



# DISABILITY & DEVELOPMENT

*How to include  
persons with  
disabilities  
in development  
cooperation*

## DISABILITY & DEVELOPMENT

HOW TO INCLUDE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

by RIDS



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This manual was developed within the framework of the InfoEas project - AID 10305  
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

- AIFO – Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau (Italian Association Friends of Raoul Follereau)
- APNIL – Asia Pacific Network for Independent Living Centers
- CBID – Community Based Inclusive Development
- CBOs – Community Based Organisations
- CBR – Community Based Rehabilitation
- CEIS – Centro Educativo Italo-Svizzero “Remo Bordini” di Rimini (Italo-Swiss Educational Center “Remo Bordini” of Rimini)
- CIL – Center for Independent Living
- CONAIPD – Consejo Nacional de Atención a la Persona con Discapacidad: National Council of persons with disability (in El Salvador)
- CRI – Centro de Recursos para la Inclusión: Resource Center for Inclusion (in El Salvador)
- CRIC – Centro Regionale di Intervento per la Cooperazione: Regional Center of Intervention for development
- CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- CSOs – Civil Society Organisations
- DGCS – Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo: Directorate-General for Cooperation and Development
- DPI – Disabled People’s International
- DPOs – Disabled People Organisations
- EC – European Commission
- ECHO – European Commission Humanitarian Aid And Civil Protection
- EE.LL – Enti Locali (Local authorities)
- ENIL – European Network of Independent Living
- EU – European Union
- FISH – Federazione Italiana Superamento Handicap: Italian Federation for Overcoming Handicap
- GUPWD – General Union Persons with Disabilities (in Palestine)
- ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights  
ICF – International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health  
IDA – International Disability Alliance  
IDDC – International Disability and Development Consortium  
MAE – Ministero degli Affari Esteri: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
MAECI – Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation  
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals  
MINED – Ministerio del la Educación: Ministry of Education (in El Salvador)  
MoEHE – Ministry of Education and High Education (in Palestine)  
MoSA – Ministry of Social Affairs (in Palestine)  
NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisations  
NUOD – National Union of Organizations of the Disabled (in Liberia)  
OGG – Office of Good Governance: Office for Human Rights of the Government (in Kosovo)  
OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers  
REC – Remedial Education Center  
RER – Regione Emilia-Romagna: Emilia Romagna Region (Italy)  
RIDS – Rete Italiana Disabilità e Sviluppo (Italian Network Disability and Development)  
SDF – Social Developmental Forum  
SHS – Stars of Hope Society  
SNF – Secretaria Nacional de la Familia: National Secretariat for family (in El Salvador)  
UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
UN – United Nations  
UNDESA – United Nation Department for Economic and Social Affairs  
UNDP – United Nation Development Programme  
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
UNI.BO – Università di Bologna: University of Bologna  
UNI.FI – Università di Firenze: University of Firenze.  
WHO – World Health Organisation

## FOREWORD

The publication of this manual derives from the observation that few international cooperation interventions include people with disabilities among the possible target groups and that they are often regarded as mere beneficiaries of health or welfare actions. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>1</sup> (CRPD, 2006) has introduced a revolutionary approach to disability, suggesting to review the conditions of these people within the framework of respect for human rights; yet, it is still too little known and applied by Italian and international stakeholders involved in specific projects in beneficiary countries of co-operation.

In 2013 the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) approved an Action Plan for cooperation on disability<sup>2</sup>, which puts Italy in a leading position among the 153 countries that have ratified the CRPD Convention (78% of whom are UN members). The Action Plan results from the collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and *Rete Italiana di Disabilità e Sviluppo*, RIDS (Italian Network on Disability and Development), who have, in fact, formed a working table and several technical groups for the drafting and approval of the Action Plan, involving fifty other civil society stakeholders.

This manual has been designed in the framework of the InfoEas project “Cooperate to include”<sup>3</sup>, as a useful tool for strengthening dialogue and cooperation between civil society and institutions and it offers an opportunity to analyse and implement the Action Plan and the Guidelines on disability not only to the staff of local and Italian NGOs, DPOs and international cooperation agencies, but also to officials of MAECI /Local Technical Units, EU delegations, national institutions of partner countries, in the hope that it will be possible to spread the RIDS approach, namely a careful approach towards both the rights and the participation of persons with disabilities, and the value of synergy among the different stakeholders involved in cooperation, to improve it.

Among the organizations dealing with international cooperation, RIDS is an innovative network, since it is made up not only of two NGOs (AIFO and EducAid) but also of two DPOs (DPI-Italy and FISH) which, on an equal footing, apply the principle of full participation of persons with disabilities in all issues concerning them (art. 4 paragraph 3 of the CRPD). In this respect, the RIDS<sup>4</sup> manifesto highlights that, in the reference framework of CRPD ratification, implementation and monitoring, the cooperation role changes its orientation (art. 32 and 11) and promotes the full inclusion of

persons with disabilities in all areas of development. In particular, RIDS argues that – and this manual aims to demonstrate it – strengthening the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities in the beneficiary countries of co-operation allows CRPD sustainability in those countries.

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## NOTES:

1. <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/AreaSociale/Disabilita/ConvenzioneONU/Pages/default.aspx>
2. <http://www.ridsnetwork.org/focus/piano-di-azione-disabilita-e-cooperazione/>
3. The InfoEas project (AID 10305) “Cooperate to include. Italy’s commitment to disability and development cooperation”, is managed by AIFO on behalf of RIDS and co-financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and it is intended to promote the dissemination and implementation of the Action Plan for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in policies and cooperation projects.
4. <http://www.ridsnetwork.org/>



## INTRODUCTION

The approval of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by the United Nations Assembly<sup>1</sup> is a revolutionary act in all fields of policies, programmes and projects concerning one billion persons with disabilities worldwide (of whom 80% in mid and low income countries<sup>2</sup>). A few further relevant figures may be provided: more than 95% of disabled children worldwide do not attend school; women with disabilities suffer multi-discrimination, in Italy as well, since they are subject to a twofold discrimination, i.e. discrimination on the grounds of gender and disability; every year, twenty million women (30 per minute) experience difficult pregnancies and childbirths, with consequent complications that might often lead to functional impairments; furthermore, in mid and low income countries, the infant mortality rate is four times higher than average for children with disabilities; and in some African countries, persons with disabilities are excluded from AIDS treatment<sup>3</sup>. The list of examples could continue, but the point is that everywhere, these people are excluded from the rights, goods and services, which are instead accessible for other people.

For this reason, CRPD promotes the human rights of persons with disabilities, engaging the States that have ratified it to ensure adequate legal protection, in order to remove the discrimination to which persons with disabilities are subjected and to promote equal opportunities, just like the rest of all the other citizens.

Article 32 of the CRPD *“ensures that international cooperation is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities”* and encourages the participation of *“organisations of persons with disabilities”*. These are two completely new fields: on the one hand, a twin-track approach is put forward, which aims to increase the resources allocated to persons with disabilities and to promote the mainstreaming of disability in all projects; on the other hand, the strengthening of the role to be played by organisations of persons with disabilities in decisions concerning their own lives (empowerment and capacity building), often the only guarantee of sustainability of the Convention at local and national level.

Article 11 also sets forth that *“States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters”*.

The United Nations, for example, have launched a few specific initiatives for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the framework of the global initiative on poverty

eradication<sup>4</sup>, of international cooperation interventions<sup>5</sup>, of actions aimed at reducing risk disaster<sup>6</sup>, and of statistics<sup>7</sup>.

The European Union, having signed the CRPD, in the field of international cooperation<sup>8</sup> and of emergency interventions<sup>9</sup>, has promoted various actions addressed to persons with disabilities, as is shown in the 2010-2020 European Disability Strategy<sup>10</sup>.

The new approach to the rights of persons with disabilities shall ensure an inclusive development, without excluding anyone, anywhere. Still today in “rich” countries not only persons with disabilities, but also the elderly, youth, women, and those who become unemployed at 40/50 years are excluded from development. In mid and low income countries exclusion is even more serious, because these people are granted no access to programmes and services that should instead be addressed to all citizens. *Including* means ensuring that all people have the opportunity to be part and parcel of society; being *included* means letting one’s voice be heard and listened to; it means having the opportunity to decide along with the rest of citizens on how to organise society, ensuring that all people, men and women alike, can benefit from its progress.

That is why we work for *empowerment*: to “strengthen the capacity of those who are impoverished” and to “give people back the chance to have a say and power in society.” From this perspective, *empowerment* is a model intended to meet the needs of people with disabilities and their organisations, to enhance awareness and competency, to have the necessary tools to protect one’s own rights, to have a say at local, national and international level about decisions that concern them.

Over the past few years, organisations working in the field of international cooperation have not often been responsive to people with disabilities. This manual is intended to serve as a contribution, starting from the experiences that have been made, to understand how it is possible to include persons with disabilities in international cooperation projects, by promoting the mainstreaming of disability and enhancing the sustainability of the CRPD.

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## NOTES:

1. The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006. It has been ratified by 153 countries, including Italy, with Law 18/2009.
2. World Health Organization and World Bank. *World report on disability*. Malta, UN-WHO, 2011.
3. Please refer the web site of the International Disability Alliance <http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/en/millennium-development-goals-mdgs> and to the document of Sightsavers [http://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/82788/MDG\\_and\\_people\\_with\\_disabilities\\_Sightsavers.pdf](http://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/82788/MDG_and_people_with_disabilities_Sightsavers.pdf).

4. Please refer to the preparatory document to the Adis Abeba Conference on the web site <http://www.beyond2015.org/> and UNDESA web site <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1470>.
5. Please refer the web site <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1618>.
6. Please refer to the conclusions drawn by the Sendai Conference (March 2015) in the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, [http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai\\_Framework\\_for\\_Disaster\\_Risk\\_Reduction\\_2015-2030.pdf](http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai_Framework_for_Disaster_Risk_Reduction_2015-2030.pdf).
7. Please refer the web site <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1618>.
8. Please refer to the Guidance note on disability and development [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/methodology-guide-on-disability-development-for-ec-delegations-services-200303\\_en\\_2.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/methodology-guide-on-disability-development-for-ec-delegations-services-200303_en_2.pdf).
9. Please refer the web site [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out/?&typ=ENTRY&i=ADV&DOC\\_ID=ST-6450-2015-INIT](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out/?&typ=ENTRY&i=ADV&DOC_ID=ST-6450-2015-INIT).
10. Please refer the web site [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/disability\\_and\\_old\\_age/em0047\\_it.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/disability_and_old_age/em0047_it.htm).



## GUIDE TO THE READING OF THE MANUAL

This manual consists of three parts. The first chapter provides readers with an introduction to the concept of inclusive development, presenting issues and approaches useful for a reference framework for action.

The second chapter introduces and analyses a number of inclusive development paths in the light of the “appropriate practice” concept<sup>1</sup>. The experiences that are illustrated have been collected by Valentina Pescetti and Maria Elisa Marzotti through a series of interviews to the following RIDS members: Ivo Pazzagli, Riccardo Sirri and Arianna Taddei on behalf of EducAid; Giampiero Griffò and Rita Barbuto on behalf of DPI Italy, Fabrizio Mezzalana and Pietro Barbieri on behalf of FISH and Francesca Ortali on behalf of AIFO. The inclusive development pathways that emerged from the interviews have been illustrated and analysed in several sections of the manual tracing back the steps of the “inclusive process spiral”<sup>2</sup>: *planning and design, implementing and monitoring, reformulation, evaluation and follow-up*. A focus on specific issues introduced in the various paragraphs offers food for thought, highlighting specific aspects of the case studies in question. Italian experiences are framed in special boxes, since the possible application of the manual to beneficiary countries of co-operation projects should be appropriate and adjusted to the local context, challenges and opportunities. A few materials useful for the design of an inclusive process are also provided in specific resource sections.

The manual ends with a series of recommendations aimed at promoting an effective inclusive development process.

The glossary explains some key concepts mentioned in the manual.

The bibliography at end of each chapter is organised both by “references” and by “recommended reading”. The appendix provides a detailed report of the project cards mentioned in the second chapter.

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### NOTES:

1. As for the definition of “appropriate practice” please refer to the introduction to the second chapter of this manual.
2. As for the definition of “inclusive process spiral” please refer to the introduction to the second chapter of this manual.



# CHAPTER ONE

## THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS SUPPORTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### INTRODUCTION

Almost ten years after the approval of the CRPD, an overview of the key issues will be provided in this chapter, emerging from the theoretical reflection on how international cooperation can promote and support the inclusion processes of persons with disabilities within the development dynamics of a country. The choice of these issues is based on an analysis of the dimensions to be taken into account when working in beneficiary countries of co-operation. The goal is to have as clear and consistent a reference framework as possible, linking the various issues to the human capital development, which is central in any development process.

First of all, the issue of *inclusive development* is going to be addressed, with a focus on the need to broaden the scope of growth benefits to the entire population. Then, a few key concepts, underlying the debate on development cooperation over the past few years, will be analysed in relation to the disability issue.

- the concept of *empowerment*, intended as a methodological approach that allows to identify the support needed to raise awareness about one's own condition and to enhance one's level of participation;
- *inclusive education*, intended as a set of strategies to ensure equal opportunities to all since early childhood and to enhance the human capital of all members of the community;
- *Community Based Rehabilitation* (CBR), or rather *Community Based Inclusive Development* (CBID), i.e. an approach to disability and a development strategy aimed at capitalizing on all the local community resources, by enhancing its skills and synergies;
- *accessibility*, intended as a cross-cutting issue and approach, aimed at enabling the full and effective participation of all individuals in social life, regardless of their specific functional conditions;
- *advocacy* intended as a set of processes designed to enable and support an effective and responsible participation in the decisions concerning people with disabilities.

The human rights dimension of persons with disabilities, introduced by the CRPD, is the starting point and, at the same time, the engine that makes the work of international cooperation rich in terms of achievable and concrete contents.

### 1.1 - THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: PREREQUISITES FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Development theories have often justified a binary development concept: within a single country, between a richer and poorer area, or between rich donor countries and mid and low income countries. In recent years, following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the growth of globalization processes, a certain interpretation of the processes leading to poverty and exclusion has emerged, shifting the responsibility on “those who are left behind”. Whilst, the CRPD highlights the items of discrimination and the lack of equal opportunities that are to be removed by the States to protect the human rights of persons with disabilities.

At the same time, two globalization models are compared and contrasted: on the one hand, the globalization of rights, established by the United Nations in the aftermath of World War II, which has led to the progressive inclusion, among the rights holders, of



Mongolia: microcredit activities for starting small business and commercial craft.



social groups being excluded over the centuries (women, migrants, children, persons with disabilities ...); on the other hand, the globalization of markets, which has gradually subordinated rights to the availability of economic resources. In this framework, persons with disabilities, traditionally on the margins of development processes, who benefit only in the case of *surplus of wellbeing*<sup>1</sup>, have clearly perceived that, after all, they are not considered part of society. Indeed, they account for more than 15% of the poorest people in the world, and in spite of that no investment is made in the promotion and protection of their rights, accounting for the corresponding 15% of the resources of a country.

The need to strive for an inclusive development has stemmed from this awareness. This, at least, is the primary commitment undertaken by the United Nations, through the approval of the CRPD, that consider the attention to persons with disabilities essential to eradicate poverty (MDGs and Beyond 2015), and that for this reason encourage countries to implement inclusive PRSP<sup>2</sup>.

Mainstreaming is a further equally important commitment, namely taking into account persons with disabilities not only in social and health policies but in all development policies and programmes as well. Development is inclusive, in fact, only if obstacles and barriers preventing the full participation of persons with disabilities are fully removed.

## 1.2 - THE CENTRAL ROLE OF EMPOWERMENT AND PEER COUNSELING<sup>3</sup> PRACTICES

The CRPD has highlighted that every day people with disabilities have to face permanent violations of their human rights. Segregation and the medicalising approach, reducing a person to one's illness, make persons with disabilities invisible, depriving them of their rights of citizenship and impoverishing them, both socially and individually.

