CONNECTIONS

Building partnerships for disability rights

An overview of results from the first UNPRPD Funding Round
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CONNECTION Noun con·ne·c·tion \ˌkə-ˈnek-shən\  
1 the act of connecting two or more things or the state of being connected.  
2 a situation in which two or more things have the same origin, goal, nature, etc.  
3 a person connected with another.
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Philip Michael Wood assisted with the writing of the summaries and “in focus” stories in the publication, while Dulcie Leimbach provided copy-editing support. Paolo Ciampagna and Elena Bonanomi of LS graphic design oversaw the design elements of the report and the development of the infographics.

Our gratitude goes to the many colleagues and counterparts in UNPRPD project countries – too many to mention here – who gave generously of their time to help us document the work carried out under the first UNPRPD Funding Round and the many results achieved. This publication would not have been possible without them.

Sincere thanks are due to Catalina Devandas Aguilar, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes, Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Maryanne Diamond, Chair, International Disability Alliance for kindly accepting to contribute messages to the publication.

Thanks are also due to Prof. Malcolm MacLachlan, Trinity College Dublin and Dr. Hasheem Mannan, University College Dublin, facilitators of the “KnowUNPRPD” programme, for graciously accepting to write the concluding section of the report.
Disability is multidimensional and cuts across all domains of life. As such, it cannot be addressed as a stand-alone sectoral issue. Recognizing the increasing need for collaboration and synchronized action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a number of UN entities came together in 2011 to form the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD). UNDP was among the first organizations involved in setting up the UNPRPD, and it gladly accepted the role of hosting the Partnership's Technical Secretariat that is now based in the Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster of UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.

A major milestone of the Partnership was the launch of the first UNPRPD funding round in 2012, which resulted in the selection of 11 joint UN programmes in five regions. This Report aims to capture the main achievements of this first set of projects. It provides a summary of results for each project and, through several case profiles, zooms in on instances of structural transformation that have significantly advanced disability rights in programme countries.

The Report highlights the positive outcomes that can result from enhanced collaboration among UN entities at the country and regional level, and from building coalitions with and among organizations of persons with disabilities as well as with government and civil society partners. Aptly titled “Connections”, the report documents pioneering efforts, systemic interventions, and innovative strategies that harness the power of connectedness to help transform the lives of persons with disabilities. It also demonstrates the synergy between the UN’s normative standards and operational work, while showcasing the UNPRPD's catalytic impact in promoting disability mainstreaming in the work of the UN system.

As the international community assumes the task of realizing the Agenda 2030 and its strong commitment to building peaceful and inclusive societies and to reducing inequalities, mechanisms such as the UNPRPD provide effective pathways to ensure that no one is left behind.

UNDP is honored to serve as the home of the UNPRPD Technical Secretariat. As host of the Secretariat and on behalf of the nine UN organizations participating in the UNPRPD, I would like to express our deep appreciation to all who have accompanied us on this journey.

We thank the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium for their leadership and support to the Partnership. We are also grateful to the Member States that contributed to the Partnership through the UNPRPD Multi-Partner Trust Fund, and to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office for the effective administration of the UNPRPD Fund. Most of all, we are grateful to the government and civil society partners, as well as the many persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, who have worked with us in the programme countries to achieve the results that are presented in this Report.

Much remains to be done to make the CRPD a reality for all persons with disabilities around the world. However, as this Report demonstrates, when we work closely together, progress and results are guaranteed.

Patrick Keuleers
Director and Chief of Profession,
Governance and Peacebuilding,
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support,
United Nations Development Programme
“With the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) ten years ago, a milestone was set to further advance towards the universal recognition of all human rights. The UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) was established to foster collaboration between the United Nations, States and representative organizations of persons with disabilities to prompt change at the country level. On the one hand, the UNPRPD has been instrumental in leveraging the convening power of the UN to encourage States to recognize the rights of persons with disabilities in their countries; on the other hand, it promotes collaboration within UN Country Teams to strengthen internal synergy and coherence, in order to have a stronger ‘One UN’ voice to promote the disability rights agenda at the country level.

As Special Rapporteur I have witnessed the effectiveness of the UNPRPD projects and the Partnership’s enormous potential to positively transform the lives of persons with disabilities by supporting capacity building of the UN system on the CRPD and by promoting the exchange of good practices and lessons learned among different projects. In doing this, the Partnership is also supporting the inclusion of disability rights as a cross-cutting consideration of all UN work, thus creating more sustainable and long-term actions in order to achieve CRPD implementation.

Moving forward, the UNPRPD can provide key guidance on the intersections between the CRPD and the SDGs to make sure persons with disabilities are not left behind.

I encourage States to increase their support to this important initiative.”
Introduction
A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO ADVANCE DISABILITY RIGHTS

The United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) is a unique collaborative effort that brings together UN entities, governments, organizations of persons with disabilities and the broader civil society. The UNPRPD supports the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by facilitating policy dialogue, coalition-building and capacity development at the country, regional and global levels. In doing so, it leverages the comparative advantage of multiple stakeholders to further the vision of a ‘society for all’ in the 21st century.

The UN entities participating in the UNPRPD are the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the World Health Organization (WHO). UNDP serves as the home of the Partnership’s Technical Secretariat.

The UNPRPD also works closely with multiple civil society organizations. These include the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC).

The UNPRPD Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UNPRPD Fund) was formally established in June 2011 and was officially launched in December of the same year as a mechanism to mobilize resources for the Partnership. The UNPRPD Fund is administered by the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office and builds on the experience developed by the MPTF Office in managing over 60 Multi-Partner Trust Funds and 40 joint programmes.

Since its inception, the UNPRPD Fund has benefited from the generous contributions of the following countries: Australia, Cyprus, Finland, Israel, Mexico, Norway, Spain and Sweden. Details of the contributions received by the Fund are available at the UNPRPD page of the MPTF Gateway: http://mptf.undp.org.

1. As per the regional grouping system used by the UN Development Group
THE FIRST UNPRPD FUNDING ROUND

More than 60 UN Country Teams submitted expressions of interest in response to the announcement of the first UNPRPD Funding Round (UNPRPD R1) in May 2012. At the end of a rigorous assessment process involving all UNPRPD constituencies — i.e. participating UN organizations, donors, representative organizations of persons with disabilities and broader civil society — 10 country-level joint UN programmes and one regional initiative were selected for funding. These programmes were based in Costa Rica, Indonesia, Moldova, Mozambique, Palestine, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Ukraine and Viet Nam as well as the Pacific region. Each joint programme brought together a variable number of participating UN organizations to work in an integrated fashion on a range of issues related to CRPD implementation. In most of the countries, project implementation started in earnest in January 2013. However, Palestine, Tunisia, South Africa and Viet Nam received funding only in the second quarter of 2013 – when additional resources became available – and started implementation in the second half of the year.

Table 1. First Round of UNPRPD countries by Region

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFRICA</th>
<th>ARAB STATES</th>
<th>ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</th>
<th>EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA</th>
<th>LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Pacific Islands</td>
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'Ngaji'. ©SAPDA/Indonesia
Figure 1. First Round of UNPRPD countries by Region
OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

The final project documents that were approved under the first UNPRPD Funding Round identified a total of 38 outcome-level objectives. However, at the end of the project implementation phase, 53 individual instances of outcome-level transformation (of varying importance and intensity) were recorded. This amounts to more than four instances of outcome-level transformation, on average, per project. Several of these outcome-level results, although not all, were reviewed by an independent value for money assessment of the UNPRPD released at the beginning of 2015. The assessment found that:

- The outputs delivered by the UNPRPD led to a high level of outcomes (although further efforts would be required to ensure the full sustainability of these outcomes); and

- A high level of equity was achieved by the UNPRPD in the delivery of its outcomes with clear potential for sustainability.

BOX 1. DEFINITION OF OUTCOME

In keeping with the harmonized result-based management terminology adopted by the UN Development Group, outcome is defined for the purposes of the UNPRPD work as follows: “The intended or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs, usually requiring the collective effort of partners. Outcomes represent changes in development conditions which occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impact.”

Under UNPRPD R1, UN Country Teams were encouraged to develop initiatives addressing one or more of the following thematic priorities (ref. UNPRPD Strategic and Operational Framework 2012, Section 2.2).

2. “Value for Money Assessment of the UNPRPD,” commissioned by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and available at http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/RPD00
Table 2. UNPRPD thematic priorities under R1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling factor</th>
<th>Thematic priority</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enabling legislation and policy frameworks</td>
<td>A. Promote the ratification of the CRPD, whenever relevant, and the development (or reform) of legislation and policies (disability-specific and not) as well as strategies and action plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering cultural norms</td>
<td>B. Reverse stigma, prejudices and negative stereotypes, while promoting supportive and empowering attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable and inclusive institutions</td>
<td>C. Strengthen national disability architecture by developing the capacity of national disability authorities as well as that of organizations of persons with disabilities, and by enhancing dialogue between the representative organizations of persons with disabilities and key actors in the area of disability rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to services (mainstream and targeted)</td>
<td>D. Enhance access to mainstream as well as targeted services by improving their design and delivery modalities, and by promoting measures that will increase availability and affordability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to justice</td>
<td>E. Increase access to justice for persons with disabilities and the capacity of the justice sector to appropriately respond to the specific circumstances of persons with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of accessibility standards</td>
<td>F. Promote the application of accessibility standards to products, environments and processes, including non disability-specific interventions undertaken by development partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to rehabilitation, habilitation including assistive technology</td>
<td>G. Improve access to rehabilitation and habilitation – including assistive technology – by strengthening the availability and affordability of services and improving the design of assistive technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate data and evidence</td>
<td>H. Improve disability-specific data and support research on different aspects of disability as well as the codification of evidence</td>
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Figure 2 shows the distribution of UNPRPD R1 objectives and results across the UNPRPD thematic priorities.

A majority of the intended outcome-level results focused on access to services (32 percent), followed by enabling legislation (24 percent), capable and inclusive institutions (13 percent), data and evidence (13 percent), empowering attitudes (8 percent), access to justice (5 percent) and accessibility standards (5 percent). On the other hand, among the results achieved, 25 percent were focused on access to services, 24 percent on enabling legislation, 24 percent on capable, inclusive institutions, 4 percent on empowering attitudes, 13 percent on data and evidence, 8 percent on accessibility standards, and 2 percent on access to justice.
Based on these figures, there appears to be a substantial alignment between objectives and results achieved by the UNRPD R1. The only partial exceptions are “capable and inclusive institutions” (overrepresented among the results in comparison to the objectives) and “access to services” (underrepresented among the results). There are several possible explanations for the observed discrepancies. They may be due to sequencing issues: it is often necessary to reform institutions before access to services can be enhanced. Or they may reflect differing time lags: institutional architecture can be modified in a relatively short period of time, whereas promoting greater access to services is typically a long, complex and expensive process. It is expected that further evaluative analysis of the UNPRPD work will help shed greater light on these issues.
Figure 2. Objectives and results of the UNPRPD R1

**OBJECTIVES vs RESULTS**

**OBJECTIVES**

- Enabling legislation: 32%
- Empowering attitudes: 13%
- Accessible, inclusive institutions: 13%
- Access to services: 24%
- Access to justice: 8%
- Accessibility standards: 25%
- Data and evidence: 4%

**RESULTS**

- Enabling legislation: 24%
- Empowering attitudes: 13%
- Accessible, inclusive institutions: 25%
- Access to services: 24%
- Access to justice: 4%
- Accessibility standards: 2%
The projects funded under the UNPRPD R1 were implemented over a period of 2-3 years. While this timeframe is undoubtedly too short for the achievement of extensive impact-level results, several projects were successful in triggering highly structural transformations which are likely to have a significant positive effect on the conditions of life of persons with disabilities in future. Some illustrative examples are provided in Box 2.

