

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

TECHNICAL BRIEF

MAY 2024



TABLE OF CONTENT

Summary	1
1. Social protection mechanisms to reduce inequality	3
1.1. Scope of the brief	3
1.2. Global situation	4
2. The importance of social protection for persons with disabilities	4
2.1. Barriers to social protection for persons with disabilities	6
2.2. What is disability inclusive social protection	6
3. Developing disability-inclusive social protection programmes	10
3.1. Include disability in the context and problem analysis	11
3.2. Design of disability inclusive social protection programmes	12
3.3. Measuring progress through disability inclusive indicators	16
4. References	17
Annex 1: Further reading and resources	18
Annex 2: Disability inclusive outcomes and indicators on social protection	21
Boxes	
Box 1: Recent data on persons with disabilities	5
Box 2: Disability needs assessment and certification	7
Box 3: A note on general and disability-specific social protection systems	9
Box 4: Disability inclusive social protection entry points	13
Examples	
Example 1: Combining research, capacity building and technical expertise in Kyrgyz Republic	6
Example 2: De-institutionalization and strengthening community services and support in Jordan	10
Example 3: Disability-inclusive social protection in Cambodia	15

Summary

Social protection is crucial for persons with disabilities to address the systemic and persistent barriers that affect their lives and lead to higher levels of poverty among this group. Unfortunately, globally, only one-third of people with significant disabilities receive any form of social protection, which is often severely inadequate. Humanitarian crises, climate-related disasters, and conflicts exacerbate these disparities, disproportionately affecting persons with disabilities. Inclusive social protection systems are crucial for reducing inequality and ensuring the well-being of persons with disabilities across different income levels and in various challenging circumstances.

Barriers to access for persons with disabilities in social protection programs include:

- Inaccessible information and communication regarding eligibility and availability of social protection schemes
- Complex and multiple disability assessment and certification processes for different social protection schemes, often based solely on medical certificates.
- Persons with disabilities face several barriers when applying for social protection programs, including the requirement to apply in person.
- Lack of accessible transportation to reach public administration offices.
- They also encounter disability-related prejudice and stigma among social workers and administrative staff of social welfare offices and local administration.
- Additionally, complaint mechanisms and grievance processes for persons with disabilities are often inaccessible or unsafe.
- Finally, persons with disabilities may find it difficult to obtain or maintain a bank account.

The following key points are essential for ensuring that social protection programs are inclusive of persons with disabilities and effectively address their diverse inclusion requirements:

- **Inclusion in the contextual analysis:** To ensure consistent attention to the situation of persons with disabilities when analysing inequality and social protection in the country, it is important to integrate a disability-inclusive perspective into the analytical framework.
- **Engagement and participation:** Consulting and engaging with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations is essential in designing social protection programmes. This should include diverse views, such as those of women with disabilities, parents' organisations, LGBTQI persons, and persons with psychosocial disabilities.
- **Coverage:** Assess the extent to which persons with disabilities are covered by existing social protection mechanisms in the country. This includes reviewing data on inequality and socio-economic exclusion of persons with disabilities, examining eligibility criteria for social protection benefits, and understanding the disability identification and needs assessment system.
- Identify the **challenges and barriers** faced by persons with disabilities in terms of inequality and social exclusion. This information will help design disability-inclusive social protection policies and prioritize actions.

- **Design elements:** Consider different design elements based on the nature of the barriers identified, existing social protection systems, fiscal space and the priorities of persons with disabilities. This may include ensuring accessibility and non-discrimination, respecting dignity and privacy, and providing a combination of mainstream and disability-specific cash transfers, benefits, and services.
- **Measuring progress:** Develop disability-inclusive indicators to measure progress in implementing disability-inclusive social protection programmes.

Social protection mechanisms to reduce inequality

Equality is a fundamental aspect of the EU's social model and tackling inequalities within and between countries is a key component of the EU's strategy to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Strengthening social protection mechanisms and protecting individuals from risk are key tools to help countries reduce inequalities. This is also reflected in the European Pillar of Social Rights and its 20 principles for building a fair, inclusive and equal Europe.

Social protection includes various public and private instruments to tackle poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, as well as to address vulnerabilities during shocks and disasters [1]. The objectives of social protection programmes vary depending on the context, culture, and economic development of each country. Programmes may focus on reducing income poverty and other deprivations, such as lack of access to health, education, hygiene, nutrition, protection, and shelter while promoting human development, access to jobs, education, and basic health and social services.

Social protection is a fundamental human right and is explicitly mentioned in Sustainable Development Goal 1, Target 1.3: 'Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable' [2]. The EU Consensus for Development also reaffirms the EU's commitment to enhancing social protection in partner countries.