Furthermore, even today, persons with disabilities are discriminated against and do not enjoy equal opportunities: the concept of poverty, for them, extends to a depleting unequal treatment. It is thus clear that disability is cause and effect of poverty: it is a *cause* since if someone has a socially forgotten feature, they will be excluded from society; it is also an *effect*, because if someone is poor, poverty often results into disability (e.g. in terms of health, culture, gender). The poverty-disability vicious circle especially affects beneficiary countries of co-operation, where persons with disabilities do not have access to basic services (e.g. health, education, employment) and are substantially excluded from the development benefits.

It is thus clear that persons with disabilities (PWD) need specific actions that change their self-perception and the perception of the surrounding world and ultimately

strengthen their self-defence instruments. Hence, it is important to promote empowerment-centred actions aimed at the protection of human rights of PWD.

*Empowerment* is a term with a twofold meaning: the first one is related to the capabilities and skills of a person; the second one, however, is of a social nature, namely related to the acquisition of power through participation in community life. Persons with disabilities need both types of support, which, together, create a virtuous circle: the strengthening of individual skills, in fact, allows the acquisition of more power to be included in society, promoting one's rights both directly and through the organizations of persons with disabilities and their families.

The continuing violations of human rights perpetrated against persons with disabilities are often the source of a sense of inadequacy experienced by these people, who feel as if it were their fault if they are unable to adapt to society, due to their condition. Changing

### (1) Individual empowerment and social empowerment

The **individual empowerment** of persons with disabilities covers several aspects: emotional (redefinition of the feelings about building and changing rather than limiting and destroying), perceptual (redefinition of life experiences based on the social model of disability), intellectual (becoming aware of the cultural tools to be used, by learning their language), behavioural (transforming human and social relations on the basis of a new awareness), enabling (learning how to do things in a different way), information (knowing and learning how to use the local laws and resources).

The **social empowerment** concerns the associations of persons with disabilities and their families and it stems from the awareness that one of the causes of the lack or inadequacy of disability policies is due to the lack of recognition and enhancement of the role played by the associations of persons with disabilities in the promotion and protection of their rights. Strengthening and empowering these associations, so that they can address society as a whole, means providing an essential and indispensable contribution to social inclusion. In the field of international cooperation, training associations of persons with disabilities of a country means ensuring the sustainability of the CRPD by giving a voice directly to those who represent them<sup>4</sup>.



Palestine: training of local DPOs

Individual empowerment and social empowerment are two closely intertwined and inseparable processes.

this perception is the first goal of empowerment, because it is only raising the awareness of discrimination and oppression caused by the inadequate organization of society that persons with disabilities can begin a (social or individual) emancipation process.

This awareness-raising process can be supported almost exclusively by other persons with disabilities who are themselves more aware of their condition. This insight has become an action tool and a real political and technical job, known as peer counseling. Peer counselors<sup>5</sup> play indeed a central role in empowerment activities. The theoretical references can already be found in humanistic psychology and, in particular, in the “customer-based therapy” designed by Rogers and Carhuff<sup>6</sup>. According to these authors, peer self-help is a very effective working tool, meaning by “peer” someone who is in the same situation, has the same age, culture, background or life experience. In the case of people with disabilities a “peer” is a person with a disability. The fields of action of peer counselors, in the context of disability, are very broad: ranging from work (in the employment centres) to promotion of independent living and personal caregiver management (in social community services), rehabilitation (in rehabilitation centres), acquisition of skills (to obtain driver’s licenses, or boat licenses) and to self-help enhancement (within associations).

## **(2) Peer counseling**

Practical applications of peer counseling were first introduced in the United States: under the impetus of the movement for Independent Living that flourished in Berkeley in the 1960s, the so-called “Centers for Independent Living” (440 in USA) developed and the self-help experiences and peer support initiatives began to emerge thus shaping the “peer counselor” profile. It turned out, in fact, that by identifying with a role model, persons with disabilities who have achieved good levels of independent, self-determined and inter-independent living can encourage other persons with disabilities to undertake the same awareness-raising path towards a higher level of personal independence with a view to reaching independent living.

The American model, borrowed in Europe as well, has led to similar experiences, with specific reference to initiatives mainly linked to the movement of independent living, *Disabled Peoples’ International* (DPI) and the *European Network of Independent Living* (ENIL), particularly in Germany, where the most outstanding peer counseling network exists. In Sweden, Ireland, United Kingdom and Germany peer counseling is practiced in the Centers for Independent Living, while in Finland it is informally practiced by associations and is mainly intended as “practical advice” (peer support). In France it is called “emulative counselor” to further emphasise the importance of the “role model”, deriving from the life example that the counselor represents. The Netherlands is the only country where peer counseling is provided by a special foundation, which organises workers and freelancers. Lately this practice has also been spreading in Eastern Europe (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro), whilst in Italy a peer counseling network has been established<sup>7</sup> (Barbutto, Biggeri, Griffo, 2011), (Barbutto, Ferrarese, Griffo, Napoletano, Spinuso 2006).

Social inclusion is a goal that can only be achieved through direct involvement and awareness of persons with disabilities themselves and peer counselors are an evidence of the skills that persons with disabilities have as experts of their own lives. The empowerment approach, in fact, is based on the assumption that people with disabilities are also endowed with a broad – real or potential – experience on how to overcome disability barriers.

Experiences aimed at promoting independent living and freedom of expression of the needs and desires of those who can only represent themselves in certain areas of relational and social life have followed the same direction towards empowerment. In the Asian Pacific countries, the Centers for Independent Living Network make extensive use of it<sup>8</sup>.

### **(3) Centers for Independent Living**

Centers for Independent Living (CIL) are a social model designed to promote and support life based on the rights for persons with disabilities, who heavily rely on welfare services provided by the community, starting from the assumption that everyone is able to lead an independent lifestyle. CIL and independent living schemes are managed by persons with disabilities themselves and they are oriented towards a proper vision of the conditions of these people and provide the following basic services:

#### **1. Information Service**

Persons with disabilities live in poverty and have no access to appropriate information, as to the type of disability, accessibility at home and to public services and means of transport, agencies or organizations that can offer medical, social and technical care and other services related to their rights (e.g. education, employment).

#### **2. Advocacy**

*Advocacy* is a process in itself, which involves not only talking to the media but also using communication channels to convey a correct message about the condition of persons with disabilities in the community, nationally and worldwide. Whereas, the *Independent Living* process involves the personal and social dimension, and in so doing it strengthens the individual capabilities and raises the awareness of both governmental and non-governmental organizations about the human rights of persons with disabilities and how to support them.

#### **3. Personal Assistants**

A personal assistant is essential to ensure an independent and self-determined support for persons with disabilities in need of assistance with activities of daily life. CIL offer training to personal assistants, in order to meet the needs and rights of people with disabilities, who are not ill, but need an extension of their physical skills to live in society.

#### **4. Peer Counseling Services**

Peer counseling services are also offered to help persons with disabilities to accept themselves and to face life independently, solving problems independently and leading the lifestyle they want. Each person has an individual empowerment plan that is designed through various meetings, in which each person becomes aware of his/her rights and capabilities, in view of reaching independent living<sup>9</sup>.

RIDS has identified *empowerment* of all those people who have been excluded, discriminated against and forgotten by society, as the best strategy to protect human rights and bring about change: the development of human societies. Social change takes place not only through conscious actions of associations, but also through the conscious action of every single person with a disability, when they become able of transforming the cultural and social view of disability in the environment in which they live. As Antonio Gramsci<sup>10</sup> stated, individuals and societies change in a molecular way, and everyone brings one's own contribution to overcoming prejudices and discriminatory myths.

According to this concept of empowerment, it is up to the State (and to the organizations dealing with development cooperation) to include all people in decision-making and development processes and, at the same time, to offer each and everyone the opportunity to enhance one's skills and awareness. Inclusive development<sup>11</sup> and direct involvement in decision making by beneficiaries are essential for societies that protect human rights<sup>12</sup>.

The empowerment and awareness-raising processes show that it is strategically important to transform the work performed by people involved in international cooperation and to invest in people's potential and in the role played by associations. Instead, continuously resorting to old cultural patterns, in which the role played by service providers only confines itself to provide assistance and care, can ultimately hinder the empowerment process of persons with disabilities.

Empowerment is a universally valid tool to fight any battle for emancipation and for the respect for human rights, because it is centred on the enhancement of awareness and skills of people and associations that represent them. This is the contribution that persons with disabilities can make to the growth of democracy and the creation of truly open societies, respectful of human rights in all countries of the world.

### 1.3 - INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The concept of "inclusive education", today so widely used in the international pedagogical field, is rooted in a series of documents drafted at a national and international level, which analyse this topic from different political and disciplinary perspectives. Among the founding documents the 1994 Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) must be certainly mentioned, which for the first time, officially introduced the term "inclusion" in the educational and social arena, by shifting the focus from the idea of special education, strictly addressed to students with disabilities, to the idea of education for *all*, which must be accommodated in mainstream schools, accepting multiple forms of diversity caused by different disadvantaged conditions<sup>13</sup>: mental, physical, cultural, gender and socio-economic conditions.

Education is a *right* every human being is entitled to, a right that protects the quality of life of every person and country. Guaranteeing the right to education for all is the commitment that governments must undertake and be held accountable for, as underlined by international documents that interpret inclusion according to human rights based approach. In this regard, reference must be made to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>14</sup> (CRPD) (UN, 2006), which in several passages reiterates the need to ensure equal educational opportunities to each person, as well as the Madrid Declaration and the UNESCO “Education For All” Programme, which emphasize the fundamental importance of education in all individuals’ lives. Proposing school as a place for all, based on the principles of participation and equality, is the first step towards an inclusive society.



Mongolia: inclusive education's activities

Historically, persons with disabilities have been excluded from the regular education system and/or have often been segregated in institutions with special containment functions and/or, at times, offering specialised interventions with segregating implications. Actual changes have occurred only when the national laws have started to provide for the inclusion of all children with disabilities in regular education systems. Several international studies report that the exclusion of persons with disabilities from educational and vocational training opportunities has a high social and economic cost, because it will also exclude them from the workplace and is directly linked to economic insecurity. While, inclusive education can help break the poverty-disability binomial.

Promoting inclusive education within education systems implies the activation of change processes, starting with the introduction and testing of innovation on the political, practical and cultural level: inclusion is a never ending and ever transforming process, in any context. The Italian school experience itself, forerunner of integration at the international level<sup>15</sup> – and increasingly more oriented to pursue the inclusion goal – is today called to carry out a critical analysis on the challenges that must be faced by our country, such as the urgent need to find a solution to the obstacles encountered by an increasing number of students within the formal and informal educational settings.

If these contexts are allowed to impoverish from the cultural, economic and vocational point of view, they are likely to go back being exclusionary.

In the light of the above considerations, promoting inclusive education processes in beneficiary countries of co-operation, suffering from conditions of extreme insecurity and poverty, inevitably means having to consider *sustainability*, through the optimization of school resources, enhancement and networking of local resources, both from civil society and institutional entities, and invest in job-oriented qualification (through capacity building schemes) of human capital engaged in education systems, both within and without the school settings of the countries involved.

It is necessary to continue to invest in vocational training, by improving the quality of initial training and retraining, to give rise to *facilitating and competent contexts*<sup>16</sup>, able to accept and include all forms of diversity, creating the conditions necessary to trigger empowerment<sup>17</sup> processes both in favour of persons with disabilities and of other socially, economically and/or culturally disadvantaged people.

Finally, the *social dimension* cannot be underestimated, since it characterizes inclusive education, intended as the ability to integrate and enhance the various spheres of life of an individual, ranging from education to the social realm, including one's circle of friends, the family context and reference community. It is a complex and articulated social environment, which constitutes the starting condition for that life project, which is expected to ensure inclusion at all times and spaces of life, bringing into play the social support network, the methodologies and interventions that can ensure an adequate quality of life (Canevaro, 2007).

## 1.4 - FROM COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION TO COMMUNITY BASED INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a development strategy aimed at improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and their families (WHO)<sup>18</sup>, trying to meet their basic needs through their participation and social inclusion in the development process of the community to which they belong. In recent years, the international debate has proposed to shift away from the previous approach towards the new definition of "Community-Based Inclusive Development"<sup>19</sup>.

In the framework of a CBID programme, persons with disabilities are involved in the rehabilitation project, not only from a medical point of view but also taking into account all aspects and spheres of life: from socializing to work integration, education and empowerment. All this is done according to a holistic approach to the person and by directly involving the local community.



Implementing a CBID programme means working on:

- sustainable rehabilitation in the medical and health care field;
- involvement of the community, to promote social inclusion and a sense of belonging;
- design of appropriate education courses and poverty reduction, to break the vicious cycle that links disability to poverty by supporting income-generating activities;
- involvement of local DPOs and of civil society, following a sustainable and multi-sectoral approach, which enhances independence and self-reliance of persons with disabilities. Being able to work and contribute to the economy of one's own family and of the local community, for example, increases self-esteem in a person with disability and helps change the perception and attitude of the local community towards that person, breaking down prejudices and social barriers.



Mongolia: training of parents of children with disabilities

CBID programmes can be implemented on a small or large scale. Once the scope of action covered by the programme has been identified, the next step is the identification and training of the key figures in the local community: families, volunteers, teachers, medical personnel and paramedics. These people will be adequately trained on relevant issues related to the CBID approach such as: disability prevention education during pregnancy, early detection of disabilities in children, physical rehabilitation in collaboration with public health centres, vocational training centres, work integration or micro-credit projects for start-ups by persons with disabilities. Training then leads to the organization of activities, such as networking to enhance already available local resources: the local community, schools, places of worship, local associations, public health centres. This ensures social continuity to the implementation of the programme (Rabbi, 2011).

Each CBID programme is implemented and managed taking into account the national and local context, through a committee representing all parties involved, including representatives of DPOs.

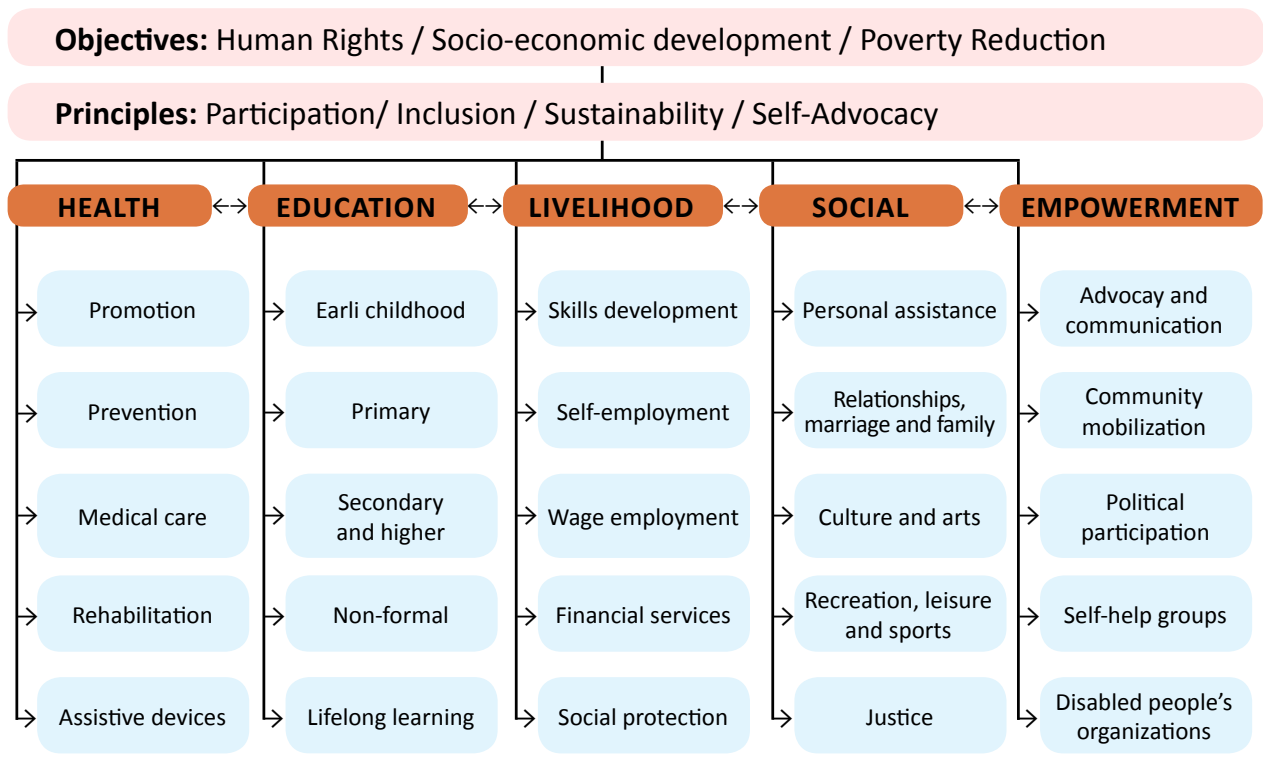


Hence, CBID enhances local resources, promotes an appropriate methodology fit for the social and economic development context of the community involved and capitalises on the knowledge of the community itself, including the use of local materials to design mobility aids for persons with disabilities<sup>20</sup>. This approach is close to persons with disabilities who can receive treatment and everything they need close to the place where they live, without necessarily being uprooted from their own families and communities. CBID underlying principles are the same ones referred to by the CRPD (UN, 2006)<sup>21</sup>: non-discrimination, equal opportunities, social inclusion.