**BOX 2. EXAMPLES OF STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION ACHIEVED UNDER UNPRPD R1**

- **Advancing rights of persons with mental and intellectual disabilities in Moldova.**
  Broad systemic changes affecting the circumstances of persons with intellectual disabilities were initiated in Moldova, including the introduction of justice oversight of existing psychiatric institutions, the adoption of an adult deinstitutionalization strategy and a reform of the legal guardianship system.

- **Comprehensive policy reform in South Africa**
  CRPD compliance of the national disability policy architecture was significantly strengthened in South Africa with the adoption of a White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the introduction of a comprehensive disability rights monitoring system and the development of a framework for disability-sensitive budgeting.

- **Political commitment in Tunisia**
  Formal political commitment to the realization of disability rights was secured in Tunisia at the highest level of political leadership and across the entire political spectrum through the development and adoption of the Tunisian National Charter for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- **Partnership with municipalities in Indonesia**
  A Network of Inclusive Cities was established in Indonesia, bringing together municipalities committed to the promotion of disability rights. As a result, several policy changes were triggered at the local level as well as significantly closer collaboration between municipal administrations and persons with disabilities.

- **Partnership with private sector in Costa Rica**
  The membership of the Network of Inclusive Businesses in Costa Rica was more than doubled, and its capacity taken to a considerably higher level. This in turn led to a much broader and deeper private sector commitment to the realization of disability rights, supported by high level political institutions.
Nguyen Thi Thanh Hieu works as a tailor at Watabe Wedding, Vietnam, Bien Hoa city, Dong Nai province. © ILO/Viet Nam/ Nguyen A
The overall budget allocation for UNPRPD R1 was slightly above 3.8 million USD. However, projects were often successful in obtaining additional resources to complement UNPRPD funding. The overall budget cost-sharing secured by Round 1 projects was 1.7 million USD (50 percent of the total allocation for the funding round). In addition, the total value of UN staff time devoted to UNPRPD country level work but not paid by Round 1 project budgets is estimated at 0.9 million USD. This brings the overall value of resources dedicated to UNPRPD R1 projects to 6.4 million.

As a result of the structural focus of UNPRPD interventions and thanks to effective resource mobilization, partnership-building and scaling-up strategies, several UNPRPD R1 projects were successful in achieving remarkable scale with relatively limited funding. Some illustrative examples are provided in Figure 4.
Figure 4. Achieving scale with limited resources: the UNPRPD R1 in numbers

3.5 million → People reached by awareness-raising on universal design in Ukraine

7.4 million → Total population covered by the Network of Inclusive Cities in Indonesia

20,000 → The total workforce represented by the Network of Inclusive Businesses in Costa Rica

40% → Reduction in the number of beds in large psychiatric institutions in Moldova

4,500 → Children with disabilities enrolled in mainstream schools in Moldova in 2014

4,887 → Persons that benefited from UNPRPD supported legal aid in Viet Nam

16,043 → Children screened for speech and hearing difficulties in Gaza
This report provides a summary of results for each project, along with an accompanying infographic, as well as “in focus” stories that dive deeper into individual instances of outcome-level transformation triggered by UNPRPD activities. The information provided is based on periodic progress reports submitted by R1 projects, interviews with project staff and partners, and the interactions that took place in the framework of the “KnowUNPRPD” programme, the knowledge-management programme of the UNPRPD.

BOX 3. THE KNOW UNPRPD PROGRAMME

A knowledge management and quality assurance programme for UNPRPD country-level projects – “KnowUNPRPD” – was launched in 2013 in collaboration with Trinity College Dublin and with financial support from the Irish Government. Undertaken by the Centre for Global Health and facilitated by Prof. Malcolm MacLachlan, Trinity College Dublin and Dr. Hasheem Mannan, University College Dublin, “KnowUNPRPD” has supported three face-to-face sessions for representatives of UNPRPD R1 projects as well as ongoing assistance to project staff.

The “KnowUNPRPD” programme has three overall objectives: to strengthen relevant technical competencies of staff involved in the implementation of UNPRPD-funded joint UN programmes; to foster exchange of experiences among projects; and to document lessons learned in the context of work carried out by the Partnership at the country level.

A range of modalities was used by “KnowUNPRPD” to achieve these objectives, including intensive training workshops, learning circles and coaching. In addition, a help-desk service was provided for applicants to the second UNPRPD funding round, which made available technical assistance based on learning from Round 1. These components complemented other knowledge-sharing activities managed by the UNPRPD Technical Secretariat, such as a portal for programme documentation, protocols and publications of relevance.

The “KnowUNPRPD” programme has helped country projects recognize areas where they have particular strengths and where they need further support. In addition, where possible, it has encouraged country-to-country initiatives to support and exchange knowledge and practice. The programme has also stimulated some unanticipated spin-offs, such as the development of EquiPP, a tool for assessing and promoting equity and social inclusion in policy processes. This tool was developed through learning from the experience of “KnowUNPRPD” participants and is now being used in a separate project to promote social inclusion in South-East Asia as part of UNESCO’s Management of Social Transformation (MOST) programme.
MESSAGE

Maryanne Diamond,
Chair, International Disability Alliance

“From its inception, the UNPRPD’s inclusion of organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs), and their allies, in both its policy board and management committee, has been greatly and widely welcomed. By providing equal space and meaningful participation, the Partnership upholds our movement’s foundational principle of ‘nothing about us, without this.’ As the largest alliance of organizations of persons with disabilities in the world, with over 1,100 affiliated DPOs, IDA clearly recognizes the importance and the role that the UNPRPD has and will have in the future.

We particularly welcome and look forward to further building on our collaboration with the UNPRPD in a number of areas, including as a platform for meaningful engagement of national DPOs with UN Country Teams, shared capacity-building initiatives and expanding regional-level coordination. There remains significant gaps in resources for CRPD implementation and for the inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We believe there is a need for the UN to lead in bridging this gap by developing these partnerships with DPOs. Therefore, we support an ambitious path for the UNPRPD, to deepen and expand its partnerships, resources and operational capacity.”
Summaries
Costa Rica

UN Support to the National Plan for Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

UN organizations: ILO, UNDP
Budget: US$ 350,000
Duration: Oct 2012-Oct 2014
“Thanks to the support provided by the UNPRPD, Costa Rica has been able to develop and operationalize a National Plan for the Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. This kind of inter-institutional coordination with support from international cooperation is what is needed to find medium-term effective solutions in the context of the post-2015 agenda.”

Roberto Gallardo  
Minister of Planning, Costa Rica (2011-2014)
In early 2012 — two years after the ratification of the CRPD — the government of Costa Rica unveiled a comprehensive strategy to advance the right to work of persons with disabilities. The strategy, based on CRPD Article 27, focused on, among other things, the right to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and the right to a work environment that is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. In late 2012, the UNPRPD launched the project **UN Support to the National Plan for Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**. Designed to assist the government’s efforts to promote a more open and inclusive world of work, the project was structured around five strategic areas: improving institutional coordination and governance; enhancing the employability profile of Costa Ricans with disabilities; expanding the demand for workers with disabilities; improving job facilitation services; and promoting entrepreneurship among persons with disabilities.
**RESULTS**

**INTERAGENCY COORDINATION ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES INSTITUTIONALIZED**

The UNPRPD project in Costa Rica was successful in facilitating the development of an inter-agency coordination protocol among the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the National Training Institute and the Ministry of Public Education on the labour inclusion of persons with disabilities. The protocol — which includes a commitment statement signed by the heads of the relevant ministries and endorsed by the President of Republic — aims to enable greater access to inclusive education and training as well as a smoother transition to work for persons with disabilities throughout the country. Further to the signing of the protocol, the participating institutions carried out a review of their internal procedures and established a set of mechanisms for referral and counter-referral. These changes will make it easier for the government to provide an integrated package of support that meets Costa Rica’s obligations under Articles 24 and 27 of the CRPD.

**DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL-LEVEL JOB INTERMEDIATION MODEL**

Five municipal-level Local Job Placement Networks for Persons with Disabilities were set up with project support between 2014 and 2015. These pilots facilitated the employment of more than 300 persons over a two-year period but also provided the necessary learning for the development of a low-cost, municipal-level job intermediation model. Municipalities across Costa Rica will now be able to take this model, adapt it to their circumstances and incorporate it in the Local Equal Opportunities Plans required by Law 882 on the establishment of Municipal Committees on Disability. A toolkit for the creation of Local Job Placement Networks — developed by the project in collaboration with the National University of Costa Rica — was presented in May 2015 with the participation of the Vice-President of Costa Rica, Ana Helena Chacón. Further to the presentation, a number of local authorities have expressed interest in putting in place their own job placement networks for persons with disabilities. A second phase of the UNPRPD project will enable the UN system in Costa Rica to assist these municipalities and others that may come forward in the future.

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**ESTABLISHMENT OF 5 MUNICIPAL-LEVEL “LOCAL JOB PLACEMENT NETWORKS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES”**

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**“LOCAL JOB PLACEMENT NETWORKS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES” FACILITATED THE EMPLOYMENT OF MORE THAN 300 PERSONS OVER A TWO YEAR PERIOD**
**Boosting Employability and Entrepreneurship of Persons with Disabilities**

*Empléate Inclusivo* is a programme that assists persons with disabilities who are seeking employment through job counseling services, training options and job placement support. The UNPRPD project contributed to the conceptualization, design and operationalization of the *Empléate Inclusivo* programme, which has since been incorporated into the government’s National Employment and Production Strategy and its 2015-2018 National Development Plan.

Through its support to training activities carried out by *Empléate Inclusivo*, the Ministry of Public Education and the National Training Institute, the UNPRPD project contributed to strengthening the employability profile of 1,653 young people with disabilities. Additionally, around 60 persons with mental and intellectual disabilities were supported in starting a business or forming cooperatives. While limited in scope, this experience demonstrated that entrepreneurship development methodologies, such as ILO’s CODE, can be successfully applied to persons with disabilities provided that appropriate reasonable accommodation arrangements are put in place.

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**THE UNPRPD PROJECT CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONCEPTUALIZATION, DESIGN AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE EMLÉATE INCLUSIVO PROGRAMME**

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**Empléate Inclusivo Programme**

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**60**

Persons with mental and intellectual disabilities supported in starting a business or forming cooperatives

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**1,653**

Young people with disabilities with a strengthened employability profile thanks to UNPRPD project
PROMOTING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE BUSINESS SECTOR

The UNPRPD collaborated with the National Business Association of Costa Rica to expand and consolidate the Costa Rican Network of Inclusive Businesses, an alliance of companies committed to promoting employment for persons with disabilities as well as accessibility in the design of products and services. As a result of project support, the Network membership increased more than twofold over three years, from 28 to 66 companies, and today represents a total workforce of approximately 20,000 employees. Over two years, more than 400 representatives of Network companies received training on disability inclusion with project support. In addition, a nine-module web-based toolkit was developed on different aspects of inclusion in the workplace. Tailored training on the application of the toolkit is now provided to companies by the Network on a full cost recovery basis. From late 2012 to 2015, more than 500 persons with disabilities were hired in administrative, operational and technical positions at Network member companies (or approximately 2.5 percent of the total workforce covered by the Network).

The prize ‘Costa Rica Incluye,’ awarded to companies that have achieved outstanding results in incorporating inclusive business practices, was initiated by the project to raise the profile of the Network. From 2014, the award has been hosted by the Office of the Second Vice-President of Costa Rica.