1.1. Scope of the brief

This brief presents recent evidence on social protection for persons with disabilities and suggests ways to increase coverage and provide them with equal opportunities to enter and remain in the labour market. It also aims to ensure that families of children with disabilities have minimum income security. The brief draws heavily on the guidance developed by UNICEF, ILO, and the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). The text does not cover health or public health interventions, education, or employment programmes, which are part of the wider social protection floor.

1 European Commission (2015b). *Supporting Social Protection Systems. Tools and Methods Series*, Concept Paper No. 4.

2 Social protection forms part of various human rights treaties and conventions, i.e., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and elaborated in the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention 1952 (No. 102) which sets worldwide agreed minimum standards for all nine branches of social security.

1.2. Global situation

Currently, over half of the world's population, 53.1% or 4.1 billion people, lack access to at least one social protection mechanism [3]. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a temporary expansion of social protection in many countries but also exposed significant systemic inequalities in access to life-saving health services, prevention measures, and economic impact.

Since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Agenda 2030's pledge to leave no one behind, a transformation is taking place to make the social protection system more inclusive of persons with disabilities. Governments and development partners are increasingly prioritising inclusive social protection. However, significant challenges remain. There is a persistent gap in which individuals with disabilities experience multiple inequities in education, health, employment, and poverty levels. Those with intersecting identities, such as children, older people, women and girls, youth, migrants, refugees, and those living in rural communities or informal settlements, are the most affected.

According to the ILO's latest World Social Protection Report 2020–2022, **only one-third of persons with significant disabilities worldwide receive any form of social protection**, often with very limited adequacy [4]. Humanitarian crises, climate-related disasters and conflicts exacerbate these disparities, as persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by these adverse events.

2

The importance of social protection for persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities are found at all income levels but are more likely to experience poverty due to systemic and persistent barriers that affect their daily lives. In low- and middle-income countries, many persons with disabilities have lower levels of education and literacy, are more food insecure, have higher health expenditures, and face higher rates of multidimensional poverty.

There is relatively good evidence that persons with disabilities earn less and spend more than the average person. This needs to be considered when designing social policies and strengthening social protection mechanisms. They often must spend more money and time to access assistive devices, human assistance, medicines and health and rehabilitation services. As a result, more of their disposable income is used to achieve the same life chances as others and there is a risk that persons with disabilities will remain in poverty. Disability-related costs are also influenced by individual characteristics such as gender or sexual orientation, ethnicity, age and the degree of impairment and functional limitation, and of course the individual's desire for participation.

³ Barca, V., Sharpe J. and Flower, C. (2021). [Social protection “killer facts”](#). Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service (SPACE), DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom.

⁴ ILO (2022). [World Social Protection Report 2020–2022](#). Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future.

BOX 1: RECENT DATA ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES [5]

Up to twice as many persons with disabilities live below the poverty line as persons without disabilities [6]. Poverty is disproportionately higher for women and girls with disabilities [7].



49% more children with disabilities have never been to school than children without disabilities and are significantly less likely to have basic numeracy and literacy skills [8].



Only 54% of persons with disabilities can read and write, compared to 77% of persons without disabilities. Compared to men without disabilities, women with disabilities are more likely to be illiterate and twice as likely not to use the internet [9].



Women and girls with disabilities are three times more likely to have unmet health care needs than men without disabilities [10].



The employment rate of persons with disabilities is consistently lower than average, and they are more likely to work in the informal economy, where they tend to earn less and have no access to contributory social protection schemes [11]. There is also a stark gender gap, with women with disabilities twice as likely to be unemployed as men without disabilities [12].



More than 2.5 billion people who need assistive technology do not have access to it [13].

5 These data come from the forthcoming guidance note by Côte, A., Knox-Vydmanov, C. and Lippi, L. (2023). *Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems Enabling participation and Inclusion of persons with Disabilities* (draft). UNICEF, ILO and UNPRPD.

6 Ibid.

7 UN Women (2017). *Making the SDGs Count for Women and Girls with Disabilities*. UN Women: New York.

8 UNICEF (2021). *Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities*. UNICEF: New York.

9 UNDESA (2018). *Disability and Development Report*. UN: New York.

10 Ibid.

11 ILO (2020). *Questions on Disability and Work: Key Issues on promoting employment for persons with disabilities*. ILO: Geneva.

12 UNDESA (2018). *Disability and Development Report*. UN: New York.

13 WHO and UNICEF (2022). *Global report on assistive technology*. WHO: Geneva. There are wide disparities in terms of access to assistive technology, with estimated access (i.e. the proportion of people with their need met among those with a need) varying from 3% in the least developed countries to 90% in some OECD countries.