These principles apply across the board to all the areas of activity covered by CBID, which, in this sense, is considered to be one of the most valuable tools for the implementation of the CRPD in rural and remote areas of the world and to support Community Based Development (WHO, 2010).

CBID is a multisectoral strategy because it acts in a systematic way on the five key dimensions of life of persons with disabilities: health, education, livelihood, social life and empowerment. The set of these dimensions, articulated in various specific components, is fully described in a matrix which all CBID programmes refer to. Each CBID programme, in fact, is intended to ensure an inclusive development; it will thus select all the components of the matrix that are more functional to the local needs and priorities, based on the resources available.

### COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION (CBR)<sup>22</sup>



To conclude, the excerpt of an interview with Sunil Deepak<sup>23</sup> (Ghezso, 1998) is quoted, conveying the profound meaning of the holistic vision of disability:

*CBR<sup>24</sup> philosophy can be summed up in seeing the person as a whole. You cannot separate education from rehabilitation; you must not only take care of the individual “pieces” of the person, as specialists do. From work, to health, from participating in the daily life, to sport and culture: you need to make an effort to see all these aspects linked together. The development of Western medicine has influenced the culture of the poorest countries to the extent to which one may think: it is enough to have the technology and the experts to do anything you want. Yet, this attitude is based on expensive facilities and institutions. Actually there is little attention to the continuity of projects, and the last phase runs the risk of being hurriedly implemented, just trying to getting by it. When we travel to the poorest countries we are used to visit hospitals, to check how many doctors and therapists are employed, and when we do not see them we simply say that there is nothing. CBR, instead, points out lots of other resources available, such as: parents, family, friends, the community, who are there to help and do something, doing whatever they can, for example, even addressing themselves to the Shaman and making sacrifices. If you give them a chance to acquire a few more tools, some knowledge, they are ready to do more. You cannot replace the role of professionals, but there are many other aspects that professionals cannot engage in; let’s say that it is a complementary rehabilitation.*

## 1.5 - ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Accessibility is a feature of the surrounding environment that enables the full and effective participation of all people in society – irrespective of their functional profile<sup>25</sup> – and thus also of the people with impairments.

It is an instrument, a means by which the goal of inclusion of persons with disabilities can be pursued.

Accessibility can therefore be defined as the feature of the environment necessary for social participation and therefore for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, in relation to the physical environment surrounding us, from outdoor spaces, to buildings, goods and products, transport, services, technologies and communication.

In other words, accessibility is a - quantitative and qualitative - feature referring to all the elements of the environment with which the body of each of us comes into contact and interacts in the performance of an activity.

This general concept has then different applications, which depend on the physical and functional characteristics of individuals.

For a person in a wheelchair, for example, accessibility means the absence of steps or the availability of sufficient manoeuvring space adequate to enter and move around in a place; for a sight-impaired person it means the presence of tactile paths that can provide guidance and direction; for a person with hearing impairment, it means to obtain information, even in a visual form, that is ordinarily communicated in the form of sound (such as alarms).

For each person, therefore, accessibility means the presence of several environmental factors that can facilitate and not hinder the performance of an activity and hence active participation in a life situation.

Participation precisely is the ultimate objective of inclusion and non-discrimination for which accessibility is an indispensable instrument and a prerequisite. Accessibility is always intended as the positive relationship with one's body that performs an activity in a particular environment, and is a function of the latter. On the contrary, the presence of barriers and obstacles determines a damaging and discriminating interaction with the surrounding environment. This concept is explained in the very definition of a person with disability<sup>26</sup> provided for by the Convention, whereby disability results from the negative relationship between a person with disability and an environment characterised by the presence of obstacles and barriers.

Rather than being regarded as an abstract and absolute condition independent of the context to be pursued only in "ideal" situations, accessibility is to be applied in all circumstances and in all places where people perform a task, such as: move, wash, play, study, work, and so on. As a matter of fact inclusion can and must be pursued and achieved by allowing the participation of all, provided that the right environmental adaptations are put in place.

Accessibility is not a luxury that you can afford only after thinking of anything else but, on the contrary, it must be sought in all circumstances and at the earliest stages of conception, design and implementation of an intervention. "Universal Design" or "Design for All" is the instrument of the process identified by the Convention to achieve accessibility<sup>27</sup>.

"Universal Design" means overcoming the concept of "breaking down barriers" that, already in the enunciation itself, suggests the presence of previously made barriers, which then have to be dismantled. The concept of "breaking down barriers" implies an unfair, inconsistent and inefficient design and construction process; in a first stage one generally only thinks of the so-called "non-disabled" or "able-bodied" people's needs (ignoring and excluding all the others) and then - if and when it is possible - to take action again to remove/modify barriers. The result is, of course, much more expensive and unsatisfactory from all points of view. Applying the Universal Design concept to accessibility means utterly changing the approach from the very start: taking all people's needs into account, to the greatest extent possible, as a target for any modification work and/or environmental integration since the very beginning is the only correct and rational way for ensuring an accessible and inclusive environment.

## 1.6 - ADVOCACY AND SELF-ADVOCACY TO GIVE A VOICE TO THE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Advocacy refers to a set of processes<sup>28</sup>, intended to influence public policy and resource allocation within the political, economic and social systems and within the related institutions. With specific reference to persons with disabilities, advocacy includes the set of processes that people with disabilities and DOPs representing them can use, to that effect, with their skills and capabilities. The importance of activating self-advocacy<sup>29</sup> processes, in this case, derives from the awareness that the real experts on the condition of disability are the persons with disabilities themselves. Only they have direct experience of the problems they encounter in society (barriers, discrimination and lack of equal opportunity) and therefore are the most competent ones in finding solutions through educational and experience-based processes.

In essence, advocacy expresses the ability to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities and can be practiced in various forms: advocacy addressed to the persons with disabilities themselves and their families, through information centers or Centers for Independent Living; advocacy addressed to the civil society, organised in NGOs, professions, services; advocacy addressed to local, national or international authorities, through DPOs.

It is fundamental to enhance the capabilities and skills of people with disabilities, by promoting them in technical, social and political fields. The implementation of self-advocacy processes enables people with disabilities to exercise all forms of active participation in their community, i.e.: cultural, based on respect for human rights, innovation in decision-making processes and in individual and collective awareness-raising processes. Supporting and enhancing the exercise of self-advocacy in co-operation projects is another form of “giving a voice” (and power) to persons with disabilities.



Italy: peace march  
Perugia - Assisi, 2005

## NOTES:

1. More often, however, they are affected by cuts in social spending in the event of economic downturns.
2. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.
3. We will use the American English diction for “peer counseling” and “peer counselor” in the whole manual because we refer to practical applications of peer counseling that were first introduced in the United States.
4. An example of a social empowerment path is that followed by the Mongolian DPOs movement chosen as an appropriate practice in the context of the case studies included in Chapter 2 of this manual.
5. It refers to people with disabilities who support other people with disabilities towards independent living and self-determination.
6. The first application of this theory has been developed with alcoholics.
7. For info [dpitalia@dpitalia.org](mailto:dpitalia@dpitalia.org) and [presidenza@fishonlus.it](mailto:presidenza@fishonlus.it).
8. Please refer to the Asia Pacific Network For Independent Living Centers (APNIL) website.
9. For further information please refer to the website. <http://www.dpiap.org/reports/detail.php?id=0000184&year=&genreid=>  
ACIL model in Italy is Centro per l'autonomia di Roma (<http://www.centroperlautonomia.it/>) e di Terni (<http://www.cpaonline.it/>).
10. Antonio Gramsci, Quaderni dal carcere. Turin, 1975.
11. See the definition of inclusive development proposed by Rosangela Berman Bieler from the Disability and Inclusive Development team of the Latin American and Caribbean Region of the World Bank.
12. Design is increasingly more based on capacity building of associations.
13. This concept has also been stressed in the World Report on Disability (WHO, The World Bank, 2011), which underlines the responsibility of governments in providing educational services to people with disabilities in the national education system (providing, where necessary, solutions that, while not being totally inclusive, however, tend to pursue inclusion).
14. In particular the introductory section of Article 24, dedicated to Education, reads: “States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunities, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and a lifelong learning”. See also artt.28-29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ONU, 1989).

15. After over 38 years since the entry into force of Law 517 of 1977, after decades of exclusion from school, finally, in Italy, people with disabilities have been granted with their right to education in regular public school systems. While the Italian regulatory environment is advanced, research conducted over the past decade on the evolution of inclusive integration in Italy has highlighted several implementation difficulties, which cannot however be generalized to the whole Italian territory, but that prove the discomfort of families, teachers and educators, who not finding adequate institutional responses, tend to resort again to special solutions and technicalities of integration, looking for solutions to be implemented in their daily work.
16. *Competent*, i.e., able to offer solutions starting from the signals of change of the educational system and of school and personal life of students who are part of it.
17. *Empowerment* is understood here as reinforcing the potential of a person who becomes the protagonist of one's own development starting from the enhancement of one's own original skills.
18. <http://www.who.int/disabilities/cbr/en/>
19. From now on the CBID acronym will always be used with regard to this development strategy, without distinction for the previous CBR wording, except in some cases where, historically, it seemed more appropriate to use the original CBR definition (especially in chapter 2).
20. See "Community Based Rehabilitation" Card of Unimondo: [www.unimondo.org/temi/salute/Riabilitazione-su-Base-Comunitaria](http://www.unimondo.org/temi/salute/Riabilitazione-su-Base-Comunitaria)
21. In particular the text of art. 3 of the CRPD reads: The principles of the present Convention shall be: (a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons; (b) Non-discrimination; (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society; (d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity; (e) Equality of opportunity; (f) Accessibility; (g) Equality between men and women; (h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.<sup>21</sup> Consulente AIFO.
22. OMS official CRB matrix.
23. AIFO Advisor.
24. As literally mentioned in the original text of the interview.
25. Functional profile here means a combination of unique physical characteristics of an individual that can include impairments or problems in the function or structure of the body, understood as a significant deviation or loss with respect to the statistical norm.
26. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

27. “Universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. “Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

28. Mostly of a political nature.

29. This term is used to distinguish the advocacy processes in favour of people with disabilities promoted by organizations dealing with disabilities from those promoted by people with disabilities themselves and/or DPOs in furtherance of their rights. This shade of meaning emphasises the shift from a perspective whereby people with disabilities are seen “only” as a target of such processes, towards a more inclusive approach, whereby people with disabilities become themselves advocacy champions within their realm of responsibility. This concept will be better illustrated in chapter 2 which refers to appropriate practices applied to inclusive development paths that promoted and supported the concrete exercise of self-advocacy by DPOs (particularly in the case of Mongolia).





## CHAPTER TWO

### COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATE PRACTICES BASED ON RIDS MEMBERS' EXPERIENCE

#### INTRODUCTION

The expression “appropriate practices” rather than “good practices” will be preferably used in this manual, since there are no practices that can be described as “good” in absolute terms. There are practices, however, that are “appropriate” in a given context, with reference to certain objectives, the means available, the inclusive development strategy and/or process to be pursued, taking into account the *ownership* of the country.

For example, the action undertaken to improve accessibility to schools in Gjilan, a city of 20,000 inhabitants in Kosovo, served as evidence that school inclusion is possible in all schools. In this case, the Ministry of Education of Kosovo, having decided that school inclusion was possible, also starting from removing barriers, then introduced the accessibility requirements in all national school designing practices.

“Appropriate practices”, then, can also be intended as a strategy for action – not just a one-off event –, which proves to be “appropriate” to achieve objectives in a consistent and effective way.

This chapter provides an overview of some “appropriate practices”, namely a few co-operation experiences promoted by RIDS representatives and by other networks, in an inclusive development perspective, with a special attention to the contexts in which they occur.

The various experiences result from an ongoing commitment in some beneficiary countries of cooperation and in Italy, through development education and advocacy initiatives, in the framework of projects in which the issues presented in the first chapter have been put in place.

A few significant details of “appropriate practices” will be illustrated with reference to the various inclusive process management stages including: planning and design, implementation and monitoring, reformulation, evaluation and follow-up.

The inclusive “process spiral” expression will be preferably used rather than “project cycle”, because one never returns to a starting point, nor is just a single project sufficient, whatever its scope may be, to achieve inclusion. As in a spiral, the variable of time and change of context – also due to the results of the projects implemented – necessarily influence the follow-up and design of new actions.

Before analysing the appropriate practices, an overview of the main processes chosen is provided, which are here graphically illustrated by a spiral.

## MONGOLIA

In the early 1990s, WHO suggested AIFO to carry out a feasibility study for the implementation of CBR<sup>1</sup> on a national scale. The country chosen for this experiment was Mongolia. Being closely linked to the USSR economy, which had just crumbled, Mongolia underwent a major crisis in those years.

In a country where the whole healthcare system had to be fully re-established, the WHO pilot project proposal was a great opportunity for the Mongolian government. The “*Tegsh duren*” programme, meaning “equal opportunities” in the Mongolian language, thus started, in collaboration with AIFO.

Thanks to a series of projects funded by the European Union, AIFO managed to introduce CBR across the country over a period of time ranging from 1992 to 2011. The following project, which is currently under way, have mainly focused on the empowerment of Mongolian DPOs and on mainstreaming actions such as, for example, the introduction of CBR in basic health programmes, the creation of a framework law on disability, the introduction of a CBR training module in university programmes in Mongolia.

Over the past 25 years, “*Tegsh duren*” has given the opportunity to demonstrate that CBR is a valid approach applicable even to very broad contexts. At the same time, thanks to collaboration with DPI, this programme has allowed us to initiate *advocacy* and *empowerment* projects for the Mongolian DPOs network, which is now able to autonomously conduct self-advocacy actions.