In 2015, Costa Rica’s National Plan for Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities was selected for recognition by the Zero Project as an ‘Innovative policy 2016.’ The 12 prize-winners have been selected from among 333 nominations of innovative policies submitted by almost 100 countries worldwide.

See also: IN FOCUS - My first job
“This is my first job!” Jose says with a smile. “I feel very happy because they have accepted me as I am.” Before becoming a loan officer at BAC Credomatic, Jose had been searching for work for many years, but no company had been willing to give him an opportunity because of his disability: “My family has always been supportive, but life has not been shiny all the time. A few years ago, I had to leave my university studies because I did not have enough money to cover the expenses.”

At some point, however, things started to move in a different direction for Jose: “One day I applied for a job in a company that opened its doors to many unemployed persons with disabilities like me. Since that day, my life has changed a lot. Thanks to this opportunity, I was able to finalize my university degree in Accounting and now enjoy sufficient economic stability to help my mother with household expenses.”

BAC Credomatic — Jose’s current employer — is one of 66 companies that have joined the Network of Inclusive Businesses, an initiative launched by the Costa Rican Association of Businesses for Development (Asociación Empresarial para el Desarrollo, or AED) to harness the power of business to promote disability rights. These companies represent an impressive array of industries — spanning the banking, finance, tourism, trade and technology sectors, among others — and a total workforce of approximately 20,000 people.

The UNPRPD project, ‘UN Support to the National Plan for Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities’ implemented in Costa Rica between 2012 and 2015, provided extensive support to the Network of Inclusive Businesses as explained by Project Coordinator, Madai Linkimer: “Through intense outreach we helped the Network more than double its membership. We also worked with companies’ executives, staff and human resource managers to improve their understanding of what it means to be an inclusive business. We raised awareness of how persons with disabilities, when provided with appropriate accommodation, can be strong assets for companies. And now we are starting to see the results of this work.”

In little over two years, approximately 500 persons with disabilities have been hired by Network members and have now been fully integrated in a variety of positions and industries across all of Costa Rica.

IN FOCUS
My first job

Approximately 500 persons with disabilities have been hired by Network members and have now been fully integrated in a variety of positions and industries across all of Costa Rica.

In little over two years, approximately 500 persons with disabilities have been hired by Network members and have now been fully integrated in a variety of positions and industries across the country. And more will follow as the membership of the Network expands. At the same time, companies’ capacity to accommodate persons with disabilities has significantly increased, as became evident during the award ceremony of the prize ‘Costa Rica Incluye,’ held under the auspices of the Second Vice-President in December 2015 to recognize disability-inclusive companies.
The Association of Businesses for Development promotes private-public partnerships combining efforts from the business sector, government and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve inclusion and social cohesion. Through the Network of Inclusive Businesses we offered practical and technical guidance, training, best practice exchange and partnership creation services to help Costa Rica’s productive sector successfully incorporate persons with disabilities in the workforce," says Silvia Lara, Executive Director of AED, adding: "Being part of the UNPRPD-supported National Plan for Labour Inclusion has definitely helped the Association strengthen the Network of Inclusive Businesses."

In the framework of its collaboration with the Association of Businesses for Development, the UNPRPD supported the creation of a toolkit on how to become an inclusive business. The toolkit, which is available in both printed and web-based form, includes nine modules covering such topics as “Disability inclusion as part of a business strategy,” “Inclusive recruitment, selection and induction” and “Reasonable accommodation.” Several companies have been willing to pay a fee for custom training on the application of the toolkit — a fact that clearly illustrates businesses’ interest in becoming more disability-friendly employers. And business associations in other countries have already expressed an interest in adapting the toolkit to their contexts.

“This is just one example of how we can work with companies to ensure that the private sector plays its role in realizing a truly inclusive society,” says Alice Harding Shackelford, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Costa Rica. “As the project moves into its second phase, we will continue to build on and expand these good practices.”

“This work is very important” explains, Ms. Shackelford, “to ensure that all people in Costa Rica have an opportunity to fully realize their potential, regardless of their disability status.” Jose could not agree more: “Now I feel very useful. I realize that I can manage many administrative tasks and can take on additional responsibilities because I have acquired new knowledge in the banking area. Now I see a future that before I could only have imagined. I see myself growing into new positions in the company, having new opportunities, and learning more every day.”
Promoting the rights of people with disabilities in Indonesia

UN organizations: ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO
Budget: US$ 327,474
Duration: Oct 2012-Mar 2015
“Banjarmasin is the capital city of South Kalimantan, which is located at the southern part of the biggest island in Indonesia, Borneo. Ten to fifteen percent of our citizens are people with disability. By percentage it looks small, but with a total population of 650,000, the number of people with a disability exceeds 6,500. Like other city dwellers, they have the right to education, employment, access to public facilities and, more importantly, to be fully recognized as citizens of Banjarmasin. However, there are many cases where people with a disability are hidden in the house, prevented from attending school, because their parents are ashamed of them. There is sometimes a belief that persons with disability are considered a curse from God. This belief has to be changed and their rights have to be fulfilled. As a Mayor, I am committed to this issue and I am grateful that the UNPRPD and Banjarmasin could partner in this. Since the intervention, Banjarmasin has established an action plan on disability rights, developed a law to protect the rights of persons with disability, improve access in public space and government buildings and provide employment. Our work is far from finished, therefore, I hope this partnership can be continued.”

Mr. H. Muhidin
Mayor of Banjarmasin
BACKGROUND

Following the ratification of the CRPD in 2011, the necessity was identified by multiple Indonesian stakeholders to develop a new disability policy and put in place a more articulated institutional architecture to address the persistent discrimination faced by persons with disabilities throughout the country. The need was also felt for improved data collection mechanisms and for a more coordinated disability rights movement with stronger capacity to engage in policy dialogue. Given this context, a UNPRPD joint programme entitled Promoting the Rights of People with Disabilities in Indonesia was launched in October 2012 with the following objectives: to enhance the capacity of disability focal point institutions at different levels of government; to strengthen the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities and improve their collaboration with public authorities; and to assist with the development of more effective systems for disability data collection.
PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL DISABILITY LAW

The UNPRPD project partners took a number of steps to significantly expand the avenues available to organizations of persons with disabilities to engage in the drafting of a new disability law in Indonesia. These included the preparation of a participatory study assessing the CRPD compliance of policies related to the rights of persons with disabilities and the organization of a number of multi-stakeholder exchanges such as a National Dialogue on Disability Rights, held in June 2013, with the participation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and other government actors, Indonesian organizations of persons with disabilities and the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the UN Commission on Social Development. Further to a meeting organized by the project with the participation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minister of Social Affairs and other senior Members of Parliament and government, for the first time in Indonesian history representatives of persons with disabilities were invited to an official hearing with the Parliament (Commission VII, Religion, social affairs, and empowerment of women). On 18 April 2016, a new disability policy was enacted by Parliament with Law No. 8/2016, which represents a marked shift towards a rights-based approach to disability. Phase 2 of the UNPRPD project will continue to engage with organizations of persons with disabilities and government counterparts around the development of relevant application decrees.
STRENGTHENED CAPACITY OF ORGANIZATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

At the national level, the UNPRPD project strengthened the capacity of the Union of People with Disability of Indonesia (PPDI) to serve as the umbrella organization for Indonesian organizations of persons with disabilities by supporting PPDI and its constituent members with a strategic planning exercise that resulted in the adoption of an Action Plan for Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in Indonesia.

Capacity-development efforts were also carried out at the regional and local level. More than 190 representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities were reached in the provinces of East Java, East Nusa Tenggara and West Java through a series of workshops covering different aspects of the CRPD as well as general organizational management subjects such as finance, communication, negotiation and presentation skills. Further, the UNPRPD project joined hands with the Kampung Halaman Foundation and other partners to develop two video diaries — ‘Job (un)fair’ and ‘Where is our access?’ — that describe the challenges faced by people with disabilities in relation to employment and accessibility in Jakarta. The videos were launched in four large cities (Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta and Semarang) in collaboration with Studio XXI and Smart FM radio.
Collaboration between the UNPRPD and the Central Statistics Bureau (BPS) contributed to strengthening disability data-collection practices through the development of a set of questions on disability (based on the Washington Group set of questions) and the finalization of the related data collection methodology. The questions — which were incorporated in the 2015 Intercensal Population Survey and will be included in the next SUSENAS (National Socio Economic Survey) — will advance the ability of the Ministry in charge of Social Affairs and the State institution in charge of Statistics to meet data collection obligations established under the recently adopted Law No. 8/2016 on Persons with Disabilities (Article 117). The process of developing the data-collection module benefited from a series of multi-stakeholder workshops in which representatives of persons with disabilities could share first hand experiences on the issues confronting persons with disabilities due to data deficiencies. These workshops helped build bridges between persons with disabilities and BPS representatives, establishing working relations which will be valuable in the context of future data collection and analysis efforts.

The UNPRPD project in Indonesia facilitated the establishment of the Network of Inclusive Cities, an innovative partnership of municipalities committed to the full realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Network, which comprises seven cities representing a total population of 7.4 million, provides a platform for the exchange of good practices and effective policy solutions around different aspects of inclusion. Five high-level meetings convened over the course of the project by Network members have been attended by more than 650 delegates from 38 Indonesian municipalities and representatives of 40 organizations of persons with disabilities. Significant policy changes triggered by Network activities have already been observed — within and beyond Network member cities — in areas such as accessibility of public spaces, inclusive service delivery and budget allocation.

See also: IN FOCUS - Building “cities for all” in Indonesia
In 2014, the city of Banjarmasin took a number of steps to improve the conditions of life of persons with disabilities. These included enacting a local law on disability rights (Peraturan Daerah No. 9) and adopting a biannual Disability Action Plan. The city also concluded a formal agreement with the municipal legal aid office regarding the provision of legal aid to persons with disabilities.

“There are many cases where people with disabilities are hidden in their houses and prevented from attending school because their parents are ashamed of them, but this has to change” says Banjarmasin Mayor, Mr Muhidin, who hopes that the new regulations introduced by his administration will significantly contribute to tackling the discrimination faced by the city’s 6,500 persons with disabilities.

The expansion of measures to address the rights of persons with disabilities in Banjarmasin began after Indonesia’s first High Level Meeting of Inclusive Mayors held in April 2013 in Yogyakarta, when Banjarmasin’s city officials learned about Yogyakarta’s successes in promoting disability inclusion. Together with the efforts of several other municipalities, these initiatives illustrate the role played by the Network of Inclusive Cities in stimulating the exchange of good practices in the area of disability rights.

The Network of Mayors of Inclusive Cities is a coalition of Indonesian municipalities comprising Ambon, Banda Aceh, Banjarmasin, Denpasar, Metro, Mojokerto and Yogyakarta. Established in 2013 with support from the UNPRPD, the Network encourages intermunicipal cooperation — as well as cooperation between municipal governments and disability communities — in the enactment of evidence-based policies that promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

After the Network’s first gathering in Yogyakarta, four other high-level meetings have taken place in the network cities of Banda Aceh, Banjarmasin, Denpasar and Ambon, bringing together more 650 representatives from 38 municipalities and as many as 40 organizations of persons with disabilities. These meetings, which included a range of capacity-building events, have been transformative. Municipalities across Indonesia, with a limited track record of engagement in this area, are now working together to realize the ideal of a “city for all.”