2.1. Barriers to social protection for persons with disabilities

As mentioned above, only one-third of persons with disabilities have access to any form of social protection due to multiple barriers:

- Inaccessible information and communication on eligibility and availability of social protection schemes, as well as templates and forms to fill in.
- Complex and multiple disability assessment and certification procedures for different social protection schemes, often based only on a medical certificate (Box 2).
- The requirement to apply for social protection programmes in person, exacerbated by the lack of accessible and available transport to reach social welfare offices or other public administration offices.
- Disability-related prejudice and stigma among social workers and administrative staff in social welfare offices and local government.
- Complaints mechanisms and grievance procedures are not accessible or do not provide a safe process for persons with disabilities.
- Not having or being allowed to have a bank account.
- Navigating complicated and bureaucratic systems to access health insurance and disability benefits, and lack of adapted assistance to engage in the process.

EXAMPLE 1: COMBINING RESEARCH, CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE IN KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

In 2022, an analysis of the Kyrgyz Republic's social protection budget revealed that disability benefits had limited coverage and were inadequate to cover the costs of living. The study's findings helped the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration identify ways to double benefits for both adults and children with disabilities. The EU provided technical expertise and training to the Ministry on design-thinking related to social protection and improving access to public employment. This support was further reinforced by amending the Labour Code and Disability Law to include enforcement mechanisms for the quota system that promotes the employment of persons with disabilities in both public and private sectors.

2.2. What is disability inclusive social protection?

There is mounting evidence on the effectiveness of inclusive and comprehensive social protection systems in addressing poverty, reducing healthcare costs, improving health status, and supporting the empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities and their families [14].

¹⁴ Côte, A., Knox-Vydmanov, C. and Lippi, L (2023). *Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems Enabling Participation and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities* (draft). UNICEF, ILO and UNPRPD. (forthcoming).

For instance, cash transfers that include additional funds for disability-related expenses can free up income for necessary healthcare or medication. Alternatively, cash can enable the purchase of more nutritious food, which can improve school attendance. Accessing child allowances can also help to reduce opportunity costs and out-of-pocket expenses, such as those for transportation, textbooks, and uniforms. Universal health coverage (UHC) and affordable health insurance can reduce out-of-pocket expenses for persons with disabilities and benefit households economically.

A sufficient social protection system for persons with disabilities must cover their additional disability-related costs and support needs at all ages. It should not only provide basic income security and institutional care and rehabilitation but also align with the paradigm shift promoted by the CRPD to promote the participation and empowerment of individuals with diverse disabilities and capacities. To ensure the most tailored support, a system of individualised disability identification, determination, and needs assessment will be required [15].

BOX 2: DISABILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION [16]

Identifying disabilities, assessing needs, and certifying entitlement to benefits is a complex task that involves multiple stakeholders. Although this brief does not delve into the details of this process, it is a crucial mechanism that requires careful consideration and broad consultation with people with disabilities. Not all social protection programmes require identification of disability. Access to poverty assistance, old age pension, or health insurance is usually based on socio-economic criteria. Disability-specific support, such as cash transfers for income replacement and/or disability-related costs, costly assistive devices, and personal assistance, may require disability assessment to ensure that programs reach those for whom they are designed.

An interesting example in the European Union is the adoption of the [European Disability Card](#) by the European Commission in 2023. This card will facilitate mutual recognition of disability status and associated benefits among EU Member States, simplifying equal mobility rights for persons with disabilities across the EU.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommends adopting a human rights-based approach to disability assessment and determination mechanisms.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

This approach should aim for universal access, focus on support requirements and barriers, and ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities. However, many countries face resource and capacity challenges. Therefore, ILO, UNICEF, and UNPRPD suggest a compromise that combines accessibility, comprehensiveness, and reliability in disability assessment and determination procedures [17].

This can be achieved by:

- Improving **accessibility** to ensuring ease, transparency, and minimal burden in the application process, making the procedure available, free, and accessible to everyone in the country.
- **Comprehensiveness** requires the inclusion of all disabilities, assessment of individual limitations and support needs, age and gender sensitivity.
- **Reliability** entails transparent evaluation procedures, standardized processes, trained staff, grievance mechanisms, fraud minimization, and involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities.