# Mongolia

## (1991-2015)

### EVALUATION (2011-2015):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: AIFO, DPI Italy / Local: AIFO Mongolia, Teeghs Niigem, Mongolian DPOs Human Rights Committee of Mongolia / International: European Union (financier)

**AIMS:** Empowerment of Mongolian DPOs, advocacy, capacity building

**ACTIONS:** CBR becomes part of the Mongolian system / Training to DPOs to promote dialogue capacity with donors and south-south cooperation (APNIL, DPI ASIA Pacific) / Institutional mainstreaming, advocacy with Human Rights Committee of Mongolia

### FOLLOW UP (2015):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: AIFO, DPI Italy / Local: AIFO Mongolia, Teeghs Niigem, Mongolian DPOs / International: IDA

**AIMS:** Self-advocacy, legal framework on disability, CBR introduced in the university curriculum

**ACTIONS:** Inter-ministerial committee for the introduction of CBR in the university curriculum / List of issues on CRPD monitoring in Mongolia put forward by a Mongolian DPOs delegation to Geneva / Mongolian DPOs submit recommendations on the implementation of the UN CRPD to the Mongolian Government and put forward an action plan / Development of Disability Law following the principle of CRPD

**NEW IDEATIONS**

### PLANNING AND DESIGN (1991):

**CONTEXT:** Serious instability due to the disintegration of the USSR

**PARTNERS:** Italian: AIFO / Local: Mongolian Government / International: WHO

**AIMS:** Assessing the overall situation of disability in Mongolia

**ACTIONS:** Feasibility study for a large-scale CBR programme

### IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING (1992-2011):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: AIFO / Local: Mongolian Government, the Mongolian Federation of DPOs / International: European Union (financier)

**AIMS:** Gradual implementation of CBR throughout the provincial districts of Mongolia

**ACTIONS:** Cascade training through the National Rehabilitation Center / CBR committees in each province / CBR inclusion in the public health centers programmes in every province

### REFORMULATION (2000-2006):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: AIFO, DPI Italy / Local: AIFO Mongolia, Teeghs Niigem, Mongolian DPOs / International: UNDESA (financier)

**AIMS:** Empowerment of Mongolian DPOs

**ACTIONS:** Birth of AIFO Mongolia (AIFO local coordination branch) / Birth of Tegsh Niigem, a local NGO committed on CBR / First training course to DPOs on CRPD, management and communication for associations

## BOSNIA

In 1996, in Bosnia, after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, Centro Educativo Italo-Svizzero “Remo Bordini” (CEIS) of Rimini – from which the NGO EducAid would later spin off – launched a first pilot project in Tuzla aimed at strengthening school education according to an inclusive approach. The operation continued during the following years<sup>2</sup>, with the setting up of laboratories for expressive activities in six schools in the canton of Tuzla and on-the-job training activities involving more than 60 teachers.

In 1998, CEIS was involved in the educational component of the “Bosnia and Herzegovina Project”<sup>3</sup>, implementing an on-site and open-distance-learning integrated training programme on the issues of social and education inclusion of children with disabilities and/or victims of conflict.

In 2004, the model of intervention experimented in Tuzla formed the basis for the design of a three-year project<sup>4</sup> extended to forty experimental schools scattered throughout Bosnia and in the Sersbka Republic, with the overall objective of supporting both institutional and civil society stakeholders, involved in educational and social inclusion processes targeted to children with special needs, through multiple actions addressed to educational, social, health and rehabilitation services.

# Bosnia (1996-2009)

## EVALUATION (2005-2009):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: EducAid, Consorzio Fuori Margine, MAECI, RER, Regione Marche

**AIMS:** Extend activities to the entire territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska to support the education system on the issues of social inclusion

**ACTIONS:** Support the various partners, both belonging to institutional organizations and from civil society, involved in the school and social inclusion processes of children with special needs through a variety of actions aimed at educational, social, health and rehabilitation services

## PLANNING AND DESIGN (1996):

**CONTEXT:** Post conflict

**PARTNERS:** Italian: CEIS (from which EducAid will spin off), Italian Cooperation, Uni.Bo / Local: University of Tuzla

**AIMS:** Strengthen educational facilities in an inclusive perspective

**ACTIONS:** On-the-job teachers' training /Twinning between Italian and Bosnian schools / Documentation and Educational Resource Center in Tuzla

## IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING (1997):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: CEIS, Uni.Bo, Italian Cooperation, CRIC / Local: University of Tuzla

**AIMS:** Strengthen educational facilities in an inclusive perspective

**ACTIONS:** Setting up of expressive activities labs in 6 schools in the canton of Tuzla / On-the-job training of more than 60 teachers

## REFORMULATION (1998):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: CEIS, Uni.Bo, MAE, RER

**AIMS:** Strengthen educational facilities in an inclusive perspective

**ACTIONS:** Implementation of an integrated on-site and open-distance-learning training programme on the issues of education and social inclusion of children with disabilities and/or victims of the conflict

## EL SALVADOR

The Italian Cooperation Department action to support inclusive school development in El Salvador began in 2005 with the project called “*Setting up of an experimental educational centre in Sonsonate.*” Starting from 2009, the Local Education Ministry (MINED) chose to give continuity to the school transformation process according to an inclusive perspective within the framework of a government policy whose social and educational manifesto focused on inclusion. The project sponsored by the Department of Education of the University of Bologna “*Support for the promotion and development of inclusive education in El Salvador*”, co-funded by the Italian Cooperation department<sup>5</sup> and implemented with the support of EducAid, in partnership with MINED was carried out in this framework. This project paved the way for a subsequent bilateral project<sup>6</sup> funded by the Italian Cooperation department for the support and extension of the process to school inclusion, “*Strengthening inclusive full-time schooling in El Salvador*”, through technical assistance by EducAid and the University of Bologna.

# El Salvador (2004-2015)

## FOLLOW UP (dal 2014):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: Italian Cooperation, Uni.Bo, EducAid / Local: mined, local universities, pilot schools stakeholders

**AIMS:** Strengthen a Salvadoran inclusive full-time school model

**ACTIONS:** Consolidate school pilot experiences / Synergy with cooperation programmes and local policies to support inclusion / Nationwide extension of the inclusive schools experience

## EVALUATION (2014):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: Italian Cooperation, Uni.Bo, EducAid / Local: MINED

**AIMS:** Assess the contribution made by cooperation interventions to the development of inclusive schools in El Salvador

**ACTIONS:** Focus groups / Interviews with strategic project stakeholders / Collection and analysis of locally produced statistical data and documents

NEW IDEATIONS

## PLANNING AND DESIGN (2004):

**CONTEXT:** Post civil war (1979-1992)

**PARTNERS:** Italian: Italian Cooperation / Local: MINED, SNF, CONAIPD

**AIMS:** Make the "Republica de Haiti" school physically accessible / Build an inclusion resource center (CRI)

**ACTIONS:** Remove school physical barriers / Build an inclusion resource center (CRI)

## IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING (2005-2009):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: Italian Cooperation / Local: MINED, SNF, CONAIPD

**AIMS:** Test the 1st Salvadoran inclusive "Republica de Haiti" school

**ACTIONS:** Remove school physical barriers / Build an inclusion resource center (CRI) / Training of school educators / Awareness-raising of the local community on inclusion

## REFORMULATION (2009-2014):

**PARTNERS:** Italian: Italian Cooperation, Uni.Bo, EducAid / Local: MINED

**AIMS:** Support and extend the education system transformation process in an inclusive perspective on the basis of local policies

**ACTIONS:** Technical assistance to MINED technicians / Capacity building for key school stakeholders / Introduction of educational innovations / Launching of the national observatory on inclusive education practices

## PALESTINE

EducAid experience in Palestine began in 2002 with an intervention in favour of children victims of the conflict and occupation. The approach favoured a methodology based on the empowerment of local stakeholders capable of becoming true resources for their communities. The project aimed at investing in the so-called “resilient tutors”, understood as factors promoting resilience and the development of positive resources among children living in a violent context. The focus has gradually shifted on children with special needs and difficulties by attempting to facilitate their inclusion in government-run public schools, insisting on teachers’ ability of proposing appropriate methodologies for all. From that moment onwards, EducAid proceeded to an increasing involvement of families and communities by providing educational services even in the most secluded and marginalized areas, devoid of any childcare services, through the “Play bus” service<sup>8</sup>.

The setting up of the RIDS network allowed to approach social inclusion issues also through the involvement of adults with disabilities, in particular women living in the Palestinian context and suffering from the double stigma deriving from disability and from being a woman in a extremely exclusionary society. In this case, EducAid tried to involve women with disabilities in an empowerment process including training on rights and on the use of new media, the development of an emancipatory research project and the provision of a fund for the creation of micro-enterprises directly run by women with disabilities. In this final stage, a special focus was centred on strengthening local DPOs capacity to promote a national network and the transfer of skills related to care and protection of persons with disabilities in emergency situations, through the “peer counseling” method.



# Palestine (2002-2015)

## EVALUATION (2013-2014):

**PARTNERS:** Europeans: EU / Italian: RIDs (EducAid, AIFO, DPI. Italia, FISH), MAECI., RER, LA / Local: SDF, El Amal, SHS, Assawat, GUPWD / Public institutions: MoEHE, MoSA

**AIMS:** Promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities / Social inclusion / Empowerment of DPOs

**ACTIONS:** Financing (by means of GRANTS) of micro-enterprise projects for people with disabilities / Advocacy activities / New media activities (videos, photo-journalism, social networks) / Training on inclusive approach / Emancipatory research

## FOLLOW UP (2015):

**PARTNERS:** Europeans: EU / Italian: RIDs (EducAid, AIFO, D.PI. Italia, FISH), MAECI, RER. UNI.FI, LA / Local: civil society organizations involved in education: SDF, El Amal, SHS, Assawat, GUPWD / Public institutions: MoEHE, MoSA

**AIMS:** Promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities / Social inclusion / Empowerment of DPOs

**ACTIONS:** Creating a national disability network / Peer counselling on disability in emergency situations / Financing (by means of GRANTS) of micro-projects for DPOs / Advocacy Activities / Training on the inclusive approach for DPOs personnel / Emancipatory research in liaison with Uni.Fi

NEW IDEATIONS

## PLANNING AND DESIGN (2002):

**CONTEXT:** Post conflict

**PARTNERS:** International: ECHO / Italian: EducAid, CRIC, RER, LA / Local: civil society organizations involved in education (REC., El Amal, Canaan Institute) / Public Institutions: MoEHE, MoSA

**AIMS:** Promotion of well-being and resilience of children victims of conflict in the Gaza Strip / Empowerment of local CBOs and CSOs

**ACTIONS:** Staff training / Refurbishment of education facilities

## IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING (2003-2008):

**PARTNERS:** International: EU / Italian: EducAid, CRIC, RER, LA / Local: civil society organizations involved in education: REC, El Amal, Canaan Institute / Public Institutions: MoEHE, MoSA

**AIMS:** Promotion of wellbeing, resilience and inclusion of disadvantaged children / Empowerment of local partners

**ACTIONS:** Training for personnel involved in education / Refurbishment of education facilities in a child-friendly perspective / Playbus activities / Educational activities for children dropping out of the school system

## REFORMULATION (2009-2012):

**PARTNERS:** Europeans: EU / Italian: EducAid, MAECI, UNI.BO, RER, LA / Local: civil society organizations involved in education: REC, El Amal, Al Rowwad, Palestinian National Theatre / Public institutions: MoEHE, MoSA

**AIMS:** Educational and social inclusion of children with learning disabilities and special needs / Creation of recreational and educational space for children in places without childcare

**ACTIONS:** Training of playbus personnel and teachers / Extensive support activities in classes of government schools / Playbus activities / Action-Research aimed at providing an overview of the situation of the Palestinian education system in collaboration with UniBo

## 2.1 - PLANNING AND DESIGN PHASE

***Knowing the context to find the entry strategy: who are the key stakeholders to be involved? What are the potential entry points? What can be done when there is a limited possibility to make decisions and to establish alliances?***

This chapter focuses on a few case studies, which serve as source of inspiration to open a debate on the “appropriate practices” to be implemented during the planning and design phase. The cooperation experience in the framework of these actions begins with a “pilot project”, which, regardless of its scope, opens up new development pathways and action strategies based on an increasing direct knowledge of the context and of local stakeholders. It will then subsequently serve as a basis for designing a broader approach to the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Starting from this initial “opportunity”, as a matter of fact, for all the experiences taken into account, it has been possible to initiate negotiation processes with local stakeholders, to learn about challenges and opportunities of each locality, to define action tools, methodologies and objectives, negotiated with local stakeholders, as well as to start subsequent projects.

All this, however, calls into question a further key aspect to be taken into account during the planning and design phase: local stakeholders’ active participation. Depending on the projects and scopes of action, whether institutional representatives, or managers and professionals of the sector or the DPO representatives are concerned, their full and direct involvement was fundamental to enable all parties to meet, discuss and provide their specific and indispensable contributions.

An additional key feature, common to all the case studies that will be presented in this chapter, is the investment in training and awareness-raising to trigger an inclusion-oriented cultural change. The design of specific training courses, addressed to different stakeholders involved in the project, has always proved to be a strategic move in furtherance of sustainability.

Finally, with reference to the design of inclusive development processes, it must be highlighted that the so called “*hinge*”<sup>9</sup> right – i.e. accessibility - is a cross-cutting aspect common to all the pathways presented here, declined according to the type of project, and always taken into account since the initial planning and design phase, rather than as a subsequent adaptation.

### *2.1.1 The start of the CBR programme in Mongolia: investing in cascade training*

In the early 1990s, AIFO started the inclusive development process in Mongolia, by organising training on CBR for state officials, doctors and social affairs experts, and by financing the participation of a dozen middle managers from Mongolia in a CBR course held by UNDP in France.



Mongolia: training activities for medical officers and health personnel

The selection of the first training group was done in collaboration with WHO and the Mongolian government, taking into account the sensitive political and institutional balance, CBR approach prerequisites and the objective of implementing the project nationwide. In fact, once trained, people would then have the responsibility to train local staff, on cascade, the true key to the success of any CBR programme.

Selecting the “right people” resulted from a negotiation and compromise and also from a professional and trust relationship between the local government – lacking training opportunities - and an NGO – having a proven longstanding CBR experience.

*Just one manager out of two will be likely to be really able to understand and convey the CBR approach, but this must be taken into account from the very beginning. (Francesca Ortali)*

#### **(4) Participation and social inclusion**

AIFO began working with the Mongolian government submitting a medical rehabilitation project. CBR, however, envisages the social inclusion and participation of people with disabilities, as an integral and indispensable part for its implementation. This approach allows AIFO to start a broader work, with important results in terms of the acquisition of rights for people with disabilities.

**(5) Quality training**

The choice of an effective training on CBR is the basis for a correct start of the programme in the country. AIFO has made a substantial financial investment to provide quality training for Mongolian officials.

**2.1.2 A pilot project on inclusive education for teachers' training in Bosnia**

The pilot project managed by CEIS (from which EducAid will later develop) in Bosnia is intended to strengthen state schools by increasing inclusiveness through an intensive field training and activation of twinning initiatives between Italian and Bosnian schools. Furthermore, the project has been developed in close collaboration with the Italian Cooperation department in Tuzla, which, in those years, promoted the establishment of a "Resource Documentation and Education Centre" with the support of the University of Tuzla and the chair of special Pedagogy of the University of Bologna. The Resource Centre is intended as a driver to promote teachers' training, with the aim to provide them with useful teaching tools for classroom-based post-conflict emergency management, fostering a new approach in the design of a more inclusive teaching activity.

**(6) Involving all stakeholders in the field**

To ensure the sustainability of inclusive education actions, EducAid considered important to provide for and implement specific cognitive processes – adopting different analysis and monitoring tools – on the political, institutional and social context taken into account, both in the preparatory design phase of the intervention, and during and after each phase of the project.

Starting from the first project in 1996 to the last one ended in 2009 in Bosnia, staff training has always been the fundamental element to strengthen education according to an inclusive approach. The methods used and training settings were negotiated and adjusted to the different stakeholders and beneficiaries' needs, on a case-by-case basis.

**(7) A broad meaning of Inclusive Education**

It is appropriate to refer to a broad and flexible meaning of Inclusive Education. It is broad because it is targeted not only to boys and girls with disabilities, but also to people with learning disabilities and to socially, economically and culturally disadvantaged people. It is flexible because these groups cannot be adequately included in the education system of a country if school settings do not become aware and competent in the



Palestine: inclusive education activities

first place. It is indeed necessary to train highly qualified education professionals with an expertise in social inclusion, to be able to design a school open to all.

The first experiences in Bosnia were carried out very gradually, in order to let the conditions ripen towards an effective reintegration of the largest possible number of children excluded from the education system into basic education.

### **(8) The synergy of institutions and social stakeholders**

Education and social inclusion is the result of a synergistic and articulated action actively involving different institutions and social stakeholders.