Explains Mr. Hadi Muchtar, Head of Social Affairs, Manpower, and Transmigration of Yogyakarta: “After participating in the training on the CRPD held in Banda Aceh in 2013, I collaborated with other local government offices, the Advocacy Centre for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities (SAPDA), and other organizations of persons with disabilities to design a set of policies to transform Yogyakarta into an inclusive city. Now, we continue to update our data on people with disabilities and we also continue to promote accessibility of public services, public spaces and buildings through regulatory measures.”
The policy effects of the collaboration fostered by the Network are already starting to emerge. With Mayoral Regulation No. 8/2014 Yogyakarta established a Committee for the Protection of the Rights of People with Disabilities within the Regional Planning Bureau. The City of Banda Aceh explicitly incorporated CRPD principles into municipal policy with Qanun Aceh No. 11/2013 on Social Welfare, while Bali introduced Provincial Regulation No. 9/2015 on the Protection and the Fulfilment of the Rights of People with Disability.

In Mojokerto, a draft policy on a 2 percent workforce quota for people with disabilities has been developed and is being considered for approval. Ambon worked with companies to integrate the creation of inclusive workplaces into their Corporate Social Responsibility programme, while in the city of Metro, Mayoral Regulation no. 18, 2014 requires the admission of students with disabilities in regular schools.

In addition, as a result of the project, the involvement of persons with disabilities in the municipal planning and budgeting process has increased substantially. Recalls, Ms. Masni from the South Kalimantan Association of Women with Disabilities: “Since receiving the training on the CRPD held in Banjarmasin on 2013, as Head of the South Kalimantan Association of Women with Disabilities, I had an unprecedented opportunity to collaborate with the Banjarmasin City Government in creating and implementing policies related to the rights of persons with disabilities. I am happy to say that this collaboration is still ongoing today and that Banjarmasin is on the right track towards becoming an inclusive city.”

A second phase of the UNPRPD project will facilitate the expansion of the Network as well as its consolidation with the establishment of a permanent secretariat. An inclusive policy indicator tool and a recognition scheme will also be instituted as motivational elements and drivers of accountability. “Given the vast powers attributed to local administrations in Indonesia’s federal system,” notes Irakli Khodeli, the UNESCO Programme Specialist who oversees the project, “the Network of Inclusive Cities holds significant potential to trigger structural transformation. The UNPRPD participating organizations in Indonesia remain committed to working with current and future member cities to transform this potential into reality.”
Moldova

Paradigm Shift: Strategic Action Supporting CRPD Implementation

UN organizations: OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO
Budget: US$ 349,890
Duration: Oct 2012-Dec 2014
“The primary function of the Constitutional Court is to ensure that the international human rights treaties and the national law are converging, which also implies that the constitutional interpretation of the rights of persons with disabilities shall be done in conformity with the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The UNPRPD project has created the necessary premises for the Constitutional Court to deliver a decision on 13 November 2014, which states that Article 12 of the Convention takes precedence over the national law and recognizes the rights of persons with psychosocial or intellectual impairments to lodge complaints with the Ombudsperson for Psychiatry. Other similar decisions in the case of a conflict between international treaties in the area of fundamental rights and freedoms and the domestic laws on incapacitation shall follow.”

Alexandru Tanase
President of the Constitutional Court of Moldova
Social and attitudinal factors have long combined with an inadequate legal and policy framework to entrench the marginalization of people with mental and intellectual disabilities living in Moldova. Exclusion from mainstream education, incapacitation, institutionalization and long-term deprivation of liberty are just some of the ways in which this process manifested. The UNPRPD programme **Paradigm Shift: Strategic Action Supporting CRPD Implementation** was launched in 2012 to support the government in a comprehensive reform initiative intended to reverse the discrimination experienced by persons with mental and intellectual disabilities. Five themes were identified as priorities in the context of this project: equal recognition before the law; access to justice; the right to independent living in the community; the right to inclusive education; and independent monitoring of the CRPD.
RESULTS

IMPROVED ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR PERSONS IN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS INSTITUTIONS

As part of its work on Articles 13 and 19 of the CRPD, the UNPRPD project supported the creation of the Ombudsperson for Psychiatric Hospitals, an independent complaint mechanism that has significantly enhanced access to justice for Moldovans with mental and intellectual disabilities. Tasked with visiting psychiatric institutions and long-stay mental hospitals to investigate allegations of mistreatment and forced detention, the Ombudsperson received more than 12,000 complaints from 3,665 people over three years. The majority of these complaints were redressed and several were referred to Moldova’s General Prosecutor’s Office, which has since initiated a number of court procedures. In addition, the Ombudsperson’s work raised public awareness and significantly contributed to political support for deinstitutionalization. Originally established with UNPRPD funding, the office of the Ombudsperson was fully taken over by the government in 2014 and, following Ministry of Health decision No. 384 on the Independent Service for Defending the Rights of Persons in Psychiatric Institutions, it is now financed entirely by the state.

See also: IN FOCUS – Unlocking the door to independent living

-40% OF BEDS IN LARGE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS ESTABLISHED IN EACH OF MOLDOVA’S 26 DISTRICTS

ADOPTION OF A DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Advocacy and technical assistance work carried out by the UNPRPD significantly contributed, in December 2013, to the adoption by the government, of a Deinstitutionalization Strategy and Action Plan aimed at reducing institutional care and transitioning to community-based arrangements as the solution of choice for the provision of mental health care. Following this decision, Community Mental Health Centers were established in each of Moldova’s 26 districts over an 18-month period. As a result, the number of beds in large psychiatric hospitals was reduced by 40 percent. Thanks to the groundwork facilitated by the project, further technical and financial assistance has been secured by the Moldovan government, including support from the Swiss and Czech development cooperation agencies, to complete the shift to community-based mental health care.

In addition, the UNPRPD project contributed to the establishment in 2014 of Moldova’s first organization of users and survivors of psychiatry and the subsequent opening of the country’s first user-managed community center and multiple-service provider. From the onset, the organization regularly engaged in monitoring visits to psychiatric hospitals and took many important cases of discrimination to the Equality Council, several of which resulted in positive outcomes.
PROTECTION OF LEGAL CAPACITY FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

In November 2013, a landmark Court of Justice decision upheld the legal rights of an 18-year-old girl in the face of a request for incapacitation on grounds of intellectual disability presented by her parents. Both the judge and the legal aid lawyer involved in the case had participated in trainings on CRPD Article 12 carried out by the UNPRPD. The decision paved the way for the introduction, on an experimental basis, of a supported decision-making model called ‘patronaj,’ which enables persons with mental and intellectual disabilities to retain and exercise their legal capacity with the necessary assistance. Piloted with UNPRPD support, ‘patronaj’ arrangements have since enabled 27 adults with mental and intellectual impairments to maintain their full legal rights.

In a November 2014 pronouncement, Moldova’s Constitutional Court explicitly recognized the legal personhood of persons with mental and intellectual disabilities and upheld their right to raise allegations of human rights abuses before the national human rights institutions. This laid the groundwork for wider reform of the incapacitation regime. Based on these developments, the government established an inter-ministerial working group on legal capacity reform that has since elaborated a draft law on equal legal capacity for persons with mental and intellectual disabilities. In addition, the Ministry of Justice initiated a process to draft a law to modify aspects of the Civil Code related to the issue of guardianship.
PROMOTION OF AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Government of Moldova recently adopted a Code of Education that abolishes discriminatory provisions and explicitly provides for the right of children with disabilities to receive an inclusive education in mainstream settings. This decision was triggered, to a large extent, by advocacy efforts and policy advice provided by the UNPRPD and its project partners. At the beginning of the 2014 academic year, close to 4,500 children with disabilities had been enrolled in mainstream schools in their communities; and 1,321 young children with specific educational needs were admitted into regular preschool groups. Close to 40 percent of schools received project support to establish resource centers to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities. In addition, the project helped establish the Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance to provide teachers with the skills and tools they needed to support children with disabilities in their transition into the mainstream education system.

INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF CRPD IMPLEMENTATION

The UNPRPD project supported the development of a comprehensive framework for independent monitoring of CRPD implementation in partnership with organizations of persons with disabilities and the Moldovan national human rights institution. This framework is based on three core documents produced with UNPRPD support: the Strategy for Monitoring Implementation of the CRPD in Moldova; a Monitoring Action Plan; and Indicators for Monitoring Compliance and Adherence to the CRPD provisions. In addition, the project supported organizations of persons with disabilities to organize and advocate for the creation of an independent human rights mechanism to monitor the realization of disability rights.

3 CORE DOCUMENTS FOR MONITORING THE CRPD

• Strategy for Monitoring Implementation of the CRPD in Moldova;
• Monitoring Action Plan;
• Indicators for Monitoring Compliance and Adherence to the CRPD provisions.

THE GOVERNMENT OF MOLDOVA RECENTLY ADOPTED A CODE OF EDUCATION WHICH ABOLISHES DISCRIMINATORY PROVISIONS AND EXPLICITLY PROVIDES FOR THE RIGHT OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TO RECEIVE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MAINSTREAM SETTINGS

4,500 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WERE ENROLLED IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS
Gabriela, or Gabi, as she likes to be called by her friends, was raised in a residential home for children with disabilities. This was a deeply dehumanizing experience for her. “The atmosphere of the internats,” she explains “both for children and adults breaks down the human spirit and destroys hope. In the Balti internat, I experienced psychological abuse, rape, neglect and other forms of violent torture at the hands of staff.”

Alexandru voluntarily presented himself for treatment at the Chisinau Psychiatric Hospital, but after being admitted was prevented from leaving. “The doctor,” he recalls “completely ignored my request, saying that I wasn’t stable enough to go home. I would have left on my own, but the doors were locked at all times and even the windows were secured with metal bars.”

In the past, people like Gabi and Alexandru had no access to the justice system and no one to advocate on their behalf. Says Gabi: “I was stripped of my legal capacity and placed under the full control of the administration. I called the police to complain of rape and forced abortion but was told that because of my disability I could not issue valid testimony and, because I was under guardianship, the institution was responsible for all health decisions, including those related to reproductive privacy. I could not even go to court, because incapacitated persons are non-existent in the eyes of the law.”

However, the creation of the Ombudsperson for Psychiatry in 2013, with UNPRPD support, provided an institutional and independent mechanism to redress abuses experienced by residents of psychiatric facilities.

The process of establishing the Ombudsperson was not without challenges. According to Alina Grigoras, a staff member of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights involved in the project: “Before the UNPRPD project was initiated doors inside institutions were locked and there was barely any independent oversight of psychiatric hospitals and residential social care facilities. At the beginning, doctors were reticent about allowing the Ombudsperson access to the wards.” But the situation has changed considerably. “Now, the Ombudsperson is mandated to carry out regular monitoring visits and has unhindered access to all patients who want to approach them for a confidential discussion.”

Over the course of three years, the Ombudsperson processed thousands of complaints and successfully addressed a large number of them. At the end of her visit to Moldova in September 2013, the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Magdalena Sepulveda, stated: “I was favourably impressed with the pilot Ombudsperson for Psychiatry arrangement, as well as with the positive changes and human rights scrutiny provided by the arrangement. I urge the Government to swiftly formalize and fully institutionalize the position.”
In July 2014, the Ombudsperson mandate was indeed formalized as an independent mechanism and is now financed entirely from the state budget.

The work of the Ombudsperson for Psychiatry has significantly contributed to improving the circumstances of many individuals living in long-term psychiatric hospitals. But — in addition to that and equally importantly — it has also drawn public attention to the grave violations that often took place in institutions. This in turn has lent significant momentum to calls for deinstitutionalization and contributed to the adoption by the government of a comprehensive national mental health reform plan.