LISTEN TO A [WEBINAR ON DISABILITY IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT, AND DETERMINATION IN SOCIAL PROTECTION](#)

The ILO and UNICEF draft guidance suggests that disability-inclusive social protection should have the following four key features to support socio-economic participation [18]:

1. **A combination of schemes** specifically designed to provide both basic income security and coverage of health and disability-related costs through a flexible combination of mainstream and disability-specific cash transfers, benefits and services to support socio-economic participation and inclusion. A twin-track approach should be adopted, including access to mainstream social protection schemes and the development of disability-specific schemes that explicitly promote social inclusion and provide the necessary additional support.
2. **Ensure accessibility** and non-discrimination to enable persons with disabilities to access and benefit from social protection programmes and social services by removing barriers and addressing their diverse inclusion needs (based on gender, sexual identity, ethnicity

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Côte, A., Knox-Vydmannov, C. and Lippi, L (2023). [Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems Enabling participation and inclusion of persons with Disabilities](#) (draft). UNICEF, ILO and UNPRPD. (forthcoming). [CRPD Article 28 Adequate standard of living and social protection](#). States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing.

age, geographical location and type of impairment and level of functioning). Complaints and grievance procedures must be accessible. Some persons with disabilities may need human assistance to make complaints, which should be provided with respect for dignity and safety.

3. **Respect for dignity, personal autonomy, choice, control over one's own life and privacy.** Social protection programmes should not contribute to the stigmatisation, marginalisation or exclusion of persons with disabilities. The placement of children and adults in segregated social or medical institutions, deprivation of legal capacity and/or coercive and forced treatment must be avoided. Benefits for adults with disabilities should be provided to the person and not to the household.
4. **Meaningful consultation** with representative organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in the design, implementation, and monitoring of social protection and to promote ownership and sustainable demand for necessary reforms. Engagement with OPDs and the diversity of persons with disabilities, which is an obligation under the CRPD (Art. 4.3), is critical to provide lived experience perspectives and complement data, and to inform inclusive design and prioritisation of investments.

BOX 3: A NOTE ON GENERAL AND DISABILITY-SPECIFIC SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS [19]

Disability-related benefits are schemes that:

- Target persons with disabilities and their families.
- Are designed to meet disability-related needs.
- Provide benefits mostly at the individual level, i.e. benefits are paid directly to an individual, but also to others because of specific circumstances, such as disability benefits for children or carers. They include cash benefits, benefits in kind, community support services and concessions justified by disability-related needs.

General social protection schemes include:

- Schemes addressing other lifecycle risks and vulnerabilities, such as childbearing, old age, unemployment, maternity, parenthood, sickness, etc., which should also benefit people with disabilities.
- Generalised anti-poverty programmes targeting low-income households may consider other vulnerabilities in addition to wealth or income as eligibility criteria, such as having a household member with a disability or including specific criteria to prioritise households with persons with disabilities.
- Public services such as childcare, health care, community care and support, rehabilitation, assistive technology, respite care, personal assistance schemes, transport, etc.

¹⁹ Côte, A., Knox-Vydmannov, C. and Lippi, L (2023). [Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems Enabling participation and Inclusion of persons with Disabilities](#) (draft). UNICEF, ILO and UNPRPD. (forthcoming).

Developing disability-inclusive social protection programmes

Persons with disabilities, who mostly belong to the lowest 40% of the income distribution, must have equal access to social protection and receive necessary disability-specific support.

Strengthening social protection is one pillar of reducing inequalities and is part of the EU's commitment to leaving no one behind. Developing disability-inclusive social protection programmes requires a careful design of interventions and programmes that consider persons with disabilities. Using policy dialogue to raise awareness and build political will can reinforce this. It is important to remember that there is no blueprint for supporting countries in developing or strengthening disability-inclusive social protection. Different models are driven by various factors, such as the country's socioeconomic context, political will and commitment, existing social protection mechanisms and schemes, and the capacities of organisations of persons with disabilities.

EXAMPLE 2: DE-INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORT IN JORDAN

The EU Delegation in Jordan is assisting the government in implementing a social protection system that is based on rights and is gender responsive. This support has been provided through budgetary assistance to the Ministry of Social Development, with the aim of reforming policies and strengthening implementation capacity, including the de-institutionalisation of disability services. Supplementary measures, in the form of grants and technical assistance, were implemented to strengthen community care and support. This will enable the transfer of persons with disabilities from residential institutions to the community. Additionally, a program aimed at enhancing the livelihoods and skills of marginalized groups has been implemented to facilitate a transition from welfare benefits to decent work. This program specifically targets persons with disabilities.

While support is ongoing, insights gained from the process show that the pace of implementing legal reforms and regulations on de-institutionalisation, which are crucial to ensure a safe transfer of people from an institution to their homes or foster homes, is slow.

This delay has impacted the transition of persons in institutions to the community and has further affected complementary community support measures. It is important to ensure that other social protection measures, such as improving access to employment and vocational training, align with the de-institutionalisation process.

De-institutionalisation is a complex process that requires long-term commitments from all parties involved, and particularly the government and its related agencies and the donors. Coordination among ministries such as health, education, and labour, as well as donors investing in social protection, is crucial. It is essential to consider disability inclusion in all such investments.