From this point of view, the projects launched in Bosnia provided for the establishment of coordination bodies, with a deep involvement of experts and local authorities, at the cantonal and municipal level, – representing the school, welfare and health systems – in the social and educational inclusion processes of children of school age.

#### *2.1.3 Empowerment, Institutional capacity building and accessibility in Kosovo: immediately involvement of people with disabilities by MFA<sup>10</sup>*

The Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation” (MAECI) has supported Kosovo since 2009 in the drafting and implementation of a National Action Plan and of a Local Plan on Disability in the Municipality of Gjilan.

The drafting project of Action Plans results from a complex negotiation process between the national institutions at central and local level, NGOs, disabled people's

organizations and international organizations present in Kosovo, in accordance with Article 32 of the CRPD.

The plans were drafted with the direct involvement of Kosovo associations and of international institutions based in the country, through special working groups made up of representatives of the Office for Human Rights of the Government (OGG), representatives of civil society and DGCS experts.

*Among the innovative aspects of this project: the presence of external experts with disabilities selected by the DGCS since the planning and design phase, project documentation made available and accessible in all formats, including Braille, audio CD and DVD in sign language, step-by-step “methodology” adopted throughout the process that has allowed to continuously review the project adapting it to different requirements. (Mina Lomuscio<sup>11</sup>)*

### **(9) A participatory process**

The extensive involvement of the Kosovo institutions and DPOs has enabled all parties involved to discuss, share, agree and even disagree, with a twofold result: a great national plan and learning of a participatory working methodology, facilitated by the officials from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **(10) Full accessibility of information**

Ensuring accessibility to information for all is a goal that must be pursued since the earliest stages of a project.

The final version of the national action plan in Kosovo has been translated into three languages (Kosovar, Serbian and English languages), as well as into sign language, through a video and in suitable formats for visually-impaired people through a CD-Rom.

### **(11) The birth of RIDs and the participatory process leading to the design of the Action Plan on Disability of the Italian International Cooperation**

The real opportunity of developing an action plan on disability for Italian Cooperation comes from afar and is the result of a longstanding dialogue built up over time by some civil society organizations with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Even before the adoption of the CRPD, DPI Italy and FISH had filed a petition with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to solicit mainstreaming on the disability issues addressed to the Italian international cooperation.

During this process, DPI and FISH established a close relationship with some NGOs working on the same issues: i.e. AIFO and EducAid. They then began to act as one subject and



develop an institutional debate with the DGCS unit, giving rise to “*Rete Italiana Disabilità e Sviluppo*” (RIDS), i.e. the “Italian Network on Disability and Development”.

The ratification of the CRPD by Italy was a turning point in this process. Article 32<sup>12</sup>, in fact, calls the Italian government to recognise the importance of international cooperation for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities by taking effective measures in this area in collaboration with civil society and, especially, with organizations of people with disabilities.

The combination of all these elements constitutes the backdrop for the emergence of a direct relationship with the then Italian Foreign Minister, Franco Frattini. Since the first meeting, RIDS put forward two fundamental principles:

- apply the CRPD not only to the Italian International Cooperation but also to all the activities performed by Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/MAECI)<sup>13</sup>;
- acknowledge the generalized value of disability issues, and thus promote the mainstreaming of disability.

The idea of an Action Plan on Disability for the Italian International Cooperation stemmed from these early steps, by identifying a few thematic areas, stressing the interdependence between the national and international commitment and the identification of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) as an important hub<sup>14</sup>. A RIDS and DGCS/MAECI “Working Table” was thus set up, with a modular structure involving various representatives of Italian institutions and civil society organizations active in the field, responsible for drafting the Action Plan (DGCS/MAECI, 2013).

The cornerstone of the process is the true dialogue established between DGDC and RIDS, which is able to participate in various technical groups sharing methods and targets and even disagreeing, when necessary, in a purposeful way. This effective and efficient exchange of ideas allowed drafting a high quality document.

The Action Plan, in fact, was able to collect the value of the experience gained by the Italian civil society in this field, further enriched with numerous meetings with representatives of institutions – both at central and local level –, decentralized cooperation, the academia, research centres and enterprises.

#### 2.1.4 Accessibility and CBR

In Mongolia, AIFO has considered the issue of accessibility right from the early design phase of the CBR-based inclusive development pathway through: training of medical and paramedical staff focused on physical accessibility of health services by people with disabilities; preparation of specific material on how to technically deal with the various disabilities and disorders, such as what to do with persons affected by stroke, how to talk with them and how to treat them from a medical and rehabilitation point of view.

Thanks to the CBR approach, based on the mapping of the problems and potentials of the local area, difficulties are perceived as an encouragement to deepen the analysis of the problem and to find the best solutions that can be easily applied by



Mongolia: a woman with disability in her Ger

the medical personnel, by the community, by people with disabilities themselves and their families. Making visible what normally is not – i.e. disability, structural barriers and social and cultural potentials for the local community – and enhancing the professional and medical skills leads to a virtuous circle.

Today AIFO is trying to bring these contents into the university training of medical and paramedical personnel, for them to become part of the body of knowledge of healthcare professionals in Mongolia.

### **(12) Making disability visible**

One of the first activities of a CBR programme consists in mapping all the homes where people with disabilities live, as well as places of worship, schools, community centres, bridges, and so on, in every village. To obtain this information, it is usually advisable to get in touch with policy- and decision-makers who have an overall view. Generally speaking, though, these people are not used to “see” through the eyes of those with disabilities. It is up to CBR personnel, then, to begin their work by interacting with the prevailing mentality and cultural barriers within the community, since people with disabilities seem to be invisible.





Mongolia: house visit of a CBR supervisor

The first goal of CBR workers is to provide the community with the tools to “see and hear” disability, to take it into account as a major theme for its development. The fact that CBR local committees are also composed of people with disabilities allows the emergence of obstacles and potentials of each community in the mapping. Only after this first step towards awareness-raising, can CBR personnel start working to remove the physical and cultural barriers and make the community an accessible place.

One of the first results of this kind of action, within a CBR programme, is the spontaneous set of activities that is triggered off at the community level.

To give just an example, in Mongolia, some school managers have spontaneously taken steps to make the school facilities accessible and, in some schools, Students Clubs were set up, who would make shifts to voluntarily fetch their classmates with disabilities directly from their homes to school and help them with their homework. By expressing their desire to stay with people with disabilities in different ways, these clubs represent a concrete example of social inclusion and accessibility promotion.

### (13) Resources

An essential element for the definition of an inclusive project consists in collecting information and data on the conditions of persons with disabilities in the area of intervention. *Handicap International* has developed a specific working tool, which allows gathering the necessary information to work in that area: the geopolitical analysis plan.

A further useful design tool is the knowledge of experiences and documents related to human rights for people with disabilities and to cooperation for inclusive development.

The following website addresses are reported:

- Centro per i Diritti Umani dell'Università di Padova (Centre for Human Rights of the University of Padua): <http://unipd-centrodirittiumani.it/>
- International Online Resource Centre for Disability and Inclusion on the Source website edited by Handicap International <http://www.asksource.info/>

One of the key questions to be asked in the planning and design stage according to an inclusive development perspective is: who are the main stakeholders for disability inclusion?

The following tool is useful to map the key players in the area of disability:

- <http://www.inclusive-development.org/cbmttools/part1/stakeholders.htm>

## 2.2 - IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PHASE

### ***Bring about change: what resources are available and how to use them at best? How can the inclusion of disability issues improve development projects?***

Each cooperation project, by its nature, can only be limited geographically, as well as in terms of time and resources. A thorough and constant analysis of the context is therefore a strategic prerequisite to define the appropriate actions to be implemented.

Constant attention to new elements that may emerge as a result of the actions put in place can also help identify the stakeholders who, although not being directly targeted by the intervention, can become potential allies and develop complementary but essential actions to enable the desirable change, either independently, or in close relationship with the activities of the project.

In this perspective, it may be extremely important to envisage and provide specific resources for the launching of ongoing research and monitoring activities.

An equally important strategic aspect, common to the experiences that have been taken into consideration, consists of the involvement of institutional authorities of the beneficiary country. They will not just give support to the action with their own instruments – such as regulatory change and implementation of policies consistent with the project objectives – but they will also put in place further actions, providing strategic and organizational resources to make change objectives envisaged by the project effective and sustainable.

To achieve this aim, the projects that have been taken into account have put in place synergistic pathways focusing on bottom-up and top-down capacity building and training on cascade, involving all the local stakeholders, both within civil society and at institutional level.

#### *2.2.1 Extending the CBR programme throughout Mongolia by means of a nationally recognized institutional body*

About 30% of the Mongolian population is nomadic, with an average density of one inhabitant per square kilometre. A long and complex challenge has been taken up by AIFO to implement CBR throughout the entire territory, including the district of the capital Ulan Bator: it has taken nineteen years of work at national and local level.

To achieve this, AIFO has put in place a cascade training system of medical and paramedical staff, using an institutional body: the National Rehabilitation Centre.

The project implementation phase has focused on the inclusion of CBR into the Mongolian health system, in order to ensure sustainability to the more general inclusive development programme.



Mongolia: activities with mothers of children with disabilities at Health Centres

To ensure an appropriate CBR programme management, AIFO has committed itself to immediately setting up an ad hoc committee at each provincial level, composed of not only the medical staff, but also of a DPO or local grassroots association representative.

This mechanism has progressively raised awareness among associations about the rights - and potentials - of persons with disabilities.

Following AIFO engagement, the Mongolian government has opened up Public Health Centres in each province of the country, integrating the issue of disability within the basic health programmes. The dissemination of the CBR approach, based on the direct participation of people with disabilities, their families and grassroots associations, has fostered a “revival” of the community, by consequently mainstreaming disability in development programmes.

#### **(14) Social and economic rehabilitation**

CBR deals with the social inclusion of people with disabilities within their communities. To own a flock for Mongolian nomadic populations is not just a source of wealth, but also of social prestige. Through the livestock revolving fund<sup>15</sup>, AIFO has managed to set a virtuous cycle in motion: people with disabilities and their families could thus improve both their economic and social status within their nomadic communities.



Mongolia: beneficiaries of cattle rotative fund

**(15) “Tailor-made” specialized training**

Each country must be studied in all its specific aspects in order to properly adjust the CBR programme at the basic Community level.

Based on the findings of a research work on the role played by Felchers – i.e. intermediate figures, half way between a general practitioner and a nurse, following a certain number of nomadic families throughout their journeys, providing different medical services in rural areas –, their training and their training needs in terms of CBR, AIFO could calibrate the provision of training to the specific characteristics of the health system and engage these intermediate figures in the Mongolian CBR programme.

**2.2.2 Education for All and Capacity Building processes in El Salvador**

To effectively promote change in an education system according to an inclusive perspective, it is necessary to foster synergy of action between the ministerial institutional level – namely the decision-making level of educational policies – and the school level – namely the implementation level of educational policies –, in compliance with the local development time needs.

The first project implemented by the University of Bologna and EducAid in El Salvador aimed at supporting the policies implemented by the local Ministry of Education (MINED) to ensure the right to education for all in public schools.



El Salvador: activities of inclusive education at public schools



EducAid action in this country results from the combination of two parallel processes: i.e. the bottom-up and top-down processes. The former began in 2009, in collaboration with MINED, for the development of a capacity building process addressed to the Ministry officials, with the aim of providing them with the tools to implement inclusive education policies and programmes. The latter was implemented on the field with the launching of pedagogical-teaching experiences in 22 schools spread out across the country. Cascade training was addressed to teachers, educators and school administrators, which provided them with the tools needed to make a school for all. Each one of the schools involved, upon receiving the ad hoc training, designed and implemented its own inclusive school proposal, adjusting it to the local context.

In this project, field experience has shown that it was possible to implement inclusive education policies at local level. MINED, for its part, has undertaken to implement this new inclusion-oriented “model”<sup>16</sup> on a national scale.

*A local experience supported by political will has been developed in El Salvador, which has made social inclusion its manifesto. (Arianna Taddei)*

#### **(16) The involvement of families of persons with disabilities**

Although the Salvadoran project does not include activities directly aimed at families, most of the parents of the students attending the pilot schools have been sensitized to the inclusion issue through active involvement in the initiatives promoted by schools: parents of children with disabilities have thus changed their educational relationship with their children, by implementing the suggestions offered by the inclusive education pedagogical project.



Mongolia: mother with child with disability involved in rehabilitation activities

### (17) Special Schools

Special schools still exist in many countries. Implementing education inclusion projects in these contexts does not mean “demanding” the closing down of these facilities, but rather developing and supporting transformation and enhancement processes in an inclusive perspective.



Mongolia: a girl with disability involved in CBR activities

*We must not totally reject the concept of special classes in those cases where the context is not sufficiently mature to enable total inclusive processes. We have to work to open up these contexts to integration opportunities and to facilitate sharing experiences. (Riccardo Sirri)*

For example, in El Salvador, in the short to medium term, the closure of special schools is not envisaged, because the system is not sufficiently prepared. Special schools, however, are being transformed into resource centres specialising in the issue of disability, to which public schools can apply to facilitate the transition of students from special to ordinary schools, by networking local resources and activating cooperation between teachers of different institutions. In this way it is possible to redesign the function of special schools in the inclusive education perspective.

### (18) The Action Plan on disability within the general framework of the reform of the Italian International Cooperation and participation in technical groups

The implementation of the Action Plan is part of the broader challenge of the Italian International Cooperation reform.

According to the new law<sup>17</sup>, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) has been renamed Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) in order to emphasize the new role to be recognized to international cooperation: a role next to foreign policy.

A central point in the reform is to provide an overall consistency to the various policies promoted internationally by the cooperation department as a whole. This question is crucial for the fallout of the Action Plan: if this document were addressed only to international cooperation directly financed by MAECI, its scope would be very limited and unable to reach out most of the Italian cooperation projects that are, instead, promoted and funded by civil society. But if the new bodies established by law 125 become a meeting point for all the various (institutional and non-governmental) stakeholders to ensure overall consistency in all international cooperation projects promoted at various levels by Italy, then the scope of the Action Plan would be much broader.

According to RIDS, the scenario to be reached is to make the Action Plan a cross-cutting tool applicable across every dimension of cooperation, recognizing that certain changes can only be achieved gradually.

Meanwhile, it is important to experiment with appropriate practices of international cooperation, capable of translating the political meaning of each pillar of the Action Plan into practice.

To implement the Action Plan, technical groups composed of MAECI/DGCS and RIDS representatives (as well as other representatives of civil society) have been set up.

The technical group dedicated to accessibility has allowed RIDS to establish a relationship with the technical department dealing with this issue within the Ministry. This work is considered to be strategic, since accessibility is both a practical and paradigmatic matter to offer people with disabilities participation opportunities and to gradually lead to the mainstreaming of disability. This allows us to understand how things can change over time. As a matter of fact, the greater the ability of this technical department in providing precise technical guidelines to ensure accessibility, the easier it will be for all MAECI offices and facilities in Italy and abroad to be made available. The immediate effect of a greater accessibility is also given by a greater visibility of the disability issue, which in turn leads to more attention to dedicated disability funds.

Participating in technical groups is a useful opportunity for RIDS – and also an appropriate practice – to get in touch with a few key decision-making centres that can influence and bring about change in different areas of the Italian cooperation.

The participatory management of the technical groups is also reflected in accreditation obtained by RIDS members who have been called to submit the Action Plan in collaboration with and on behalf of MAECI, internationally, at the European Union<sup>18</sup> and at the UN level in New York<sup>19</sup>.



Mongolia: social inclusion activities

Accreditation is the result of a long process whose turning point occurred when the president of the ad hoc Committee of the United Nations<sup>20</sup> urged the delegations of the countries participating in the drafting of the CRPD to involve also the representatives of organizations of people with disabilities from the respective countries.

*Until then, we were perceived as people imposing their presence rather than being accepted as acknowledged subjects. (Pietro Barbieri)*

The input from the United Nations, accepted by the Italian delegation, has opened up new scenarios: a few representatives of the main Italian DPOs have become advisors to the Italian government and helped build a substantial credibility of Italy on the issue of disability, in the international context. It can therefore be stated that the MAECI/RIDS collaboration is a good opportunity also for the Italian Government and, indeed, an appropriate practice.

