



ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

8 COMMIT TO REALIZING POSITIVE SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Civil Society Organizations are effective as development actors when they collaborate to realize sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalized populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.

**HANDICAP
INTERNATIONAL**



Photo: Handicap International

Disability Checklist: Handicap International

Handicap International (HI) is an international aid organization working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. Working alongside persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, our action and testimony are focused on responding to their essential needs, improving their living conditions and promoting respect for their dignity and their fundamental rights.

CHALLENGE

The United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities, in its article 11, clearly highlights the obligation to take “all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflicts, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters”.



Persons with disabilities often remain invisible in the aftermath of disasters or humanitarian crises. Their access to aid and protection is also often deficient due to a number of barriers that are seldom known about, let alone taken into account in aid delivery.

RESPONSE



It is in this context that Handicap International created the Disability Checklist, a tool based on field experience and resulting from a collection of good practices that aims at addressing the problem of the “invisibility of disability”. The Disability Checklist summarizes concrete measures that humanitarian actors should take for disability inclusion in areas such as health and nutrition, water and sanitation, reconstruction and shelters, protection issues, etc.

In practice, the Checklist highlights the necessity that special efforts be put on identification, localization and registration of persons with disabilities, and that needs assessments include specific questions about disability. It also indicates the importance of evaluating the specific needs for assistive devices or rehabilitation, of building an inclined ramp to access a water point or distribution facilities, or of ensuring that messaging use at least two forms of communication (written and verbal) as well as pictograms in order to reach everyone, including persons with visual or hearing impairments.

LESSONS LEARNED & BEST PRACTICES

The Disability Checklist is a living document, and is as such adapted constantly to specific contexts. Its improvement is tributary to the capacity to learn from field experience, and to share that learning.



MAINSTREAMING/KNOWLEDGE SHARING



Through its relief interventions, Handicap International works at ensuring that persons with disabilities are identified and access humanitarian assistance like everyone else. However, one essential way of ensuring that access to services for persons with disabilities is done by supporting other humanitarian actors in that process through capacity building, training, technical assistance and knowledge sharing. Many agencies operating under an “all-inclusive” paradigm often assume they implicitly take the disability dimension into account, and do not give it further consideration. The sharing of knowledge and experience with these agencies allows greater awareness on the issue, on the challenges, and provides tools for the implementation of concrete measures that can make that access a reality.

Handicap International’s participation in coordination mechanisms (such as the UN clusters) is important for the mainstreaming of disability, and the Disability Checklist is one key practical instrument that is then shared with the wider humanitarian community.

NEXT STEPS

Handicap International hopes that awareness, capacity building and the sharing of practical tools will lead to the adoption of approaches and measures that make accessibility to aid for persons with disabilities a mainstream component of humanitarian practice.



Handicap International will also continue to widen the scope of its emergency response efforts while continuing its longer-term development programming alongside and for persons with disabilities, for the improvement of their living conditions, respect for their dignity and full access to services through the exercise of their fundamental rights.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Handicap International website
<http://www.handicap-international.ca>

Handicap International Disability Checklist for Emergency Response (a specific example from the organization’s intervention in Indonesia)
http://www.handicap-international.de/fileadmin/redaktion/pdf/disability_checklist_booklet_01.pdf

Go here for more examples of how Canadian civil society is improving its development practice: <http://www.ccic.ca/IP-case-studies.php>