3.1. Include disability in the context and problem analysis

Social protection interventions should consistently consider the situation of persons with disabilities, just as they do with gender equality, climate, and human rights. This means avoiding the creation of a new analysis framework and instead incorporating a disability-inclusive perspective into the existing framework. Social protection interventions and social policy dialogues must meet the OECD/DAC Disability marker 1 or 2 criteria [20].

When analysing the country context and defining the main problems of the social protection system in the country, use the key approaches of the Disability marker;

- Engage and promote the participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations.
 - ✔ Consult and engage with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations during the design of social protection programmes. This will help to promote their participation and engagement. Ensure diversity of views by including women with disabilities, parents' organisations, LGBTQI individuals where possible, and individuals who are deaf or have psychosocial disabilities. These groups are often the most disadvantaged due to intersectional discrimination.
- To what extent do existing social protection mechanisms in the country cover persons with disabilities?
 - ✔ Review data on inequality and socio-economic exclusion of persons with disabilities in the country. This includes education, health, and livelihood. Use census and household surveys, such as UNICEF-supported MICS or World Bank-supported LSMS, as well as other country-based administrative Management Information Systems (MIS).
 - ✔ Examine the current eligibility requirements for both contributory and non-contributory social protection benefits. If data on the coverage of persons with disabilities receiving these benefits is available, review it. If data is limited, seek information from UN agencies or NGOs and analyse research and studies. Collaborate with OPDs to comprehend the obstacles to accessing social protection benefits and services.

²⁰ Guidance on how to score and implement the Disability marker can be found in Annex 3 of the [Guidance note Leaving no one behind. Disability Inclusion in EU external action](#) (2022).

- ✓ Gain an understanding of the disability identification and needs assessment system, as well as how disability-specific benefits are provided. Identify physical, communication, and attitudinal barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing general social protection schemes, disability cards, and specific benefits.
- ✓ Additionally, provide information on persons with disabilities in Country Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs) and Gender Country Profiles (GCPs), and other gender analyses on inequality and social protection schemes.
- What is the fiscal space and political will to increase coverage of social protection, and how could this be considered in budget support dialogues?
- ✓ Analyse what are the public financial implications of expanding mainstream social protection coverage to be more inclusive and introduce/strengthen disability specific schemes.

The information gathered through the context analysis will highlight specific challenges and barriers faced by persons with disabilities in terms of inequality and social exclusion. This will support the design of a disability-inclusive social protection intervention, and the identification of priority actions to be taken and aspects to be included in policy dialogue and meetings with implementing partners and other Member States in the country.

3.2. Design of disability inclusive social protection programmes

The type of disability inclusion measures that would need to be considered in the design of the programme will vary depending on the nature of the barriers identified, the existing social protection systems available, the fiscal space and willingness to extend coverage, and the priorities of persons with disabilities. However, there will always be entry points for improving coverage and even extending support beyond basic income security. Some key design elements are provided here, although this is not an exhaustive list, and more specific guidance and examples can be found in the resources section.

During contract negotiations for social protection interventions, it is crucial to pay attention to disability inclusion. This is especially important when agreeing on detailed actions, budgeting, and defining the logical framework and indicators. The EU frequently partners with UN agencies, such as UNICEF and the ILO, and civil society organisations for social protection programmes. Therefore, it is essential that interventions align with policy priorities and build on opportunity windows to support inclusion therein, leveraging as possible successful strategies and building on milestones.

BOX 4: DISABILITY INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION ENTRY POINTS**MAKING THE MOST OF EXISTING EXPENDITURES**

Although not always tailored to disabilities, existing schemes can become more inclusive by eliminating discriminatory criteria, using public works schemes to provide community care and support, and simplifying application processes and information.

It is also worth considering exemptions from conditional schemes, such as those related to education or healthcare, which can unfairly affect persons with disabilities and their families. Once education and healthcare are accessible to all, the mentioned conditions become relevant.

Social insurance should be extended beyond the formal sector to include those working in the informal sector, including many persons with disabilities and their families.

Disability-related extra costs should be covered by social protection, which should also support resilience to shocks and be compatible with work.

**SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS, DISABILITY DATA AND COSTING FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION**

To plan and budget for disability-inclusive social protection, it is essential to understand the number of persons with disabilities and their different needs. Therefore, census and household data should include information on disability. Additionally, the assessment of disabilities should be reformed to capture support needs and requirements rather than being solely medical based. Quantitative analysis, such as microsimulation tools, can estimate the benefits of disability allowances for reducing poverty and inequality, as well as the associated costs [21].