### 2.2.3 Accessibility and inclusive culture

Accessibility can be achieved by removing both physical and cultural barriers, which in different contexts constitute a major obstacle to participation. At the start of projects implemented in El Salvador, EducAid had to cope up with cultural and physical barriers in schools, since the school authorities did not have sufficient skills to guarantee the right to education for all.

EducAid therefore started working on accessibility, through awareness-raising actions on the subject of inclusion addressed to the key players of the formal and non-formal education system and of the local communities, to dismantle the cultural barriers hindering free access and movement within schools and thus denying the right to education for all.

During these awareness-raising and training processes, investments were also made to manage the space and resources available in a “creative” accessibility perspective, looking for immediate “low cost” although effective solutions, able to facilitate the accessibility of students with motor difficulties to school facilities, through the involvement of various civil society organizations.

#### **(19) Accessibility and right to participation**

Although physical accessibility is not the main focus of the project initiated by EducAid in El Salvador, the same local stakeholders involved in the field activities have pointed out that physical accessibility is a fundamental prerequisite for exercising the right to participation, regardless of the physical conditions of each person. In this capacity building process, local stakeholders have engaged themselves to rethink the school pro-



ject from an inclusive perspective, and have found practical solutions to make school buildings accessible and affordable. For example, they set up working groups to discuss how to improve the home-school itinerary and to make it more accessible. Educational agencies<sup>21</sup>, in turn, promoted the establishment of an informal network to support inclusive education locally, offering different types of contributions, also in terms of transport, which is often non-existent.

### **(20) Resources**

What are the steps to be taken to make a programme inclusive? What should an NGO do to address this issue? Should any new specific programmes be designed or can disability be included in the already existing programmes?

Some concrete answers to these and many other questions can be found in:

*Count me in. Include people with disabilities in development projects. A practical guide for organizations in North and South.*

This practical guide is the result of the work done by a few Dutch NGOs and by a group of local NGOs in Ethiopia and in India, which have concretely tried to include people with disabilities in their programmes and in their organizations.

## 2.3 - REFORMULATION PHASE

***The opportunity to change the formula: what do we need to analyse the movement that we helped to create? Who can offer us binoculars to look ahead, or a microscope to find out strategic details?***

The activities carried out by NGOs can be seen as a continuing reformulation of the action design process to adapt activities and tools to the different society needs. This process ultimately leads to identify new partners and new fields of action, as well as to progressively include local stakeholders' views, transforming them from recipients of the intervention into agents of change.

The progressive involvement of local partners in the direct activity management is undoubtedly important, along this direction.

An NGO, engaged in producing profound changes at different (institutional, social and cultural) levels, cannot play the role and act on behalf of local organizations, but it is intended to provide adequate support and tools to enable them to take steps to claim their own rights and to make their own decisions independently.

This step, on the other hand, determines a qualitative shift in the operating mode of an NGO, allowing to shift away from the intervention-based approach - often decided somewhere else and then to be somehow joined in by local stakeholders

– to an approach centred on the empowerment of local stakeholders, who are the only ones who can indeed decide and play an ongoing strategic role, in the pursuit of change.

On the other hand it is precisely this gradual empowerment process of local stakeholders that makes it possible to avoid the trap of welfarism, allowing reformulating the types of beneficiaries and activities in relation to new needs and opportunities highlighted by the project actions themselves.

In particular, working with DPOs, NGOs need to rethink their goals and expand their vision to include the views of people with disabilities in their work. The work done so far by NGOs, as shown by the experiences that have been illustrated, has paved the way towards the development of synergy between organizations dealing with disabilities and organizations of people with disabilities. The complementary action that can be performed by local and international NGOs and DPOs may promote empowerment at all levels: at the individual, association and organization level.

The empowerment activities presented here below are the result of a careful analysis of the local contexts, the deliberate choice of the methodologies to be used by peer counselors and proper management of the dynamics between local stakeholders, which inevitably arise from this kind of training.

### *2.3.1 Empowerment of DPOs Movement in Mongolia*

The empowerment of people with disabilities and DPOs is a fundamental aspect of the work to be done as part of the CBR<sup>22</sup> matrix, in a holistic perspective of disability.

In 2006, AIFO focused the inclusive development process in Mongolia on the empowerment of local associations of persons with disabilities. Training support on human rights<sup>23</sup> and tools to know how to manage the organizational, financial and remote communication aspects were provided to DPOs, through a project funded by UNDESA, managed by AIFO-Mongolia, in collaboration with DPI Italy. Then, thanks to a project funded by the European Union<sup>24</sup>, the DPOs network received appropriate training on the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the CRPD. This facilitated signing of the Convention by Mongolia in 2009, despite the fact that the Mongolian State had not taken part in the drafting of Convention itself.

The collaboration with DPI Italy has been a turning point for AIFO in the work addressed to local associations of persons with disabilities.

Starting from their representation role in CBR provincial committees, they then turned to acquire the tools and awareness necessary to carry out advocacy work at the national level, in their capacity as DPOs.

### (21) Opening up to the local civil society

In 2000 AIFO decided not to have any more expatriates in Mongolia and to open up a local coordination branch, investing on the formal and substantial training of a locally-rooted and motivated team.

In 2006 a group of welfare and healthcare professionals, with a longstanding experience in the field on CBR, founded the Mongolian NGO named Tegsh Niigem.

The birth of a local CBR organization, combined with the development of closer interactions with the Mongolian civil society, allowed AIFO to expand and strengthen the scope of the inclusive development programme in Mongolia, focusing on the empowerment of local DPOs and on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities.

*It is clear that it would not be possible to find already trained managers on site who are able to manage the association locally. It is more about local staff following what you are doing step by step, thus being trained on the job. For these people it is no longer a question of following up a project, but of dealing directly with the development of their country, thus becoming part of the process ... which is something that they find very exciting! (Francesca Ortali)*

### (22) The NGOs - DPOs alliance

The first effect of the DPOs empowerment process started in Mongolia is to claim for greater decision-making power and representation within the DPOs federation. Such a transfer of power does not take place easily and it is not easily granted by the old management, chaired by a non-disabled person.

Thanks to a greater awareness and tools acquired with the training offered by AIFO and DPI Italy, local DPOs can initiate a self-determination process, getting reorganized in a more fluid movement, which goes beyond the old federation and grants more power and representation to persons with disabilities.

The training programme implemented by DPI Italy in Mongolia proved to be appropriate thanks to its analysis and awareness capabilities of empowerment processes.

This allowed the DPI Italy counsellor to find the right key to open the channel of communication with the Mongolian DPOs and know how to handle the situation that the empowerment process itself had generated.

This allowed the DPI Italy counsellor to find the right key to open the channel of communication with the Mongolian DPOs and know how to handle the situation that the empowerment process itself had generated.



Palestine: Empowerment training of DPOs

*The momentum that you need to know how to develop consists in introducing the theme of the rights of persons with disabilities in a neutral way... Empowerment does not mean replacing organizations in their decision-making processes but providing them with an overview of the problems and the means to address them. (Giampiero Griffio)*

Thanks to DPI's ability to interpret events in terms of empowerment, AIFO could seize this opportunity to further reformulate the project proposal in favour of the new local DPOs movement, supporting the latter to make their decisions independently, without interfering with their internal dynamics.

*The DPI involvement has been a crucial help for us to understand the power dynamics between local associations and to manage the crisis of the National Federation of Mongolian DPOs. We learned a lot from one another, first of all flexibility. (Francesca Ortali)*

### 2.3.2 *The encounter with DPOs and the empowerment of local associations and of women with disabilities in Palestine*

According to a networking perspective, it is important for an NGO to outline a mapping of all the local organizations and grassroots associations working on the issues of disability, education and social inclusion in order to try to work together.

EducAid has begun its activity in Palestine collaborating with a few local associations in the Gaza Strip involved in educational work with children<sup>25</sup>. Since 2007 onwards new partnerships have been established with Palestinian civil society organizations also within the territory of the West Bank<sup>26</sup> and East Jerusalem<sup>27</sup>.

The collaboration with local organizations was extended further after the birth of the RIDS network, directly involving DPOs and local grassroots organizations of people with disabilities<sup>28</sup> in an association-wide empowerment process, initiated with the help of DPI Italy and FISH peer counselors.

In the framework of an inclusive path it is important to evaluate the work done by local stakeholders with a view to reaching empowerment and sustainability. The more widespread the



Palestine: Editorial staff of the magazine Voice of Women

inclusive approach is the more effective it becomes. This implies the need for NGOs to relate to different local partners to share intervention techniques and methodologies.

The natural evolution of empowerment, in terms of professional capacity building, is to achieve a certain level of sharing of inclusive methodologies, such that local stakeholders can autonomously propose training to other local stakeholders.

In the EducAid experience in Palestine, achieving that goal was very complex, due to the fear voiced by local partners, that this might encourage the emergence of competitors in the provision of welfare and educational services to the population.

*We have always tried not to suggest (and export) any educational models. Indeed, our work is intended to build inclusive development pathways along with our partners, thus allowing them to become fully familiar with inclusive methodologies and to make them sustainable, through a continuous and open dialogue respectful of cultural differences. (Riccardo Sirri)*

### **(23) Women with disabilities and multi-discrimination**

The status of women with disabilities is a condition in which multiple inequalities add up to various disadvantages: being a woman, having a disability and, in the case of Palestine, the need to manage different “roles” in a situation of war, of continuous crisis and emergency.

Discrimination in the private sphere, for example, is very strong for women with disabilities.

*Even as a child you're used to not indulge in wishing or hoping of being loved and accepted with all your impairments. Your affective and sexual life is totally denied and hence also the possibility of having a family. It is an unspoken limit, but it's there! (Rita Barbuto)*

The encounter with the RIDS network has meant a lot for EducAid, which has opened up to disabled people's organizations, such as DPI and FISH, offering the possibility to analyse discrimination from the point of view of those who experience it firsthand. EducAid has been able to gather this input and to reformulate its approach to work in Palestine by promoting exchanges between Italian DPOs and associations of women with disabilities, grassroots organizations and Palestinian DPOs, to begin working on empowerment both at the individual and at community level.



Palestine: empowerment of women with disabilities

### 2.3.3 *Emancipatory research: a useful tool for promoting the empowerment of persons with disabilities*

Emancipatory research is a type of applied research that is conducted with persons with disabilities in ways that promote their empowerment. It is a useful tool to identify both the problems and barriers related to different types of disability, and the possible strategies to overcome them, according to an approach based on human rights (Deepak, 2012).

Emancipatory research in India, in the district of Mandya<sup>29</sup>, implemented by AIFO, in collaboration with WHO and the Universities of Florence, New Delhi and Leeds, was based on the involvement of associations and people with disabilities, who have become the protagonists of research. At the beginning of the project, the methodological framework has deliberately started from a roughly sketched technical instrumentation, to be developed further, in the process, by the research group itself, through participatory training, discussions with other people with disabilities and meetings with the DPOs involved, as well as through practical trials.

An appropriate scientific methodology was thus built, with innovative tools to promote the rights<sup>30</sup> of people with disabilities with residential focus groups able to grasp the key issues and specificities of the issues related to disabling conditions and CRPD principles.

It was important, in this case, to encourage direct participation of people with disabilities in all stages of research, supporting their capabilities and listening to their proposals. The results of this kind of study can provide an excellent basis for reformulating a project with a view to greater inclusion.

#### **(24) Emancipation for all**

According to the educationalist Paulo Freire, even illiterate people are aware of their situation, they are able to understand it, although they are not able to process and translate it into a cultured language. Yet, if a poor person manages to process it in a language that he/she understands, this may lead to emancipation.

Although at first no one believed that it would be possible to turn illiterate people into researchers, however, thanks to a few University researchers, themselves with disabilities and aided by a support group, this has been proven to become possible. Aifo participated in this process, by playing a coordinating role and raising awareness that this kind of initiative could be carried out by people with disabilities (Rabbi, 2011).

*We could not of course involve 22,000 people as a whole, yet we did involved them at different levels: we identified 26 people representing all disabilities, local people, playing different roles. This group then met with other disabled people to try to understand how to carry out the research project. They then identified eight*



areas regarding the whole theme of disability and selected five issues related to the scope of action (labour, health, education, empowerment and legislation), self-help groups and associations of people with disabilities. Finally, they identified further more general and cross-cutting themes (e.g. violence, leisure, poverty).

22 themes in all were selected and each theme was discussed during meetings, which lasted even for a few days, involving people with disabilities. Life stories have been used as methodology, trying to figure out what their problems were and to what extent CBR could help solve them. At the end of each meeting they documented the whole process through an hour-long video. Findings deriving from this analysis work are mixed and complex: CBR has helped people access services, it has provided valuable support to certain groups of disabled people, even though others were excluded (such as individuals suffering from leprosy, people with epilepsy and patients with psychiatric disorders).

The project ended in April 2011 and involved around 400 people with disabilities, not to mention all those who have seen the video. Every time I see these people, I realize how much they have changed during this work: they have become much more aware. As many as 13 people in the group have finally registered for local community elections. (Sunil Deepak<sup>31</sup>)

## **(25) Resources**

*Promoting Empowerment. Emancipatory research in Community-based Rehabilitation Programme: a guide for CBR programme managers.*

All the necessary steps to conduct emancipatory research are illustrated in this practical guide, developed by AIFO based on the experience developed in Mandya, Karnataka state, in India.

The Mandya case study has shown that this approach can help CBR programmes to strengthen and promote the empowerment of people with disabilities.

## 2.4 - EVALUATION PHASE

### ***Achievements and/or stepping stones: how to capitalize on the experience? How to value the unexpected results?***

Each project can be intended as a useful pathway to acquire knowledge aimed at developing new strategies that are specifically designed in relation to the changes achieved within the local context. The evaluation process is therefore a key tool to develop new appropriate strategies. It must be conducted on the basis of indicators which capture the dynamics that have been initiated and detect not only the expected but also indirect results, arising from variables, which were not planned but anyway linked to the ongoing inclusive development process.

Evaluation is essential to continue work to ensure *mainstreaming* and linking of *empowerment* to institutional processes and, more generally, in society.

In this perspective it is also strategic to raise the awareness of media on both the work results and on the issue of how to communicate the disability issue. A decisive contribution can thus be made to disseminating a different cultural approach towards disability, supporting *advocacy* actions for the recognition of rights of persons with disabilities.

The assessment of inclusive development processes – which will be further illustrated in the following pages – and investment on the empowerment local DPOs are critical steps for NGOs from an “*advocacy on behalf of*” to an “*advocacy with*” persons with disabilities.

#### ***2.4.1 CBR, advocacy and empowerment***

AIFO has strategically chosen to begin its work in Mongolia according to a profile apparently limited to purely medical and health issues. The inclusive development project was, in fact, initiated according to a CBR based approach, supported by the local government, as it proved to be the most cost-effective way to contain health spending and to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Such an approach, however, has also immediately allowed the participation of people with disabilities and DPOs, thus laying the foundations towards the broader horizon of human rights.

In 2011, the Mongolian government enacted a law that made CBR an integral part of the national health system. AIFO was able to seize this important result of a twenty-year-long commitment on *mainstreaming* and used it as a stepping stone towards new more ambitious goals of advocacy to be pursued together with the DPOs movement in Mongolia.

As a matter of fact, in 2013, AIFO Mongolia and Tegsh Niigem promoted a new action aimed at local DPOs, with a twofold objective: on the one hand, to set up a working



group able to draft a national framework law on disability; on the other hand, to encourage the development of local branches of DPOs and civil society organizations able to manage an advocacy process addressed to the government for the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The last empowerment mission carried out by DPI Italy in the framework of this project was aimed at strengthening the skills of Mongolian DPOs to enable them to engage in independent advocacy activities at the national level and to network in the Asian region context. Thanks to all this, the network could further refine its awareness-raising ability among major donors towards the issue of disability, build close ties to strengthen its authoritativeness and representation, through an “institutional literacy” and strengthen its relations with APNIL<sup>32</sup>, in a South-South cooperation perspective.

