Change strategy and key messages developed (Quarter 6);
- Advocacy scheme launched targeting ten (10) key funding and policy-making organizations (Quarters 6-8); and,
- Impact and results of advocacy campaign captured and documented (Quarter 8).