**CHOOSE UNIVERSAL OVER POVERTY-TARGETED SCHEMES**

The limited evidence available suggests that universal (categorical) or wealth-tested schemes achieve higher coverage than means-tested or poverty-tested schemes.

Moreover, when evaluating new social protection schemes in countries with limited fiscal space, universal schemes for persons with disabilities (or children with disabilities) are a good starting point. It is a rights-based and affordable option for progressively building a social protection system that covers risks along the life cycle.

21 See an example of such [simulation from EASCAP](#), focusing on Asia-Pacific countries.



SUPPORT REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (MIS)

The MIS should be able to identify persons with disabilities. Various tools could be used for identification, or the system could be linked to the national disability registry (with the caveat that most disability registries have limited coverage).

Programme monitoring and impact evaluation should be disaggregated by disability status, gender and age to monitor inequalities.



DIVERSIFYING SOURCE OF PUBLIC FINANCING

To reduce the challenges of added disability-related costs, disability-targeted concessions such as free or reduced public transportation, tax exemptions, free or subsidised cultural and leisure activities, and utility subsidies for gas and electricity should be made available.

Additionally, expanding the coverage of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to include rehabilitation and assistive technology would be beneficial.

It is also recommended to expand the range of publicly funded community services, both geographically and in terms of the services provided. In certain countries, this may be associated with a wider process of deinstitutionalisation, whereby governments can allocate resources and funding towards improved care and support within the community.



MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Consulting with OPDs is critical for informing disability-inclusive programme design, monitoring, and evaluation of social protection programmes. This is also an obligation under the CRPD. Most bilateral and UN agencies now provide OPD consultation guidance.

While many OPDs and civil society groups are new to advocating for disability-inclusive social protection, investing in mutual capacity development can enable OPDs to participate in inclusive spaces.

The EU could enhance regular consultation with OPDs by using its partnership with civil society and consultation mechanisms. This could include strengthening OPDs' capacities, including with resources, to engage in social protection policy discussions and at the programme delivery level. One way to achieve this is to engage OPDs in assessing social protection schemes or improving accessibility.

3.3. Measuring progress through disability inclusive indicators

The tools for follow-up, field visits, reporting, and results-oriented monitoring and evaluation should include questions and information about including persons with disabilities in the social protection programme. It is important to ensure that indicators and results are inclusive, reported upon, and that data on persons with disabilities are disaggregated during progress monitoring.

The **EU Global Results Framework** on social protection suggests specific outcomes that directly refer to disability-inclusive social protection. When developing activities and indicators and in the subsequent contracting process with implementing partners, these outcomes should be considered. Most other outcomes are also relevant, and where possible, disaggregation by disability status should be encouraged. **Annex 2** contains a detailed list of these outcomes and indicators.

EXAMPLE 3: DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CAMBODIA

The EU Delegation to Cambodia has supported social protection institutions and civil society in Cambodia to improve the efficiency and coverage of social protection. Disability inclusion has been mainstreamed into several funding mechanisms and partnerships, resulting in a tangible contribution to the reform and modernisation of the disability inclusive social protection system. Some of the success factors are highlighted below:

- The Government of Cambodia is committed to reforming and expanding social protection, including for persons with disabilities.
- National data from the 2019 census (4.9%) and the 2014 (9%) and 2021 (13%) DHS provide information on the prevalence and situation of persons with disabilities. Disaggregated data on disability and other disaggregated data are essential for assessing the fiscal space to expand social protection coverage.
- The EU Delegation has been working with the Government of Cambodia, UNICEF, the ILO and civil society on social protection to strengthen disability-inclusive programming and engagement with organisations of persons with disabilities.
- Inclusive social protection programmes are supported through several funding streams:
 - Cambodia was one of 18 countries to benefit from a three-year support programme under the Global Social Protection - Public Finance Management (SP&PFM) initiative. The initiative, implemented by UNICEF, ILO and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, aimed to achieve universal social protection, while ensuring gender equality and disability inclusion.

- The EU and UNICEF regional Public Finance Facility provided technical assistance to Cambodia and six other countries. This assistance supported the analysis and influence of budget formulation processes and the reform of the disability identification system. It also expanded the disability allowance programme as part of the Harmonised Family Package launched in 2023.
- Part of the EU's COVID-19 budget support programme has been directed to support the adoption of the Family Package of Social Assistance Services, which integrates disability inclusion, and the nationwide roll-out of the Disability Identification System.
- Two other complementary measures under the EU budget support programme targeting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social protection are being implemented:
 - The ILO, in partnership with UNICEF, is assisting the government in improving social protection coverage (social assistance and social security) for poor and vulnerable groups. This includes strengthening institutional capacity to deliver the Family Package of Social Assistance, which provides cash benefits to persons with disabilities, and exploring the linkage of cash transfer programmes with the promotion of livelihood skills and access to services.
 - Oxfam is coordinating a partnership of civil society organisations to build the capacity of civil society actors to engage in social protection policy. This includes supporting the identification of persons with disabilities, raising awareness of available schemes and their access to services, advocating for their participation in relevant decision-making processes and monitoring government social protection programmes. The partnership includes organisations of persons with disabilities.