*It is not only a political act but also empowerment building work... if you want to talk to institutions you need to speak the appropriate language to make sure that they understand and address the disability issue. (Giampiero Griffo)*

CBR programmes result from good strategic planning. They have allowed achieving the expected objectives not only in terms of welfare and healthcare, but they have also led to important results in the area of human rights, which were initially formally “unexpressed”, but consistent with the AIFO mission.

In Mongolia, thanks to the CBR programme, AIFO has been able to map disability in each community, thus setting up CBR local committees also involving people with disabilities and/or their associations, thus providing them with visibility and highlighting both challenges and opportunities. According to the CBR approach, this meant: enhancing local resources, promoting an appropriate methodology fit for the social and economic development context of the communities involved and investing in community-based knowledge, ranging from the use of local materials for building mobility aids to shaping a cultural and/or spiritual approach of a given culture.

The social, cultural and political climate in Mongolia, which became very favourable to the recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities – even more so after the signing of the CRPD Convention by the Mongolian Government in 2009 – fully rewarded AIFO investment in the empowerment process of civil society, which became independent in defending and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

*It is important to be open to what is moving around us in the country, maybe even thanks to processes triggered by our own actions. (Francesca Ortali)*

**(26) Institutional mainstreaming**

Thanks to empowerment processes, Mongolian DPOs were able to build a good working relationship with the Mongolian National Commission on Human Rights<sup>33</sup>. Together, they produced a list of issues addressed to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations and were called by the UN to participate in the monitoring process on the official report submitted by the Mongolian Government regarding the compliance with the CRPD.

**(27) Cultural mainstreaming**

AIFO has always taken care of the communication aspect. It had noticed that disability was not a subject of interest for journalists, or if so, this topic was treated only in pietistic terms in Mongolia. The CBR programme provided the right flexibility to offer a training course for journalists to learn how to communicate disability appropriately. This has led to the setting up of the “journalists club”, which annually awards a prize for the best article about disability.

This positive relationship with journalists has given rise to a lot of videos, photos and TV commercials that have helped spread a cultural change in the approach towards disability throughout the country.

**2.4.2 Inclusive pathways and process indicators**

In the evaluation phase of the inclusive education pathway in El Salvador, EducAid detected the concern and desire expressed by teachers, with reference to the introduction and recognition of the right to inclusive education in the Constitution of their country, so as to ensure institutional sustainability regardless of the sensitivity of the government in power. The concern expressed by Salvadoran teachers to transform inclusive education from a “Government policy” to a “State policy” is a positive indicator in terms of *ownership* of this issue.

The next project initiated by EducAid, which is currently underway, provides for support to the Salvadoran Ministry of Education to extend education and to provide full-time and inclusive public schooling for all. At this stage, civil society is more and more involved in education. This involvement is a further positive indicator of the importance that the Salvadoran society attaches to education. Education is now becoming increasingly more attentive to the backgrounds students come from and increasingly more competent in knowing how to situate educational interventions from an inclusive perspective, to allow school to serve as a bridge toward a “life project”, according to a holistic personal development approach.

### **(28) An Italian case study of accessibility and right to education: DPI Italy and the University of Calabria**

The right to accessible environments means that every individual is entitled to freedom of movement and the greatest possible degree of independence.

From 2000 to 2011 DPI Italy started a peer counseling process, both individually and collectively, in the University of Calabria, to provide physical access and education to students with disabilities and to create a level playing field so that they could access the campus like anyone else.

The service offered by DPI Italy has initiated an awareness-raising process on the right to education and it has greatly improved the level of inclusion of all students with disabilities. The first group of freshmen who joined the peer counseling project reported the presence of numerous physical barriers within the campus and obliged the university administration to remove them.

Having freedom of movement to accessible environments means being able to share common spaces and benefiting from the services and opportunities offered by the university campus. Claiming the right to a university accessible to people with disabilities has been an essential step towards the enforcement of this right. Data show that, thanks to this process, in ten years the number of registered students with disabilities increased from 80 to 800.

#### **2.4.3 Liberia: Empowerment and ratification of the CRPD**

Empowerment is a process to be adapted to the various contexts and objectives. The methodology, tools and contents are the three elements to be combined together in an appropriate way to achieve an effective result.

In 2011, in Liberia, a country recovering from civil war, AIFO and Handicap International launched an empowerment project aimed at breaking the deadlock in the CRPD ratification process. Thanks to the organization of a workshop on the CRPD, open to various African countries, and a training programme focusing on human rights, on the implementation of the CRPD and the possible forms of lobbying offered by the National Federation of DPOs<sup>34</sup>, it was possible to achieve a result coveted for over four years, in just six months, which finally led Liberia to ratify the CRPD.

### **(29) Resources**

*Best Practices for including disabilities in all aspects of development efforts, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, April 2011*

In this UN publication, several case studies of projects, programmes or processes of inclusive development are reported. The case studies were assessed using a set of criteria developed under the CRPD.

## 2.5 - FOLLOW-UP PHASE

### ***New emerging scenarios: how to capitalize on the experience? The challenge deriving from re-organizing and re-launching opportunities.***

In the follow-up phase of the inclusive development pathways, which have so far been indicated, the desire of a political and practical impact of this process, also in Italy, emerges from the experience gained in the beneficiary countries of cooperation.

In terms of public awareness, RIDS has acquired an increased authoritativeness in institutional working tables – such as MAECI for example – and on the field, where RIDS is fully engaged in acting as a network promoting inclusive development

At this stage, there is a need on the part of RIDS members, to capitalize on the expertise gained through a circular knowledge feedback process and real exchange of experiences with DPOs. DPOs, abroad, have been able to benefit from many contributions and training. In a few cases, they have also been able to enhance empowerment to such an extent so as to play an essential role in monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities in their own country, promoting an independent self-advocacy model.

This phase offers RIDS members, and in particular NGOs, an opportunity for analysing the practices adopted by individual organizations on the issues of social inclusion, non-discrimination and accessibility.

This same text can be intended as an evidence of this and an opportunity to further analyse the sensitivity and enforceability of these themes.

#### ***2.5.1 The new challenges for RIDS launched by the “Include” project in the Gaza Strip***

The “Include” project was a precious opportunity for EducAid and other RIDS members to share and promote an inclusive methodological approach. The project began in 2013 in the Gaza Strip with the aim to enable and support the leading role of Palestinian women with disabilities, to improve their living conditions from a financial point of view and to promote respect for their rights as women and as persons with disabilities. To achieve these results, the rich RIDS internal expertise was capitalized on. Regarding the economic aspect, EducAid promoted the creation of micro enterprises, through unsecured funding granted to 35 women with disabilities. With reference to advocacy, the project provided training to 120 women with disabilities concerning the use and production of videos, photos and articles collected in an online magazine<sup>35</sup> disseminated through the project website and social media. As for collective and individual empowerment, FISH and DPI promoted a debate on the monitoring of the CRPD<sup>36</sup> implementation by Palestinian DPOs; whilst AIFO supported a group of 20 girls with

disabilities in the realization of an important “emancipatory research”, aimed at identifying and analysing the social, economic and cultural factors hindering social inclusion of women with disabilities in Palestine.

The “Include” project is an important follow-up experience focusing on social inclusion, empowerment of women with disabilities and creation of a DPOs network able to undertake advocacy on behalf of the rights of persons with disabilities in Palestine. The visit of the Palestinian delegation of women to Italy also helped to provide more visibility to RIDS as a reference platform for inclusive development projects.

### **(30) How to appropriately choose a peer counselor**

Consistent with the RIDS approach, all the experts who went to Gaza had a physical or sensory disability. This was an ambitious challenge, given the difficult access conditions to the Gaza Strip.

Being a peer counselor<sup>37</sup>, in fact, necessarily meant being a person with disability, expertise, know-how and relational skills. It is thanks to these characteristics, that a peer counselor can become a reference model able to raise the awareness of other people with disabilities about the potentials to be tapped on and the challenges to be overcome by persons with disabilities.

Since the “Include” project focused on the empowerment of women with disabilities, peer counseling had to be provided by a person having the “adequate characteristics” fit for this group, namely by a woman.

Rita Barbuto is the DPI Italy expert who coached the group of Palestinian women in the emancipatory research development process, conducting individual empowerment training targeted to 120 women with disabilities involved in the project.

The arrival of a woman in a wheelchair from Italy was a powerful symbolic message, which encouraged and motivated Palestinian women with disabilities. The challenge to overcome the political and cultural barriers that dot the way from Palestine to Italy was then revived and fully met, thanks to the project activity, which allowed a delegation of women with disabilities from Gaza to come to Italy in March 2015.



Palestine: empowerment of women with disabilities

*A peer counselor travelling to another country to provide training is per se an evidence of a good practice, who bears witness to the fact that a quality life is possible even for a person with a severe disability.*

*During training, I first of all start by telling people about my life and my entitlement to human rights. In this way, I immediately reach out and speak to people's hearts. Palestine has been for me one of my most beautiful experiences. I could realize that the desires and expectations of persons with disabilities are the same all over the world: to break free from disadvantage and exclusion and to be recognized as a "person".*

*Making it clear that equality for all means being part of humanity: this is for me talking about human rights. (Rita Barbuto)*

### 2.5.2 New accessible contexts in Palestine: RIDS contribution

Operating consistently with an inclusive cultural approach allows NGOs to reap full benefits, in the long run. In implementing its inclusive development project in Palestine, EducAid has always experienced inclusive practices, while maintaining an open dialogue also with those working with a different approach. In this way it has facilitated the opening of the world of education to inclusiveness, waiting for the cultural climate to ripen to allow the spread of change.



Palestine: check point to enter in Gaza Strip from Israel

Over the past few years, thanks to the effects of the entry into force of the CRPD Convention, in Palestine international agencies also began undertaking an inclusive approach. The expertise developed by EducAid, in collaboration with the RIDS network, is now more widely recognized and appreciated, even when, for instance, a petition is filed to make public and private spaces, such as kindergartens and parks, accessible to all.

*Since the very beginning, in Palestine, we were confronted with a context where large international organizations would look down at us with interest but also with suspicion, believing that our inclusive methodologies and approaches were far too complex for a context characterized by constant emergency. Today, after almost fourteen years of continuous work, we can observe a new attitude towards*



*our values and issues. Those same international agencies are now starting to turn to us to ask for help to learn how to make their programmes more inclusive.*  
(Riccardo Sirri)

Cooperation and exchange of expertise opportunities offered by RIDS makes the difference: in fact, combining the experience of an NGO such as EducAid, which has been active in Palestine for many years, or a DPO such as FISH, which has always been committed to accessibility, can indeed make a difference for inclusive development.

### **(31) An Italian case study on accessibility, inclusion and right to play: the “Let’s all play” project by FISH**

Playing activities are an example of an action in which children or parents with disabilities are involved and confronted with a specific environment: the playground. The FISH approach aims to eliminate all physical or social barriers, to enable persons with disabilities to experience a full social inclusion in the context of an accessible space.

*FISH is not directly engaged in building playgrounds, but rather social inclusion. “Let’s all play” is a project intended to show that there may be a place – i.e. the neighbourhood playground – where real effective inclusion is possible (Fabrizio Mezzalana)*

Thanks to this project, FISH has started the construction of playgrounds accessible both to children and parents with disabilities in various Italian towns.



Italia, Genoa: inclusion activities and right to play

### 2.5.3 *Appropriate empowerment practices and South-South networking in Vietnam*

In the framework of an empowerment-oriented project aimed at both DPOs and people with disabilities in Vietnam, AIFO has managed to foster South-South cooperation, always ensuring that training would be conducted by experts with disabilities. Thanks to the close relationship between DPI Italy and DPI Asia Pacific, AIFO could directly appoint the “Centre for Independent Living” of Hanoi<sup>38</sup> to deliver a specific training necessary for the implementation of the CBR programme of Quy Nonh in South Vietnam.

#### **(32) Calibrating the empowerment intervention**

Not all contexts have the same level of awareness with respect to the protection of human rights. Hence, starting an empowerment process sometimes requires extreme care and sensitivity.

In Vietnam, the Government claimed that they did not need the CRPD because the country already had its own law on disability.

In this case, the peer counselor decided to shift the focus from collective to individual empowerment training in order to have more leeway of manoeuvre to introduce the key concepts related to the CRPD and thus offer people with disabilities the tools they needed to claim for and protect their rights.



Vietnam: training course of DPOs

### 2.5.4 *Monitoring of the National Action Plan on Disability in Kosovo*

Once the National Action Plan on Disability in the Republic of Kosovo had been drafted, the need arose to build a monitoring system that would allow to monitor its implementation and to define any possible developments.

The Office of Human Rights (OGG) under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, who has been entrusted with the monitoring, after an exchange of ideas with the Kosovo DPOs, has taken steps to train all the relevant stakeholders, including DPOs themselves, on human rights, CRPD, scope of intervention and any specific actions envisaged by the plan. Since then, a monitoring report on the action plan, examined by civil society, is periodically published by OGG.



### 2.5.5 Reaping fruits and sowing seeds in new fields: follow-up activities from Mongolia to other countries

Several new possible horizons can be outlined, transcending the borders of the country where the process itself started, as a follow-up of the inclusive development pathway conducted by AIFO in Mongolia.

From the medical and health care point of view, the commitment to ensure sustainability of CBR is giving outstanding results, even for a country such as Italy. A scientific committee composed of representatives of the Mongolian Ministry of Education and the Ministry of University were entrusted with the task of setting up a CBR graduate curricular programme within the faculties of medicine and nursing sciences. The transition from the post-graduate education to curriculum training therefore enabled the establishment of the CBR approach within the Mongolian health system.

*At this point it would be nice to have a training feedback from Mongolia to Italy and also internationally. (Francesca Ortali)*

As for the empowerment, IDA<sup>39</sup> has contacted AIFO to train Mongolian DPOs to monitor the implementation of the Convention in Mongolia. In a few months, they were able to work together at the national level, to draft a list of issues to be submitted to the Monitoring Committee of the CRPD at the United Nations. In April 2015 a delegation of seven people with disabilities<sup>40</sup> – representatives of Mongolian DPOs – travelled to Geneva to explain the content of this important document and express their opinion



Mongolia: DPOs delegation during a press conference after presenting the list of issues to UN Monitoring Committee in Geneva

for an effective and full implementation of the CRPD in Mongolia, being the highest institution for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Mongolian DPOs movement is still engaged in its own advocacy work with respect to the rights of persons with disabilities. Upon the return of the delegation from Geneva, it convened a press conference to illustrate the recommendations by the UN Committee on the CRPD sent to the Mongolian government. DPOs also drafted and delivered an action plan for the implementation of these measures to the Ministries concerned, thus proving that they are fully aware that the rights that have been acquired are to be continually defended and promoted.

In line with the suggestions by IDA to IDDC members<sup>41</sup>, engaged in promoting similar approaches in other countries, the empowerment process follow-up by Mongolian DPOs could now envisage a South-South transfer of skills, to support further CRPD empowerment and monitoring actions in other countries and to promote advocacy fit for these new contexts.

*Skills are not only the competences that are transferred, but also the ones that are acquired. (Giampiero Griffo)*

Finally, again in line with the CBR approach, in the next future a new focus of work in Mongolia could concern the start of information/training processes addressed to DPOs, to narrow the gap between the centre and the outskirts, between urban and rural areas, including settled and nomadic population.

### **(33) NGOs thoughts about accessibility**

Accessibility is a multi-faceted process. If an NGO decides to cooperate with DPOs it should first start an in-depth analysis and re-organization process, including logistics as well, by paying special attention to this aspect. The organization of a trip by a delegation of people with disabilities, for example, requires great attention to several factors: i.e. the provision of the necessary papers, the personal care services to be booked in advance, duly equipped conference rooms and hotels, personal assistants willing to travel and so on.



Palesatine: a delegation of women with disabilities for study visit in Italy

Planning the trip of the Mongolian DPOs delegation to Geneva was quite complex<sup>42</sup>: since most members of the delegation had never travelled, they had no passports and the airline company had not prepared the necessary stewards to provide for the needs of persons with disabilities during the trip. In Geneva, however, the delegation was able to move independently, experiencing all the benefits offered by a very modern and accessible city.