The reform, which has shifted the locus of care from psychiatric institutions to community based mental health care and support services, has already started to have a life-transforming impact for many persons with mental and intellectual disabilities. Ivan Borin, a former resident of the Balti internat confides: “I will never forget how I first opened the door to the little house which became my home; I clearly remember it was 20th of May 2013. During the winter of the same year, Ms. Jana came to the Balti internat and said that it was finally possible for me to leave the institution and move into the city together with the person I loved the most. I couldn’t believe my ears at the time, but I [now] feel like I have control over my life and I know that I am walking towards a better future. The way to happiness lies in those small day-to-day decisions that I am able to make.”
UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Mozambique

UN organizations: UNDP, UNICEF
Budget: US$ 340,046
Duration: Oct 2012-Sep 2014
“It’s the first time anyone has come to see me because of what happened, and it happened 21 years ago. I am glad the government is taking our situation into account. Thank you for recognizing even an old woman like me.”

Maria
a landmine survivor referring to a comprehensive survey of landmine survivors supported by the UNPRPD in Mozambique
The project **United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Mozambique** was launched in October 2012 to advance CRPD implementation through a multipronged strategy involving both right holders and duty bearers. A key objective of the initiative was enhancing the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities to engage in advocacy and policy dialogue. Another key goal was the development of more robust data-collection systems to become the foundation for the effective design, implementation and monitoring of disability rights programmes. Recognizing the specific circumstances of the country’s estimated 20,000 landmine survivors, an additional component was included in the project that focused on supporting the development of a National Action Plan on Victims Assistance.
RESULTS

ENHANCED CAPACITY OF ORGANIZATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The UNPRPD work in Mozambique created opportunities for several organizations of persons with disabilities to play a more proactive role in demanding the full realization of disability rights, with 18 distinct advocacy activities enabled through partnerships facilitated by the project.

Assistance was provided to the Forum of Mozambican Associations for the Disabled (FAMOD) in the review of the government report to the CRPD Committee and in the development of an independent shadow report complementing the government submission. The Mozambican Association of the Visually Impaired (AMDV) received a project grant to conduct sensitization sessions on inclusive education for teachers and education managers. The Mozambican Association of Youth with Disabilities (AJODEMO) conducted several awareness-raising activities for health-service managers, medical officers and nurses with project financial support. In addition, connections were made with media channels such as Radio Maria and Radio Alfa & Omega, which extended the reach of communication efforts aimed at promoting the principles of disability inclusion among the Mozambican general public.

STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ON DISABILITY DATA COLLECTION

A module for the collection of disability statistics was developed by the project in collaboration with the national statistical bureau — Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE) — and with the active participation of FAMOD. In addition, training on the application of the module was organized for 36 enumerators. Among other things, the training provided FAMOD an opportunity to raise the enumerators’ awareness of the constraints experienced by persons with disabilities and address some of the misconceptions associated with the theme. The disability statistics module developed by the project could not be included in a recurrent multipurpose household survey as originally planned since this initiative was called off due to financial constraints. Nonetheless, significant capacity on data collection was built in the process and advocacy efforts are underway to incorporate the module into the next nationwide survey.
The UNPRPD project contributed to the design and startup of Information, Orientation and Social Support Services (SIOAS) — referral and outreach centers established under the aegis of the Social Action department of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Affairs. These centres link children with disabilities and their families with a range of social protection, health, education and social services that are required to improve their well-being. An estimated 1,697 children with disabilities (796 girls and 901 boys) have been reached by SIOAS outreach centers to date.
The UNPRPD project partnered with the Landmine Victims Assistance Network (RAVIM), the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action, the Ministry of Health and Handicap International to conduct a comprehensive survey on the circumstances and aspirations of survivors of mines and unexploded ordnances in Mozambique. The findings of the survey, documented in the report ‘Shattered Dreams — Living Conditions, Needs and Capacities of Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Survivors in Mozambique,’ significantly contributed to shaping the country’s first National Plan of Action on landmine Victim Assistance. In November 2015, the Plan was approved by the Council of Ministers and included as an addendum to the already-approved second National Disability Plan (PNAD II 2012-2019). Relevant line Ministries were subsequently required to take the necessary budgetary measures to ensure the full implementation of the plan.
Pacific Island States

Pacific Enable

UN organizations: ILO, UNESCAP, UNICEF, UNV, WHO
Budget: US$ 350,000
Duration: Oct 2012-Sep 2015
“Real momentum and gains in advancing disability rights can only take place if different stakeholders are enabled to work together, building on each other’s experience and recognizing the critical role of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations. A genuine, flexible and empowering partnership between the Pacific Disability Forum, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UN agencies was the key behind the success of Pacific Enable. The Pacific Disability Forum is a proud member of the Pacific Enable project and is thankful to the UNPRPD and its Technical Secretariat for the support provided under this initiative.”

Setareki Macanawai
Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Disability Forum
The UNPRPD Pacific Enable project sought to leverage the unique relationship between the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in several Pacific Island States. In keeping with the priorities identified by governments and regional organizations of persons with disabilities, four related themes were selected as key focus areas for the project: strengthening legislative and regulatory frameworks; enhancing national-level data collection processes; improving education outcomes for children with disabilities; and increasing work and employment opportunities for men and women with disabilities.
RESULTS

PROMOTION OF CRPD COMPLIANT LEGISLATION

CRPD legislative reviews were conducted within the framework of the project in three countries: the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Nauru and the Republic of Vanuatu. More than 500 laws were examined as part of this exercise, of which a significant proportion were found to be inconsistent with CRPD provisions. The reviews established a strategic foundation for the development of CRPD compliant legislation, which will be further pursued in the second phase of the initiative.

In addition to the review, in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the project supported the drafting of a dedicated disability rights law — the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill — which was enacted in September 2015. The codification of RMI’s Human Rights Committee which now has significant advisory, monitoring and complaint-handling powers in respect of human rights treaties ratified by RMI including the CRPD was another legislative outcome of the project and an example of how disability-specific work carried out in the UNPRPD context can have a positive impact on the broader national human rights machinery.

Project technical and financial assistance helped the PDF and the PIFS Secretariat produce a comprehensive study on barriers to CRPD adoption and compliance in Pacific Island States. This research will now be used as a basis for joint advocacy efforts and policy dialogue in the region.
ENHANCING DISABILITY DATA-COLLECTION SYSTEMS

As a result of UNPRPD analytical and advocacy efforts, the issue of disability statistics was tabled at the July 2013 meeting of regional Heads of Planning and Statistics. An important outcome of the meeting was the decision to reassess existing census and survey datasets in order to obtain a more detailed picture of disability in the region. Another key result was an agreement to include disability as a theme in the National Minimum Development Indicator Database, maintained by Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Following these commitments, the UNPRPD supported the national statistics offices of the Republic of Fiji, the Independent State of Samoa and the Republic of Vanuatu in introducing disability components based on Washington Group standards into their demographic and health surveys. In addition, the programme provided technical assistance to the Vanuatu National Statistics Office in the conceptualization and implementation of a study on the situation of children, women and men with disabilities, based on a detailed statistical analysis of the census, household surveys and education database. The study provides an updated and more accurate estimate of disability prevalence in Vanuatu, documents gaps in access to services and makes recommendations to improve the quality of future data collection.
Training on early intervention and inclusive education was conducted jointly with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Vanuatu and the Vanuatu Society for Disabled People using resources developed by Education International. A total of 231 key Early Childhood Care and Education Teachers, including 12 Zone Curriculum Advisors and eight Heads of Primary Schools, were reached by the training. Parents, who were also invited to participate in the programme, reported “[being] delighted to have resources to learn how a child with a disability feels and how a parent or teacher can support this child [to] feel part of the community.”

Technical support was provided by the project for the development of a national action plan for community-based rehabilitation in the Republic of Vanuatu. This plan outlines key elements to be put in place in order to provide services to persons with disabilities in a range of areas, including employment facilitation. Twenty-five representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities from four Pacific Island countries gained new skills through the ILO’s Start Your Business Programme Training of Trainers, held in Nadi, Republic of Fiji. The participants then delivered follow-up training for persons with disabilities in their respective countries.
Palestine

Strengthening Respect for the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities through Legislation, Services and Empowerment

UN organizations: UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO
Budget: US$ 349,890
Duration: Aug 2013-Dec 2015
“Before I started my livestock enterprise, I used to receive support from neighbours and acquaintances and had to take three means of transport for my kidneys dialysis. Nowadays, even though I still have impairments and suffer from kidney failure, I can feed my kids and provide for their education. I can also afford to take a charter taxi to the hospital, which has made my life much easier.”

Fares Foqaha
a father of six who is blind and has a range of other physical disabilities, describing the impact of the Deprived Families and Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP)
The UNPRPD project *Strengthening Respect for the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities through Legislation, Services and Empowerment* was established in 2013 to advance the CRPD compliance of laws, policies and practices in various areas of service delivery. A key component of the initiative was the implementation of sector-specific legislative reviews aimed at identifying gaps and opportunities in relation to disability rights. In addition, two pilot initiatives — on inclusive education and support to entrepreneurship — were built into the project to illustrate the benefits of adopting a disability rights perspective in the design of service delivery models.
LEGISLATIVE REVIEWS AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF LINE MINISTRIES

Legislative and policy reviews in the areas of education, health care, social services and employment were completed as part of the project and a series of recommendations put forward for each of the reviewed sectors. These recommendations will provide a strong basis for the future domestication of the CRPD, which Palestine ratified in 2014. Training on disability mainstreaming in planning, policy making and service provision was delivered to 29 executive bodies of key line ministries. In addition, a workshop on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health and its implications for access to services was held for several ministries. Further to the workshop, the Ministry of Health agreed to begin a process to explore the reform of the disability assessment system.

MAKING LABOUR MARKETS MORE ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

As a follow-up to the legislative and policy review of the labour sector, a national committee was established by the Ministry of Labour to reform relevant aspects of the national labour law. The committee includes partners from various ministries, trade unions, private sector representatives and, for the first time ever in an official body of the Ministry of Labour, a representative of persons with disabilities. Training on mainstreaming disability in the labour market was delivered to 13 senior members of the Palestinian Authority, including the President’s Office, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Chambers of Commerce and Federations of Trade Unions. This training resulted in the adoption of the Aqaba Declaration, which includes a commitment to 17 action points to expand employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
MAKING EDUCATION MORE INCLUSIVE

Capacity development sessions on child-led activities and different aspect of inclusive education were conducted for master trainers in 70 pilot schools in the West Bank and Gaza. Follow-up training was then carried out for school principals, teachers, counselors, children and parents. Twenty-three teachers were also trained on storytelling techniques to teach about diversity, and 448 stories were developed and disseminated in 10 pilot schools.

To strengthen institutional capacity on early diagnosis, 50 inclusive and special education staff from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) received intensive training on speech and language therapy and were deployed to six governorates in Gaza. Further training was then provided for 291 first grade teachers. Screening was also undertaken for 16,043 first grade students of whom 1,760 were identified as having varying degrees of speech and language problems and received referrals for diagnostics. Ten speech therapy units within Gaza were furnished with the necessary supplies and equipment.

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Based on the experiences of inclusive education pilots supported by the UNPRPD in the West Bank and Gaza, the case for inclusive education was strengthened and technical support was provided to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the articulation of its first inclusive education policy.