4

References

Barca, V., Sharpe J. and Flower, C. (2021). [Social protection “killer facts”](#). Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19 Expert Advice Service (SPACE), DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom

Côte, A., Knox-Vydmanov, C. and Lippi, L (2023). [Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems Enabling participation and Inclusion of persons with Disabilities](#) (draft). UNICEF, ILO and UNPRPD. (forthcoming)

European Commission (2015b). [Supporting Social Protection Systems. Tools and Methods Series](#), Concept Paper No. 4.

European Commission (2022). [Guidance note Leaving no one behind. Disability Inclusion in EU external action](#)

ILO (2022). [World Social Protection Report 2020–2022](#). Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future

UNDESA (2018). [Disability and Development Report](#). UN: New York

UN Women (2017). [Making the SDGs Count for Women and Girls with Disabilities](#). UN Women: New York

UNICEF (2021). [Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities](#). UNICEF: New York

ILO (2020). [Questions on Disability and Work: Key Issues on promoting employment for persons with disabilities](#). ILO: Geneva

WHO and UNICEF (2022). [Global report on assistive technology](#). WHO: Geneva.

Annex 1: Further reading and resources

UNDERSTANDING THE KEY ISSUES

- **ILO and International Disability Alliance (2019). [Joint Statement Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems Supporting the Full and Effective Participation of Persons with Disabilities](#)**

This statement outlines the risks and vulnerabilities that persons with disabilities and their families face. It also provides recommendations on how social protection systems can effectively shield them from livelihood shocks, reduce and prevent poverty, and enable them to participate in society.

- **ILO UNICEF guidance note (draft) (2023). [Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems. Enabling Participation and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities](#)**

This document offers guidance on designing, implementing, and monitoring social protection systems that promote inclusion.

- **Social Protection Advice for Covid Expert Advice (SPACE) (2021). [Inclusive Information Systems for Social Protection: Intentionally Integrating Gender and Disability](#)**

This resource offers guidance on developing digital information systems that are inclusive and rights-based, serving the social protection sector, particularly social assistance, and leveraging technology to remove barriers to inclusion. The paper specifically addresses gender and disability inclusion.

- **GIZ social protection (2021). [Ensuring Social Protection for Persons with Disabilities Matters](#)**

This resource provides information on international, national, and regional instruments that contribute to disability-inclusive social protection systems and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social protection programming. Examples from various parts of the world are provided.

- **UNICEF, Alexandre Cote (2023). [Inclusive social protection and persons with disabilities](#)**

This resource presents the disability-related costs of individuals with disabilities in a graphic format. It also outlines what inclusive social protection systems should look like throughout a person's life. The recommendation is to shift the focus from incapacity to work and to combine cash and in-kind support.

- **ILO and European Network for Independent Living (ENIL). (2024). [Towards Dignity and Autonomy: A Comprehensive Look at Personal Assistance Policies for Persons with Disabilities Worldwide.](#)**

The report presents the findings from a review of personal assistance policies and practices from across the world and formulates recommendations on how to ensure that personal assistance promote full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in community, including by improving the working conditions of assistants.

TOOLS FOR DISABILITY INCLUSIVE ANALYSIS / ASSESSMENT

- **The Social Inclusion Assessment Tool (SiAT)**

This tool is a four-question method to help policy makers and development practitioners assess how to address social inclusion in projects, programs, policies or analysis. The questions are designed to be simple and straightforward, allowing for a logical and clear structure to the assessment process.

- **Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis**

This GEDSI analysis identifies how social norms, relations, and power dynamics affect people with diverse identities. It recognizes that the interaction of impairments and different physical, social, communication, and institutional barriers can create experiences of exclusion and marginalization.

DISABILITY MAINSTREAMING FOR INCLUSIVE PROJECTS

- **OECD. (2022). Disability, Work and Inclusion. Mainstreaming in All Policies and Practices.**

This report documents the current labour market situation of people with disabilities. It calls for rigorous disability mainstreaming in all relevant policies and practices. Disability mainstreaming is the missing link for better labour market inclusion. Policies to support young people with disabilities, improve their skills, and intervene early during a health problem or disability have not been effective enough.

