

# Disability Inclusion Advisory Services Issue Paper

## Executive summary

To meet a growing demand from organisations to support the development, evaluation and implementation of disability inclusion strategies, Light for the World offers tailored Disability Inclusion Advisory services. Building on our deep expertise in disability inclusive programming, we have by 2025 provided disability inclusion advice to more than 100 development and humanitarian programmes. We have successfully walked the disability inclusion journey with over 500 international NGOs, UN bodies, foundations, government entities, private sector actors and service providers.

In this issue paper, we outline our unique advisory approach, centred around a Disability Inclusion Facilitator (DIF) and Disability Inclusion Advisor (DIA) model, and provide concrete examples how we work with organisations. As part of our Strategy 2030, we are committed to scaling our advisory services to ensure we deliver impact, at scale, sustainably.

## Why we offer disability inclusion advisory services

At Light for the World, we believe in a world where people with disabilities and eye conditions can fully exercise their rights to health, education, work – and protection in emergencies. One in six people (or 16 % of the global population) have a disability,<sup>1</sup> yet despite ambitious global and national commitments,<sup>2</sup> people with disabilities continue to be left behind in many areas.<sup>3,4,5</sup>

Despite ambitious commitments, governments, development and humanitarian stakeholders and other organisations often lack technical expertise and knowledge on how to plan and budget for disability inclusion.<sup>6</sup> To address this growing demand from organisations to support the development, evaluation and implementation of disability inclusion strategies, Light for the World has developed and expanded Disability Inclusive Advisory services, building on our disability expertise and track record in bridging the gap between commitment and practical implementation.

Working closely with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and with our unique Disability Inclusion Advisor (DIA) and Facilitator (DIF) models, we have supported organisations on the ‘how-to’ of disability inclusion in 12 countries in Africa. By 2025, we have provided disability inclusion advice to more than 100 development and humanitarian programmes and successfully walked the disability inclusion journey with over 500 international NGOs, UN bodies, foundations, government entities, private sector actors and service providers.

### Light for the World’s Disability Inclusion Facilitator (DIF) model

**In 2018, Light for the World facilitated a co-creation process with young women and men with disabilities and OPDs that resulted in the Disability Inclusion Facilitator (DIF) model. DIFs are young women and men with lived experience with hearing, visual, physical and psychosocial impairments. Participants are trained and certified as trainers and coaches on the ‘how-to’ of disability inclusion through a competency-based training programme called the Disability Inclusion Academy. Since the start of the Academy, we have trained over 250 DIFs in 12 African countries.**

## Our disability inclusion advisory services consist of

- training on disability inclusion and disability inclusive programming,

1 Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

2 United Nations. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities & Optional Protocol. New York, United Nations. and Global Disability Summit 2025 (final draft as of 2025-02-20) Amman-Berlin Declaration on Global Disability Inclusion

3 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2024), Disability and Development Report 2024: Accelerating the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities, New York: United Nations

4 United Nations, (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, Disability Inclusion in the United Nations System, Summary of Progress 2019-2024 United Nations p. 29

5 Global Disability Summit 2025 (final draft as of 2025-02-20) Amman-Berlin Declaration on Global Disability Inclusion

6 This is reiterated in the report on the evaluation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) that stresses the need for building more organisational knowledge on disability inclusion. United Nations, (2024) Report of the Secretary-General, Disability Inclusion in the United Nations System, Summary of Progress 2019-2024 United Nations, pp. 30 - 33

- ▶ facilitation of co-creation processes,
- ▶ expert advice to support mainstreaming of disability inclusion into organisational strategies, policies, budgeting and processes,
- ▶ accessible training curricula that support mindset and systems change,
- ▶ resources and tools, such as How-To guides.

As a result, the organisations we work with become more disability inclusive in their programming, systems, partnerships, organisational policies and service delivery. Through these partnerships, Light for the World positively impacts the lives of over a million people with disabilities.

## **Our unique approach to advising on disability inclusion**

For inclusive and sustainable change, disability inclusion needs to be taken on board by organisational leadership and embedded in organisational policies, budgeting and processes. Disability inclusion is not just one step - it is a mindset change. We support organisations in identifying needs and gaps, by offering basic disability awareness training, through an organisational self-assessment, and in the development and implementation of an action plan. Our Disability Inclusion Advisors, based in countries in Africa, are available to support the implementation of the action plan and provide hands on coaching and technical support.

Disability is just one part of a person's identity. When combined with other factors, - such as gender, displacement, poverty or age - it can create complex barriers to inclusion. For example, women with disabilities often have less access to resources and decision-making opportunities. Refugees and internally displaced people with disabilities face even greater challenges. We support organisations to design programmes that take these intersections into account.

There is no one-size-fits-all intervention to support meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities. Through participatory approaches and action learning using the principles of human-centred design, we support solutions that fit the local and organisation-specific context.

## **Our disability inclusion advisory offer**

**At Light for the World, we offer the following disability inclusion advisory services, tailored to specific organisational needs and contexts:**

### **1. Comprehensive disability inclusion advice**

- ▶ We offer Disability Inclusion Advisory services across the African continent, through a pool of certified Disability Inclusion Facilitators and Advisors.
- ▶ We work with sector experts and thematic Disability Inclusion Advisors who provide deep thematic expertise on disability inclusion in areas such as agriculture, work force development, higher education, vocational training, entrepreneurship and humanitarian action.

### **2. Unique Disability Inclusion Facilitator (DIF) approach**

- ▶ Disability Inclusion Advisors, employed by Light for the World or licensed OPDs and based in countries in Africa, train and mentor DIFs using rigorous quality standards and based on the specific needs of our partners.

- Certified DIFs, who regularly participate in refresher trainings and peer learning, work directly with partner organisations to provide disability awareness training, accessibility assessments, inclusion tips and other tailored inclusion services.

### 3. Co-creation and solution building

- Our team of advisors and experts applies human-centred design to develop inclusive solutions that place people with disabilities at the centre. We focus on underrepresented groups and individuals with higher support needs, addressing barriers linked to intersecting identities.

#### 4. Upholding dignity through inclusive safeguarding

- ▶ As organisations begin their disability inclusion journey, adopting and implementing safeguarding strategies to address the layered vulnerabilities is essential. We support organisations in developing inclusive safeguarding training, strategies and reporting mechanisms that are accessible to all, adhering to the principle of 'do no harm'.

## 5. Best-practice communities

- ▶ Working with diverse organisations in Africa, we are in the unique position to convene development and humanitarian actors to share and learn.
- ▶ We initiate thematic learning communities and communities of practice on the 'how-to' of disability inclusion. These learning communities are a space to disseminate the further tailored resources, tools and knowledge products that are produced as part of our partnerships.

## Co-creation through human-centred design processes

**Developed by Light for the World with support from the Mastercard Foundation, the Disability Awareness Game aims at creating awareness on the barriers that students with disabilities face during different stages of their university experience. The game enables the player to empathise, as it uses a human-centred approach, but also co-create solutions to the barriers. In the game, players reflect on their roles in creating an enabling environment for people with disabilities in higher education.**



## Acknowledgements

Light for the World was founded, and is supported by our trusted donors and partners, to serve people with eye conditions and disabilities, so that everyone can fully exercise their universal human rights. We would like to thank all Light for the World colleagues, leadership and Board Members, past and present, and thank Anneke Maarse as lead for this issue paper.



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