- **10** SPEECH THERAPY UNITS WITHIN GAZA WERE FURNISHED WITH THE NECESSARY SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT
- **50** INCLUSIVE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION (MOEHE) RECEIVED INTENSIVE TRAINING ON SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY
- **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS ON CHILD-LED ACTIVITIES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WERE CONDUCTED FOR MASTER TRAINERS IN 70 PILOT SCHOOLS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA
- **16,043** FIRST GRADE STUDENTS SCREENED FOR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROBLEMS AND RECEIVED REFERRALS FOR DIAGNOSTICS
PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Disability was mainstreamed in the Deprived Families and Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP), an initiative that provides access to a package of financial and non-financial enterprise development services to poor households. As a result of this collaboration, 180 persons with disabilities were assisted in preparing business plans and received grants to start businesses. A training manual on the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities was also developed in the context of the partnership between the UNPRPD and DEEP, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). The manual has been adopted by the Ministry and is being used by MoSA field workers to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in economic empowerment programmes.
South Africa

Accelerating the Implementation of the UNCRPD in South Africa

UN organizations: OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF

Budget: US$ 349,890

Duration: Mar 2013-Dec 2015
“The Department of Social Development would like to express its appreciation to the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which, through its Fund, rendered significant financial and technical support to the development process of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This enabled the Department to, amongst others, finalize research into a number of the key policy options considered in the White Paper and deepen participation by civil society. It will furthermore assist with the roll-out of an implementation capacitation programme across government and civil society, but also in particular for representative organizations of persons with disabilities (inclusive of parents’ organizations).”

White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
approved by the South African Cabinet
on 9 December 2015
The effective planning and implementation of programmes related to the CRPD was hindered in South Africa by an insufficiently developed policy framework, inadequate alignment between budgetary allocations and CRPD provisions, and a lack of comprehensive data on the opportunities and challenges faced by persons with disabilities. The UNPRPD project *Accelerating the Implementation of the UNCRPD in South Africa* was launched in 2013 to assist the South African government in addressing these bottlenecks through work focused on three entry points: the articulation of a CRPD-compliant policy framework; the development of an analytical framework for disability-sensitive budgeting; and the strengthening of monitoring capacity in the area of disability rights.
RESULTS

ADOPTION OF A REVISED NATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS POLICY

A White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of South Africa, together with its Implementation Matrix, on December 9, 2015. The Paper, which updates the Integrated National Disability Strategy of 1997 in light of the provisions contained in the CRPD as well as the National Development Plan for South Africa, significantly benefited from analytical work carried out by the UNPRPD participating UN organizations as well as assistance provided by the project in the context of civil society outreach efforts.

See also: IN FOCUS - ‘Unified in diversity and disability’: a conversation with Lidia Pretorius

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISABILITY-SENSITIVE BUDGETING

A study on the economic impact of disability at the household level was conducted within the UNPRPD framework in order to provide the evidence base for more adequate budget allocations in relation to disability rights. The findings of the first phase of the study have already started to inform the policies of the Treasury and Revenue departments as well as the funding models for basic education and early childhood development programmes. Similarly, decisions about reasonable accommodation for public servants with disabilities and for post-school education and training have been influenced by the research. The review of the National Health Rehabilitation Policy, which also covers the provision of assistive devices currently underway, is making use of the study’s evidence, as are the review of the National Social Welfare Policy and the development of a new group housing infrastructure policy.
STRONGER MONITORING AND EVALUATION CAPACITY IN THE AREA OF DISABILITY RIGHTS

The UNPRPD project provided the technical support necessary for the development of a government-wide Disability Rights Monitoring and Evaluation Framework that is aligned with the new disability policy. The Framework is constituted by three pillars: a set of indicators and processes to monitor statistical trends relevant to persons with disabilities; a set of indicators and processes to monitor government performance in advancing disability rights; and a process to obtain feedback from persons with disabilities through participatory research. This process institutionalizes the government’s commitment to ensure the participation of representative organizations of persons with disabilities in the monitoring of CRPD implementation as per CRPD Article 33.3.

As part of its efforts to advance monitoring capacity in the area of disability rights, the project facilitated the disability disaggregation of targets and indicators contained in South Africa’s National Development Plan 2030. Furthermore, work began on the development of a Disability Inequality Index that will enable policymakers to assess variations over time and space in the wellbeing experienced by persons with disabilities and their families relative to national averages. These tools will further assist the government in pursuing the principle of ‘leaving no one behind,’ which underpins the National Development Plan as well as the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals.
STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR DISABILITY DATA COLLECTION

The UNPRPD fostered greater collaboration between the designated national disability rights coordinating mechanism — currently located in the Department of Social Development — and Statistics South Africa, the national statistical office. An outcome of this collaboration was the Census 2011 Disability Monograph, which provided the country’s first national profile of persons with disability since 2001 and helped establish a critical baseline for the design and monitoring of disability rights programmes. The collaboration with Statistics South Africa also contributed to deepening analysis, eliminating data misinterpretation and halting the use of harmful terminology. A more institutional relationship between the Department of Social Development and four divisions of Statistics South Africa was formalized during the implementation of the project. In addition, work is progressing on the establishment of a centralized disability statistics database as a collaboration between the two institutions.

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOUR DIVISIONS OF STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA WAS FORMALIZED

CENSUS 2011 DISABILITY MONOGRAPH
On 10 March 2016, South Africa’s new disability policy, the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, was launched at a National Disability Summit, which brought together hundreds of people from all over the country under the theme “unified in diversity and disability, together advancing people’s power.”

The White Paper, which replaces the Integrated Disability Strategy of 1997, represents an important step forward for disability rights in South Africa. Not only does it create the foundation for greater alignment between the CRPD and national legislation, it also establishes a much stronger accountability framework and makes it easier for persons with disabilities to access recourse when subjected to discrimination.

In launching the White Paper, South African President Jacob Zuma specifically noted the UNPRPD’s contribution and expressed his thanks for “the technical and financial support provided over the past three years to bring [South Africa] to this point.”

Similar sentiments had previously been voiced by other representatives of government, including the Minister for Social Development, Bathabile Dlamini, who remarked: “South Africa, like many other countries, has benefited from the work undertaken by the UNPRPD to support capacity building. This has enriched our ability to deliver on key outcomes for persons with disabilities.”

But how has the UNPRPD project ‘Accelerating implementation of the CRPD’ succeeded in adding value in a middle-income, high-capacity setting like South Africa?

“In several ways,” explains Lidia Pretorius, Chief Director, Advocacy and Mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities in the Department of Social Development. “For one thing, the analytical work carried out by the UNPRPD project expanded the arsenal of arguments we can draw from in our advocacy work within government. Let us take the case of the study on the cost of disability: thanks to this study, we are not discussing anymore whether disability should have implications for budget allocations, but rather what the size and modalities of the necessary adjustments should be.”

The study Ms. Pretorius is referring to — ‘Elements of the Financial and Economic Costs of Disability to Households in South Africa’ — is one of various analytical pieces that were facilitated by the UNPRPD project, often connecting South African institutions with international networks and expertise.

These studies played an important role in advancing the conversation on CRPD implementation in South Africa but were not the only channel through which the UNPRPD provided its support.
By many accounts, the UNPRPD project also served as an enabler for the coordination role of the Department of Social Development — as the current host of the national disability rights coordinating mechanism in government — and has helped build bridges between institutions that did not have a history of collaboration around disability rights. “The collaboration with the UNPRPD has elevated the status of the disability rights agenda and therefore the status of our coordinating responsibilities. As a result, we gained a level of access to officials and programmes in key departments which had not been possible in previous times,” Ms. Pretorius says.

A case in point is Statistics South Africa, as explained by Ms. Pretorius: “Whereas the designated national disability rights coordinating mechanism struggled in the past to penetrate the national statistical body beyond one or two committed individuals, it has now secured participation across four divisions in the statistical body, with Statistics South Africa representation and participation in the National Disability Rights Machinery significantly strengthened.”

The disability policy framework established by South Africa is remarkable in terms of ambition and sophistication. "I don’t think I have ever seen such a comprehensive implementation matrix,” says Alexandre Cote, who facilitated several exchanges between the South African Government, the International Disability Alliance and DPOs from Philippines and India to learn from the South African experience.

And the process that led to the policy was exemplary in terms of participation of persons with disabilities. In the words of Gana Fofang, United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Africa: "The active participation and high level contribution of the South African Human Rights Commission, and Commission on Gender Equality ensured that the policy development process meets the required international human rights standards, and human rights issues are adequately mainstreamed. Furthermore, the combined contribution of the South African Disability Alliance, Disabled People South Africa, and the National Chapter of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry ensured that the policy framework process was informed by communities [...] [this] contribution also ensured that the policy framework is grounded on the local realities, needs and challenges. [The Government of South Africa] made this process a truly people centered process.”

The UNPRPD will continue to engage with the Department of Social Development and other partners in South Africa to support the implementation of the White Paper, but also — and perhaps more importantly — to share the outstanding experience of South Africa with other countries at different stages of the journey towards the full realization of the rights of persons with disabilities.
Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities

UN organizations: OHCHR, UNICEF, WHO
Budget: US$ 350,000
Duration: Oct 2012-Sep 2014
“My limbs moved uncontrollably and prevented me from speaking or writing. My classmates made fun of me, so I dropped out of school. My mother left us and my father took care of me. One day, members of the Kara Association for Persons with Disabilities came to register me. They helped me get care and enrolled me into the Tchanadè school. I enjoy playing with my new schoolmates. I can even read and write.”

Alphonse

talking about the impact on his life of UNPRPD project partner
Kara Association for Persons with Disabilities on his life
The UNPRPD project *Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities* was established in Togo in 2012 to build national capacity to meet CRPD obligations with a special focus on provisions related to children. A twofold strategy was adopted to achieve the project objective. The first component focused on the harmonization of domestic laws with the CRPD; the second aimed to expand educational opportunities for children with disabilities in the Kara and Savannes regions. Dedicated awareness-raising efforts were also built into this second component, in order to leverage the regional pilots’ results to trigger policy and institutional changes at national level.
The UNPRPD project assisted the Togolese umbrella organization of persons with disabilities (FETAPH) in conducting a study to assess the CRPD compliance of a number of legal instruments, such as the 2004 Law on the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities, the 2006 Labor Code, the 2007 Family Code, the 2007 Child Code and the 1968 Ordinance on the statute of civil servants. The review generated a number of concrete proposals on how to achieve greater alignment between Togolese legislation and the CRPD. These proposals were presented by FETAPH at a workshop attended by representatives from Ministries, non-governmental organizations and development partners. The second phase of the project will support follow-up discussions on relevant legislative reforms.

As a result of the technical, analytical and advocacy work carried out by the UNPRPD project, inclusive education for children with disabilities was incorporated in Togo’s 10-year Education Sector Development Plan. Some of the newly introduced measures in the Plan — such as support for children’s inclusion in mainstream schools and accessibility of all newly built classrooms — hold significant potential to advance the rights of children with disabilities in Togo. In addition, the Plan mandates the preparation of an inclusive education policy to detail the steps to be taken by the Ministry of Education and other partners in order to fulfill the provisions contained in article 24 of the CRPD.
Three technical manuals on inclusive education, Braille and sign language were developed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Action and civil society organizations. The Braille and sign-language manuals were officially adopted by Ministry of Education in 2014 and have since become part of the Ministry’s training reference materials.

The project supported a redesign of the role of itinerant teachers (with more attention to supporting children with a hearing disability) as well as the geographical extension of this system. Furthermore, given the positive impact observed on children with hearing impairments, the project successfully advocated for the adoption of the itinerant teacher support system at the national level.
PILOTING OF AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL

A number of complementary and mutually reinforcing interventions were undertaken by the project and its partners in order to demonstrate an effective model of inclusive education in the pilot regions of Kara and Savanes. These interventions included a sensitization campaign against stigma and shame, the provision of rehabilitation services, the introduction of measures to improve the accessibility of schools and capacity development for service providers, including health professionals and teachers.