- **World Bank. Disability and the Global South (2017). No One Left Behind: A review of social protection and disability at the World Bank**

This paper highlights the importance of systematically addressing the issues faced by people with disabilities in the planning, provision, and evaluation of development assistance. It concludes with recommendations for ensuring that future projects are inclusive, from program development and implementation to outcome assessment.

PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

- **EU, ILO and UNICEF: Social Protection. Financing Disability-inclusive Social Protection Systems**

This webinar includes the approach to build disability-inclusive social protection systems to really achieve a universal coverage for all.

It is the third webinar of the [Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management](#) series, to learn from country experiences and contribute to the international debate on innovative solutions to increase financing and improve Public Finance Management.

- **Mont, D., Morgon Banks, L., Carraro, L., Cote, A., et al. [Methods for Estimating the Impact of Disability Costs for Designing Inclusive Policies](#). *Disabilities 2023*, 3. 539–549.**

This paper analyses various methods for estimating extra costs related to disabilities and explores their usefulness in designing inclusive social policies. One approach is to measure current spending, while another is to estimate the spending required for equal participation. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. The paper concludes with recommendations on which methodology is suitable for which purpose and how they can be used together to obtain a complete account of the additional costs incurred by people with disabilities.

MODEL POLICIES FOR AN INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

- **UN agencies, EU and Member States (2023). [An Analysis of Innovative Public Policies](#). *Supporting the SDG and the UN CRPD with Model Policies***

This report chooses a small selection of national model policies based on their clear goals and approaches, with a particular emphasis on accessibility. Countries with similar geographies, cultural backgrounds, and income levels can adapt and use these policies. In addition to the national model policies, the report looks at three additional models: two from United Nations agencies and one from the European Union.

Annex 2: Disability inclusive outcomes and indicators on social protection

- **Outcome 1:** Nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures implemented for all.
 - Indicator - Coverage by social protection floor/systems – the proportion of persons with disabilities receiving benefits (sub-component of SDG indicator 1.3.1).
- **Outcome 3:** Legal and policy frameworks for social protection based on pro-poor and gender-and disability-sensitive development strategies designed and enforced.
 - Indicator: Extent to which national social protection sector policy is based on pro-poor and gender- and disability-sensitive principles.
 - Indicator: Extent to which sex-disaggregated data and qualitative information on gender and disability sensitivity are publicly available for national social protection programmes.
- **Outcome 7:** Increased participation of civil society and social partners with the state to develop social protection systems and monitor performance.
 - Indicator: Extent to which civil society and other partners participate in the planning of social protection provision (OPSYS core indicator). While not disability specific, disaggregating by type of representation of civil society groups, such as women’s organisations, OPDs etc. should be possible.

The EU Global Results Framework also suggest several outputs that can be selected when designing social protection programmes, and the majority of those are relevant to persons with disabilities and can be used to apply a more inclusive monitoring framework. For example:

- Strengthened advocacy for an extended, more inclusive and better-financed social protection system.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Extent to which the EU-funded intervention supported effective civil society advocacy promoting the expansion of the social protection system (OPSYS core indicator).
 - Number of government and civil society participants trained by the EU-funded intervention who increased their understanding of the potential benefit of an extended, more inclusive and better-financed social protection system, disaggregated by sex and sector.
- Improved gathering and analysis of data on the social protection system, the programmes and/or instruments of delivery (strengthen disability data could be part of this improvement for example).

- **Indicator:**
 - Extent to which the EU-funded intervention maintained/improved the social protection sector registry (e.g. scale of coverage, quality and completeness of data records, frequency of updating). This could also include improvement of disability registry for example.
- Strengthened policy makers' capacities for inclusion of people in urban settings and in the informal economy in the social protection policies and delivery.
 - **Indicator:**
 - Extent to which the EU-funded intervention contributed to the development/revision of social protection policy and implementation practices to ensure the coverage of workers in informal employment (OPSYS core indicator). Many persons with disabilities work in the informal sector, so this output is of importance to include in disability-inclusive social protection programmes.
- Increased opportunities for dialogue between civil society and social partners with the government on the design and performance of social protection system.
 - **Indicator:**
 - Number of agencies/parties participating in multi-stakeholder meetings/conferences/forums organised by the EU-funded intervention on the design and performance of social protection systems, disaggregated by sector (public, social partners, civil society (including organisations of persons with disabilities) and private sector)).
- Strengthened advocacy to eliminate barriers for access to rights and services.
 - **Indicators:**
 - Number of government officials and civil society participants trained by the EU-funded intervention who increased their understanding of multiple barriers to accessing social protection services, disaggregated by sex and sector.
 - Extent to which the EU-funded intervention contributed to extend/maintain the inclusivity of national social protection strategy and delivery mechanisms (OPSYS core indicator).