The activities carried out in the project’s framework increased children’s autonomy and helped improve their inclusion in their communities and in schools. Community sensitization campaigns, led by persons with disabilities, resulted in the identification of 231 children of primary-school age living with disabilities. Assessments and consultations led to better diagnosis of the children’s situation and specific needs and to the provision of rehabilitation services — including physiotherapy, orthopedic services, speech therapy, ENT and ophthalmologic health care services — to 209 children, almost half of whom were girls. Nearly 200 additional children (53 girls) with disabilities were enrolled in mainstream primary schools. Beyond enrollment, the achievement rates of children were tracked: in the Savanes region, out of 438 children with disabilities monitored by the project, 389 (88 percent) took their exams and 75 percent (291) were successful. In the Kara region, 150 out of 212 children took their exams, of whom 97 (65 percent) were declared successful. These percentages are fully in line with the overall exam success rates in the two regions.

Based on the success of the interventions in the Kara and Savanes regions, it is expected that the model tested by the project will form the prototype for the development of a full-fledged national approach to inclusive education.
The new Tunisia won’t be built without us

UN organizations: ILO, OHCHR, UNICEF
Budget: US$ 350,000
Duration: Oct 2013-Dec 2015
“I would like to express my appreciation for the great contribution made by the UNPRPD for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in Tunisia. The work within the UNPRPD Advocacy Group inspired and encouraged me to experience with confidence and great determination the political life in my country with the purpose of defending and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. I stood for the legislative elections in October 2014 and I was thereby the first woman with a disability to run for the elections in Tunisia.”

Temna Tebib
member of the UNPRPD Advocacy Group
and the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women
The UNPRPD project ‘The New Tunisia Won’t Be Built Without Us’ was established in 2013 to create solid foundations for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of Tunisia’s political transition. Key elements of this initiative included sensitization work aimed at changing negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities; capacity strengthening of duty bearers and right holders alike in the area of disability rights; the strengthening of data collection systems and work aimed at expanding opportunities for persons with disabilities to enter the workplace and be included in mainstream schools.
RESULTS

ADOPTION OF THE TUNISIAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The project supported a broad coalition of organization of persons with disabilities in drafting a Charter on the rights of persons with disabilities through a highly consultative process involving more than 500 persons across Tunisia. Assistance was also provided to representatives of persons with disabilities in carrying out an advocacy campaign to secure political support for the Charter. As a result of this campaign, the President of the Tunisian Republic, Beji Caid Essebsi, formally committed to the principles outlined in the Charter, and 86 percent of the current Members of Parliament are affiliated with parties that have endorsed the document. Various institutional changes have already been triggered by the Charter, including the creation of a Parliamentary Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

See also: IN FOCUS - Shifting the conversation: a manifesto on the rights of persons with disabilities

ENHANCED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION THROUGH INCLUSIVE ELECTIONS

The UNPRPD project provided the impetus for activities aimed at making elections more inclusive conducted within the framework of UNDP’s ‘Support to the Electoral Process in Tunisia.’ As a result of these activities, during the 2014 legislative elections 50 percent of voting centers were equipped with Braille ballot forms and more than 220 voting centers were made accessible to people with reduced mobility (up from 55 in the previous election cycle). Furthermore, a voter education campaign specifically targeting persons with disabilities was implemented through multiple media.

CHARTER SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE TUNISIAN REPUBLIC, BEJI CAID ESSEBSI AND 86 PERCENT OF THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

CHARTER FOR THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

2014

50% OF VOTING CENTERS WERE EQUIPPED WITH BRAILLE BALLOT FORMS

220 VOTING CENTERS WERE MADE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY
STRENGTHENED INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Assistance was provided by the project to implement inclusive education pilot initiatives in three regions. These initiatives delivered training to 60 education professionals, supported the inclusion of 3,000 children with disabilities in mainstream schools and facilitated the creation of local coordination groups to supervise the application of inclusive education policies at the local level.

The results of the pilots and subsequent advocacy efforts carried out by the UNPRPD and its partners triggered significant changes in the Tunisian education system. A new position was created within the Ministry of Education, which, among other things, will be responsible for supervising the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Inclusive education principles were integrated in the national sectoral Plan for Education, drafted as part of the National Development Plan 2016-2020. And, for the first time, the Ministry of the Education started to collect data (disaggregated by gender) on the enrollment of children with disabilities.

The Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood launched a series of initiatives, with project assistance, to facilitate the preschool inclusion of children with disabilities as a way to prevent future school dropout and exclusion. An example of these initiatives was the development of a practical guidance note for preschool educators on integrating children with disabilities into early childhood education facilities.
IMPROVED DISABILITY DATA COLLECTION

Advocacy efforts carried out by the project led to the inclusion of the Washington Group short set of questions into the 2014 national census. In addition, a national group on disability statistics was created within the National Council of Statistics to generate knowledge on disability, mainstream disability into national information systems and provide the necessary evidence to inform policymaking in the area of disability rights. The national group is currently carrying out a mapping of relevant information sources and a preliminary analysis of the newly available data.
The political transition that started to unfold in Tunisia at the beginning of 2011 opened up previously unimagined opportunities to reshape social relations in the country. Determined to make the most of this historical moment, ten organizations of persons with disabilities came together, with support from the UNPRPD and Handicap International, to articulate their aspirations for a truly inclusive Tunisia in a comprehensive manifesto.

This manifesto — the Tunisian Charter on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities — was to become a turning point for disability rights in Tunisia.

Recalls Hajer Bouyahia, a Human Rights Officer with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: “The process that led to the formulation of the Charter was an exceptionally comprehensive one. It involved a broad range of organizations, including organizations specifically representing women and young persons with disabilities. And it reached more than 500 persons through a series on consultations across the country.”

“It was not always an easy process,” says Ms. Bouyahia “as people at times had to work through sharp divergences. But it was a very important process, and, in the end, a very constructive one.”

Once the Charter was ready, the organizations that had participated in the process organized themselves in an advocacy group under the banner of the UNPRPD and engaged in an ambitious campaign that reached out to parties across the Tunisian political spectrum.

By the time the parliamentary and presidential elections were held, in October and November 2014 respectively, ten political formations and four presidential candidates — including Tunisia’s current President Beji Caid Essebsi — had endorsed the Charter. And when Tunisia’s new Parliament was formed, 86 percent of its elected members represented parties that had formally committed to integrate the rights persons with disabilities into policies and laws.

The association with the UNPRPD significantly contributed to the success of the campaign, according to Sami Ben Youness, a blind person and the president of Kistas, an organization that works for democratic governance and the protection of human rights: “I proudly joined the UNPRPD Advocacy Group as a civil society activist, together with several other representatives of persons with disabilities” he says, explaining: “Being able to operate within the framework of the UNPRPD project helped us a lot — it elevated our work and gave us visibility and recognition in the eyes of the public.”

Organizations of persons with disabilities came together, with support from the UNPRPD and Handicap International, to articulate their aspirations for a truly inclusive Tunisia in a comprehensive manifesto.
An important effect of the Tunisian Charter on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was to reframe the public debate on disability — from a matter of charity to a matter of equality. But this was not the only way in which the Charter was transformational. It provided the opportunity for coalition-building with the disability rights movement. It created the conditions for different political parties to find a common ground in relation to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. And it facilitated the development of an accountability framework that will strengthen the ability of persons with disabilities to demand the realization of their rights.

Important institutional changes have already taken place as a direct result of the Charter. For instance, a Special Parliamentary Commission for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups was established in January 2015 with the mandate to advance legislative reform related to disability rights and to monitor the implementation of government programmes in this area.

Through the Charter process, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations have forged new partnerships. They have also gained new allies among the general public, within the political system and also in the United Nations. “Before joining the UN, I was a business lawyer,” says Ms Bouyahia. “I did not have the chance to work with persons with disabilities. The UNPRPD was a great opportunity for me to have such an experience. And it was a beautiful experience that changed me a lot. The project greatly strengthened my commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities, not just as a human rights officer but also in a very personal sense.”
Promoting Mainstream Policies and Services for Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine

UN organizations: ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO
Budget: US$ 333,600
Duration: Mar 2013-Dec 2015
“Representatives of the State Inspection of Architecture and Building of Ukraine took part in all the training events that were organized in the framework of the Joint Programme. Thus, the personnel of the Inspection learnt about the problems of people with disabilities in Ukraine, universal design principles and international best practices. The Programme inspired us to host our own events, and in 2014 regional offices of the Inspection — jointly with representatives of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and building experts — held roundtables on issues related to creating a universally designed and accessible environment in the regions and in Kyiv. As a result of the Programme, the State Inspection of Architecture and Building urged authorities to change the state construction codes that regulate the accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with limited mobility. The purpose of the change is to introduce the notion of universal design into construction codes and therefore make buildings equally accessible and comfortable for all citizens, regardless of their physical abilities.”

Yuri Vasylchenko
Deputy Head of the Department of licensing, inspection and certification of the State Inspection of Architecture and Construction
BACKGROUND

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Ukraine, conducted in 2012, identified a number of issues affecting persons with disabilities. These included inaccessibility of built spaces and barriers to access in key areas of service delivery such as education, employment facilitation, health care, rehabilitation and habilitation. The UNPRPD project Promoting Mainstream Policies and Services for Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine was launched in October 2012 to address some of the issues raised in the UPR exercise. Focused on promoting accessibility and universal design as enablers of participation, the project set out to undertake a mix of national and sub-national interventions to raise awareness, strengthen the capacity of multiple stakeholders and demonstrate the practical and financial viability of inclusive service delivery models.
RESULTS

INCREASED AWARENESS OF DISABILITY RIGHTS, ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Over 70 representatives of 31 state bodies (including the Ministries of Education, Social Policy, Infrastructure, Health, Regional Development and Justice) took part in training activities on universal design organized in the first year of the project. During the second year, 45 of these representatives (from 26 state bodies) were invited to follow-up training focused on international experiences and good practices. A total of 1,276 professionals — including architects, journalists, business associations’ representatives, educators, activists — gained knowledge about universal design at training and seminars organized by the project. An additional 2,600 people became familiar with universal design principles at events independently organized by newly established partners of the project with their own resources. As a result of these activities, the Ukrainian Assembly of Persons with Disabilities was empowered to become a center of excellence and key source of expertise on issues of universal design and accessibility.

Multiple tools were developed by the project to raise awareness of universal design and accessibility principles on a very large scale. These include a website fully devoted to universal design, http://ud.org.ua, featuring good practices from Ukraine and abroad. An article on universal design was published in the major Ukrainian newspaper UkrPravda, which has a daily audience of over 4.5 million viewers. Almost 400 publications were produced between 2013 and 2015 in online media, social media, print media and television. Presentations on Slideshare.net collected 2,500 views, and social media posts had close to 18,000 hits. YouTube animation videos on universal design had 3,500 views and were additionally shown at movie theatres and television shows, reaching an estimated 3.5 million people. The animation videos on Universal Design are also routinely broadcast on the InterCity train services, which according to InterCity Statistics, has over 350,000 passengers commuting monthly.

1,276 PROFESSIONALS GAINED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT UNIVERSAL DESIGN AT TRAINING AND SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY THE PROJECT

MULTIPLE TOOLS WERE DEVELOPED BY THE PROJECT TO RAISE AWARENESS OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND ACCESSIBILITY PRINCIPLES ON A MASSIVE SCALE

ANIMATION VIDEOS ON UNIVERSAL DESIGN REACHED 3.5 million PEOPLE

400 PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED BETWEEN 2013 AND 2015
Changes in Policy, Standards and Practice

Several changes in policy and practice took place as a direct result of awareness-raising efforts carried out by the UNPRPD and its partners. A total of nine legislative acts in areas such as education, infrastructure, information and employment services were developed or amended in 2014, based on the principles of inclusion promoted by the project. These legal instruments now refer to such concepts as “non-discrimination on the grounds of disability,” “accessibility” and “universal design” and provide for better protection of persons with disabilities from acts of discrimination.

The universal design framework was incorporated within the Kyiv Street Design Manual, developed by the Municipality of Kyiv with project support. The Ukrainian Zonal Research and Design Institute for Civil Construction, which includes staff previously trained by the project, introduced universal design principles into two of its albums, “The Album of Technical Architectural Solutions for Redesigning Residential Apartment Buildings to Meet the Needs of People with Disabilities” and “The Album of Technical Solutions for Architectural Planning of Institutions for Temporary and Full-time Living of People with Mental Disability.”

Engagement with the Ukrainian Retail Association resulted in the inclusion of a non-discrimination clause into the Association’s “Code of business ethics and rules of professional ethics of retailers.” The Code, developed with inputs from the project, requires retailers to apply accessibility criteria in designing the retail experience for their customers as well as in their human resources policy. Collaboration with the Ukrainian Real Estate Club led to the adoption of accessibility features as a criterion for the classification of Kyiv office space – something that has direct consequences on the real estate value of the premises.
APPLICATION OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN IN SERVICE DELIVERY AT SUBNATIONAL LEVEL

In parallel with national processes, the UNPRPD supported the piloting at the subnational level of service delivery models based on the principle of universal design. In Chuhuyiv town, two initiatives were initiated by the project: a ‘School for Everyone’ and a series of measures to ensure equal access to gynecological services for all women, including female wheelchair users. Additionally, early intervention services were introduced in both Chuhuyiv Town and Valky Raions in collaboration with the Institute of Early Intervention and Kharkiv Oblast Specialized Baby Home #1. It is estimated that 8,916 community members in the Chuhuyiv and Valky Raions will benefit from the services established by the project, including 2,652 persons with disabilities (predominantly women and children).

A total of 186 representatives of local administrations, organizations of persons with disabilities, employment centers, social services and educational facilities in the pilot regions gained greater understanding of universal design and accessibility as a result of the project’s interventions. Among other things, this led to the development of action plans to create an accessible environment in both pilot raions. Furthermore, lessons from the pilots are already being used for advocacy at the national level. The second phase of the project will build on these successful initiatives to advocate for further reform across the country.
Strengthening the Role of Disabled People’s Organizations to Advance Disability Rights in Vietnam

UN organizations: ILO, UNDP, UNICEF
Budget: US$ 350,000
Duration: Mar 2013-Dec 2015
“The UNPRPD project in Viet Nam has supported the UNCT to better respond to the multifaceted nature of disability rights by integrating the expertise of various UN agencies. It has improved synergies across UNCT thematic areas of intervention and programme on disability rights. Importantly, it has strengthened the role of organizations of persons with disabilities to engage with policymakers at the highest level, the Parliament and the Government, particularly in the processes and discussions leading up to the CRPD Ratification. The newly established National Committee for Disability, which is tasked with coordination functions for CRPD implementation, has 4 representatives of disabled persons organizations. In promoting access to justice for persons with disabilities, the UNPRPD project strengthened the role of persons with disabilities not just as beneficiaries of legal aid but also as active providers of it in their own communities.”

Pratibha Mehta
UN Resident Coordinator, Viet Nam
The UNPRPD project **Strengthening the Role of Disabled People’s Organizations to Advance Disability Rights in Vietnam** was designed to increase the capacity of persons with disabilities to undertake individual and collective action to demand the realization of their rights. One component of the project focused on promoting the meaningful participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in policy dialogue related to the ratification of the CRPD, which Viet Nam signed in 2009. Another component aimed to advance access to justice for persons with disabilities by raising legal awareness and providing legal aid services, including assistance in interactions with different parts of the public administration.
RESULTS

SUPPORT TO CRPD RATIFICATION

A range of advocacy, analysis and policy dialogue initiatives were carried out by the project in support of the process that led to Viet Nam’s ratification of the CRPD — without reservations — on 28 November 2014. Activities implemented in this context included CRPD ratification feasibility and impact studies — undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government institutions — as well as consultative workshops, such as the dialogue event ‘The CRPD and the role of organizations of persons with disabilities,’ jointly organized with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and featuring interventions of several national and international experts.

POLICY REVIEWS

As a result of advocacy efforts supported by the project, the Law on Social Insurance (Law no.58/2014/QH13) and the Law on Vocational Education (Law no. 74/2014/QH13) were amended to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social insurance and vocational training programmes. A number of regulatory documents on social assistance, health insurance, public transport and education were also revised to ensure the full recognition of the rights of people with disabilities.
PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN POLICY DIALOGUE

The UNPRPD project in Viet Nam facilitated unprecedented levels of institutionalized engagement for persons with disabilities and their organizations, representing a significant departure from previously low-profile and tokenistic involvement. Two events are symbolic of this process: the first televised national debate between a representative of persons with disabilities (Ms. Do Thi Huyen, Chair of the Association of People with Disabilities of North Tu Liem district) and a Member of Parliament (Mr. Ngo Duc Manh, Vice Chairman of the National Assembly External Relations Committee), and the opportunity provided to Vong Minh Nhi, a 15-year-old girl with visual impairment, to address Members of Parliament at a workshop on CRPD ratification organized for the National Assembly.

Representatives of more than 60 organizations of persons with disabilities were trained by the project on policy and advocacy techniques and actively involved in an assessment of existing policies and services for persons with disabilities. A total of eight training workshops on the CRPD and the national disability law were organized and attended by 520 participants, including representatives of persons with disabilities, journalists, employers and other social actors. Many participants in these trainings have since become agents of change in their communities and are actively advocating for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The perception of persons with disabilities and their role in society has started to change within Vietnamese institutions as a result of sensitization efforts carried out by the project. As noted by a person with a disability involved in the initiative: “It really represents a truly meaningful change in government’s attitudes when organizations of persons with disabilities are treated as equals by representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

Four representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities will be included among the 18 members of the newly established National Committee for Disabilities.
INCREASED ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Technical and financial assistance was provided by the project to the Action to Community Development Centre to establish the first legal aid network for people with disabilities led by people with disabilities in Viet Nam. Originally located in Hanoi, the network has progressively expanded its reach to five other provinces in the Northern and Central parts of the country, where it has provided legal advice in a broad range of areas such as civil disputes related to land and housing, applications for social policy entitlements and submission of complaints to local governments. Over three years, 3,887 persons (1,878 women and 2,008 men) have benefited from legal assistance delivered by the network. Additionally, under a Memorandum of Understanding facilitated by the project, law professors and students engaged in the Law on Disability programme at Hanoi Law University directly provided free legal aid to more than 1,000 persons with disabilities during their internships with around 20 organizations of persons with disabilities in Hanoi and other provinces.

The success of the UNPRPD-supported legal aid network highlighted the significant demand for legal information and assistance among persons with disabilities. In recognition of this demand, in December 2015 the Ministry of Justice included persons with disabilities as a discrete beneficiary group in the proposed draft Law on Legal Aid. Furthermore, in the draft Action Plan for CRPD implementation, clear targets and budgetary support have been set for legal aid to persons with disabilities.

4,887 PERSONS RECEIVED LEGAL AID DELIVERED BY NETWORK AND HANOI LAW UNIVERSITY
MESSAGE

Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes,
Chair, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

“The UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been a valuable mechanism for strengthening capacity at the country level for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In particular, it provides the means by which States Parties, UN entities and organizations of persons with disabilities can collaborate to operationalize the recommendations and General Comments of the CRPD Committee across a wide range of areas. I am, for instance, pleased that UNPRPD projects carried out innovative and impactful work on issues such as the exercise of the right to equal legal capacity through supported decision-making, application of universal design and accessibility principles, disability inclusive budgeting and strengthening of disability statistics among many others.

At the same time, UNPRPD interventions have the potential to inform the deliberations of the Committee. For example, based on the experience of a UNPRPD-supported project in the area of deinstitutionalization, the Republic of Moldova, made a submission on the Day of General Discussions on the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community. There is significant potential synergy between the work of the UNPRPD and the work of the CRPD Committee. I, therefore, look forward to working with the Partnership to advance our collaboration.”
Conclusion
STEPPING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

By Prof. Malcolm MacLachlan, Trinity College Dublin and Dr. Hasheem Mannan, University College Dublin; facilitators of the “KnowUNPRPD” programme.

This publication illustrates the diversity and depth of interventions undertaken through the UNPRPD. It is worth stepping back a bit to consider the scale of the challenge we are addressing. The rationale for the multistakeholder collaborations described here — among government, DPOs, broader civil society, the UN and other partners — is that many of the barriers to implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are embedded within longstanding social structures and attitudes that do not give way easily.

Often such discriminatory practices — even when not necessarily intentional — are nonetheless ‘protected’ because of the advantages that accrue to others; the advantage of keeping things as they are, of maintaining the status quo. Alternatively, discriminative attitudes and practices may be maintained unwittingly because, to some, they seem “natural,” “just the way things are”; or they may be culturally sanctioned — “the ways we do things around here.”

People with disabilities are often “othered”; seen as different; and the need for people to explain this difference may reference ideas ranging from karma to retribution to “bad luck.” Such explanations are intended to provide a rationale for the difference people see, and often the discomfort — sometimes fear — that they experience when encountering people with disabilities.
The Convention doesn’t accept that any of these views are legitimate. Such views unjustly stigmatize people. People with disabilities have as much to contribute to society as does anyone else, and there is an obligation on all of us – but especially on States Parties — to change attitudes and provide new social structures that empower rather than marginalize.

This, of course, requires that we dislodge the institutionalized discriminatory behaviours and structures that have often been embedded in our societies for centuries. This is where the power of the UNPRPD’s multi-stakeholder structure can really count. While there have undoubtedly been several good examples of implementing specific Articles of the CRPD — by either government, civil society or UN agencies working singularly — these case studies illustrate that much can be achieved by working collaboratively.

By approaching the realization of rights through a number of different and complementary pathways that converge, the UNPRPD has sought to dismantle structural barriers and build new social structures that are more inclusive and aimed at facilitating opportunities and the fulfilment of rights for people with disabilities. Many of the country projects featured in this publication have therefore sought to move upstream, targeting the ‘causes of the causes’ through specific projects intended not only to produce valuable gains locally, but also to reconstruct how society works, so that it works more fairly.

The multi-stakeholder relationships that characterize the UNPRPD allow for multiple entry points; they give a greater and broader reach to dislodge barriers and to establish and embed new structures. These pathways to change are brought
together by using a pragmatic Theory of Change to guide action, drawing on the opportunities presented, not just by more entry points, but, crucially, by joining them up across government, civil society and UN agencies.

The UNPRPD is certainly not the only programme that has found success in achieving social structural change. However, the “KnowUNPRPD” programme, which we have facilitated over the last three years, has highlighted that one aspect of the added-value of the Partnership is that when projects are completed, they have the potential to leave behind not just the infrastructure of new and facilitative social structures but also greater articulation between the stakeholders who can make the most of those structures by working together collaboratively.

Something else that the “KnowUNPRPD” programme has highlighted is that the UNPRPD experience can be used as a valuable source on insights about the impact of different types of interventions and practices that have been tried in different social, cultural, economic and political contexts. The case studies in this publication are not a recipe for intervention, but rather some of the ingredients that have been found to be effective in different ways and in different places. In each case, the projects’ Theories of Change have been about creating a pattern of pathways that can combine and complement in order to dislodge unfairness, promote social justice and improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Having the privilege of witnessing the claiming and enacting of rights by those who have been disenfranchised has been both inspiring and humbling. The Partnership within countries has also spurred new partnerships across countries. The partnership continues to grow, to learn, and to share experiences, with the “KnowUNPRPD” programme and this publication being some of the ways in which this can be done. Together we are contributing to realizing the rights of people with disabilities globally.