Just because the preparation work to be carried out in advance is so complex, it is important to rely on the most experienced partners, such as DPOs, to avoid the risk of neglecting some fundamental point.

*At the beginning we, as an NGO, started working with a lot of good will and little experience. Today, we have acquired more expertise in our specific sector, but we have also become aware that we are not experts in some fields and, following the motto of the international movement of persons with disabilities – “Nothing About Us Without Us!” – we ask for help directly to those who are more experienced than us in that specific field, that is to say, DPOs. (Francesca Ortali)*

### **(34) Resources**

#### *Training Manual on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

DPOs training in Mongolia in September 2006 was the first training in the world related to the CRPD. This experience has then led to drafting a training manual on the CRPD, translated into seven languages and distributed not only in the beneficiary countries of cooperation, but also in donor countries. This example demonstrates that international cooperation may have a development impact even in the economically most developed countries.

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## NOTES:

1. Currently, the CBR acronym is replaced by the wording CBID (Community Based Inclusive Development), which shifts the focus from medical rehabilitation to inclusion. In this chapter reference is made to the CBR acronym to be consistent with the time of the events described, although the Community Based Inclusive Development approach is used.
2. Please refer to the Bosnia Information Sheet attached herewith.
3. Ibid.
4. Thanks to a decentralized cooperation grant.
5. ex Art.18

6. Art.15/Law 49.

7. The project is still under way.

8. In this case recreational and educational activities were aimed at testing, by playing, the resilience potential, at encouraging life skills, and at creating relationships between adults and minors.

9. This expression has been coined by Bruno Tescari, the <<tenacious disability fighter>>, as reported in the article by Pietro Barbieri, dedicated to him: <http://www.superando.it/2012/04/04/la-fame-di-liberta-di-bruno/>

10. At the time of the events described, the cooperation reform had not occurred yet. Afterwards, the “Ministry of Foreign Affairs” (MAE) was renamed as “Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation” (MAECI).

11. Official at the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of MAECI.

12. Article 32 states out that: “States Parties recognize the importance of international cooperation and its promotion, in support of national efforts for the realization of the purpose and objectives of the present Convention, and will undertake appropriate and effective measures in this regard, between and among States and, as appropriate, in partnership with relevant international and regional organizations and civil society, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities. Such measures could include, inter alia: (a) Ensuring that international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities; (b) Facilitating and supporting capacity-building, including through the exchange and sharing of information, experiences, training programmes and best practices; (c) Facilitating cooperation in research and access to scientific and technical knowledge; (d) Providing, as appropriate, technical and economic assistance, including by facilitating access to and sharing of accessible and assistive technologies, and through the transfer of technologies.” 2. This Convention shall not alter the rights and obligations of States Parties which arise from other agreements compatible with this Convention and which do not affect the enjoyment by other States Parties of their rights or the performance of their obligations under this Convention.”

13. For example, the issue of accessibility of MAECI premises.

14. The five pillars of the A.P are:

- Policies and strategies. Programming tools and monitoring of disability policies at national level.
- Inclusive design.
- Accessibility and usability of premises, goods and services.
- Humanitarian aid and emergency situations including persons with disabilities.
- Capitalization on the experience and expertise of civil society and enterprises.

15. It is a revolving credit mechanism that envisages the transfer of funds from one group to another. These funds, for nomads, are represented by livestock. Hence, 100 goats are assigned to a family and when they are impregnated, the newborns remain to the family, whilst the “stock” consisting of the initial 100 goats passes to another family (Rabbi, 2014).
16. By “model” we mean the combination of flexible and dynamic theoretical and operational paradigms which make it different from a rigid and static interpretation.
17. Law 125/2014
18. In May 2014.
19. In June 2015.
20. An ad hoc committee was appointed by the General Assembly in 2001, entrusted with the task to draft a document for a “*Comprehensive and integral international convention to promote and protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities*”, which would later become the CRPD.
21. By educational agencies we mean all those entities, including universities, associations and others, not involved in the field of education (libraries, sports clubs, cultural centres, museums ...).
22. Cf. chapt. 1 par. 1.4
23. In particular, the first training course on CRPD in the world was held.
24. The project lasts from: 1 November 2013 – 31 October 2015.
25. Remedial Education Centre of Jabalia; El Amal di Rafah; the Canaan Institute of Gaza City.
26. Al Rawwad in the AIDA refugee camp of Bethlehem.
27. Palestinian National Theatre.
28. Palestinian General Union of Persons with Disabilities of Bethlehem; Stars of Hope Society of Ramallah; Assawat of Nablus.
29. State of Karnataka.
30. Awareness-raising video made by the people with disabilities themselves, discussion report.
31. AIFO Consultant and Global Research Coordinator.
32. Asia Pacific Network for Independent Living Centres, <http://apnil.org/>
33. It is a Mongolian institutional body that deals with human rights, including those of persons with disabilities.
34. National Union of Disabled – NUOD.

35. Please refer to the “Voice of Women” magazine, published on the project website <http://www.include.ps> and through social media.
36. The Convention was ratified by the Palestinian President in 2014.
37. Cf. box “Peer Counseling”
38. The “Centre for Independent Living” of Hanoi joins the “Network on Independent Living” of the Asia-Pacific region (APNIL), involving 9 Asian countries.
39. <http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/en>
40. The delegation also included 3 accompanying persons, 1 representative of AIFO Mongolia, 1 representative of Tegsh Niigem and 1 representative of AIFO Italy, but only the 7 Mongolian DPOs delegates were responsible for submitting the list of issues before the monitoring committee.
41. As pointed out during the last meeting of the International Disability and Development Consortium (<http://www.iddcconsortium.net>) in June 2015.
42. Even in the framework of the “Include project”, it was necessary to apply for at least twice as many permits, not knowing exactly how many people would be granted a laissez-passer to accompany a delegation of four Palestinian women with disabilities to Italy. In the case of Palestine, and Gaza in particular, an insurmountable barrier lies in the authorities’ discretionary power with which these permits are granted. As far as people with disabilities are concerned, one should also add to it the uncertainty with which permits are granted to accompanying persons, who are subject to the same discretion rules. This was the case of a Palestinian deaf woman of the INCLUDE project delegation, who could not come to Italy, because her accompanying person felt sick before leaving and could not be replaced. Rita Barbuto from DPI, herself, does not know whether she can go back to the Gaza Strip, because it is not easy to find a personal assistant, who is ready to put his/her personal safety at stake.



## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Reflections and examples of appropriate practices in this manual have given rise to a few specific recommendations that are intended to improve the work done by NGOs, cooperation agencies and stakeholders involved in development processes. These suggestions start, of course, from the paradigm shift introduced by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), now an international standard, and from the consideration that the issue of disability is now included in the most recent UN documents<sup>1</sup>, concerning 15% of the world population.

Based on our experience, therefore, a set of ten recommendations is suggested here below, which are intended to be the most important practices to ensure the quality of projects aimed to support the inclusive development of persons with disabilities:

1. Any action aimed at supporting inclusive development is designed **to take into account the rights of persons with disabilities defined by the CRPD**, since they are an important part of every society and often represent the most discriminated against and poorest population bracket with no equal opportunities.
2. NGOs working in the field of international cooperation **train their staff** to act competently in support of the rights of persons with disabilities, to include this important target in planning and, at the same time, to engage competent DPOs in international cooperation projects according to the CRPD criteria.
3. In compliance with the CRPD rules, international cooperation projects **ensure accessibility for the entire population** to the activities and products that are developed, as well as to the offices of cooperation agencies, NGOs and donors (art. 32 and 9 of CRPD).
4. To ensure the sustainability of the application and implementation of the rules set out by the CRPD, cooperation projects **promote the empowerment** of persons with disabilities and of the organizations representing them, through methodologies directly developed by persons with disabilities themselves<sup>2</sup>.
5. The following items are especially important when designing new projects:
  - the **CBID strategy**<sup>3</sup>, which sets the framework conducive to the inclusion processes of persons with disabilities in public policies and awareness-raising actions within the community;
  - the **inclusive education** topic, which is a strategic cultural change element promoting processes towards more open societies and able to support the rights of all citizens.

6. The national and international agencies for international cooperation design adequate technical regulations and policies, based on the “**twin track approach**”, i.e. by allocating funds to projects aimed at persons with disabilities, by supporting the **mainstreaming of disability** in all projects, by assigning a priority in selecting projects and promoting the implementation of the CRPD.
7. International private and public donors, in particular the European Union, **pay more attention to the billion persons with disabilities** living in the world, with special attention to beneficiary countries of co-operation, through international cooperation programmes and projects – including humanitarian aid – and through bilateral or multilateral agreements consistent with the CRPD.
8. National and international cooperation agencies and NGOs support **advocacy actions with local DPOs** and support the **self-advocacy processes** undertaken by these same organizations<sup>8</sup>.
9. National and international cooperation agencies and NGOs promote the transfer of **South-South cooperation processes** and skills, in order to strengthen local DPOs and the sustainability of development processes.
10. National and international cooperation agencies and NGOs engage in a discussion on their own level of inclusion of persons with disabilities and promote synergy between Disabled People’s Organisations<sup>5</sup> and organisations committed to the inclusion of disability.

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## NOTES:

1. Reference is made here in particular to the following documents:  
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 [http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai\\_Framework\\_for\\_Disaster\\_Risk\\_Reduction\\_2015-2030.pdf](http://www.wcdrr.org/uploads/Sendai_Framework_for_Disaster_Risk_Reduction_2015-2030.pdf)  
Development Agenda Beyond 2015 <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/development-beyond-2015.html>
2. As in the case of peer counseling and emancipatory research.
3. The CBID (Community-Based Inclusive Development) definition is now replacing the definition of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR), which has instead been used in the second chapter of this manual for “historical” reasons.
4. It is particularly important that the local DPOs directly follow the CRPD ratification and/or monitoring process, rather than outsourcing it to external consultants.
5. DPOs.



## GLOSSARY

### **Accessibility**

To provide equal opportunities it is necessary to remove barriers and obstacles that prevent people from fully participating in society. Accessibility means that everyone must have access to the “various systems of society and environment, such as services, activities, information and documentation” (Standard Rules). The “Universal Design” approach takes into account the characteristics of all the people of a community and a nation, since disability is part of mankind.

### **Capability**

The process enabling people to learn and handle new skills in the individual and social domain, aimed at enhancing their social role and participation in society.

### **Capacity building**

It includes the actions that build up or strengthen skills and capabilities within the individual, social and political realms, providing training on specific issues, in view of awareness-raising and enhancement of human resources in various non-governmental and institutional fields.

### **Civil Society**

This term has various definitions. This manual used the term to refer in general to non governmental organisations and institution, representing persons with disabilities.

### **Committee on Rights of People with Disabilities**

It is the body established by the Convention whose task is to monitor and evaluate the Convention at international level. It will take into consideration reports coming from ratifying States regarding the implementations of the Convention, having jurisdiction to consider accusation of Convention violations.

### **Disability**

Disability is a social relation between personal characteristics and the major or minor capacity of the society to take them into account. Disability is not a personal condition, but depend from environmental and social factors and from personal factors. Disability is a life condition for any person (childhood, old age, in different situations) and belong to all humankind. Disability is a concept in evolution, related to cultural and material conditions of each country.

### **Discrimination based on disability**

Means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation.

### **Emancipatory Research**

It is a research methodology that, by engaging people with disabilities and their associations in research, aims to investigate the real situation of people with disabilities starting from themselves and, at the same time, to raise awareness about the life dimension they are confined to by society due to existing obstacles, barriers and discrimination that violate their human rights.

### **Equal opportunities**

Being excluded and often segregated, persons with disabilities do not enjoy the same freedom of choice and opportunities as other people do. According to the Standard Rules, by equal opportunities it is meant that “the needs of each and every individual are equally important” and “that those needs must be made the basis for the planning of societies” and thus “all resources must be employed in such a way as to ensure that every individual has equal opportunity for participation” in society (art. 5).

### **General Assembly**

It is the main deliberative body of United Nations, most adapted to elaboration of general norms and standards for member State conduct. Each State member of United Nations is represented to General Assembly works and each State member of United Nations has a decision vote in the General Assembly resolutions.

### **Habilitation**

The process enabling a person to perform and manage concrete activities of daily, working and social life. Unlike rehabilitation, which is intended to recover impaired functions, habilitation aims at enhancing people’s functional diversity.

### **Human diversity**

The condition of disability is an experience that all human beings have lived, go on living and will live. It is therefore important to regard disability as one of the features of human diversity. The history of negative cultural views and treatment that some characteristics of human beings have undergone over the centuries has produced a negative social stigma on people with disabilities, thus labelling these characteristics (as well as the people bearing them) with a socially undesirable mark. Hence, regarding disability as one of the many differences that distinguish human beings helps to remove the negative social stigma (art. 3).

### **Human Rights**

Rights owned by any person as human person. All human persons are entitled to enjoy all rights just because they belong to humankind.

## **ICF (International Classification of functioning disability and health)**

Cultural and scientific frame of reference at international level on disabled person's condition. Approved by WHO in 2001.

## **Implementation**

Legal and political activity of ratifying States in order to implement the legal obligations foreseen by the Convention.

## **Inclusive development**

Economic development theories consider the exclusion of some people from the benefits of that same development as an unavoidable consequence. Actually this is due to the fact that development mechanisms are linked to conditions of disadvantage and unequal opportunities generated by society itself. With reference to persons with disabilities, these conditions are caused by mechanisms of discrimination and social exclusion that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has made clear. Hence, the need to promote inclusive development, which does not produce mechanisms of social and economic impoverishment, but indeed ensures respect for the human rights and the enjoyment of not only economic, but also educational, social and cultural benefits deriving from development for all people.

## **Independent Life**

It is a Movement and a philosophy enhancing the control on every day life and freedom of choices that the persons with disabilities have to have in life as any other persons. For this reason they ask solutions and services enabling persons with any kind of limitation to live autonomous, self determined, independent and interdependent life.

## **International Bill of Human Rights**

The combination of these three documents: the Universal declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International covenant on civil and political rights, and the International covenant on economic, social and cultural rights.

## **Local grassroots associations (*grassroots organizations, community based organizations*) and organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs)**

They include the organizations that operate locally and represent the rights and needs of their members, being rooted into the communities where they belong. DPOs are also included, namely the national and local organizations of people with disabilities.

## **Mainstreaming**

Mainstreaming is the main flow of a river. The idea is to change disability policies from special subordinate policies, (as a river tributary) to ordinary policies, for all. Mainstreaming policies intervene to safeguard rights and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities inside ordinary policies and legislation, utilizing funds allocated to all citizens.

## **Millennium development Goals**

Union Nations global initiative to promote poverty eradication all over the world within 2015.

## **Monitoring**

Systematic and periodic activities to control the level of application and implementation done by ratifying States regarding the obligations legally undertaken inside the Convention.

## **Multidiscrimination**

When characteristics related to gender, race, culture, religion, political opinions, age, disability conditions summarize and combine, they produce multiple discriminations making more vulnerable persons with those characteristics.

## **Non-discrimination**

The medical model of disability has spawned differentiated approaches and treatments for people with disabilities, than for other people. In so doing it has led to the development of solutions and actions that impoverish people with disabilities and generate continuous violations of human rights. Each unjustifiably different treatment is, in fact, a violation of human rights. "Persons with disabilities [...] have the right to remain within their local communities" and "receive the support they need within the ordinary education, health, employment and social services structures" (Standard Rules). To combat this situation, anti-discrimination laws have been issued, to protect people with disabilities, banning any form of discrimination on the grounds of disability, through a legal basis that provides for the removal of discriminatory conditions using "reasonable accommodation" (Art. 5).

## **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a department of the United Nations Secretariat, is mandated to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all human rights established in the Charter of the United Nations and in international human rights laws and treaties.

## **Optional Protocol**

A separate agreement that covers only a certain aspect of the Convention. For example, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has an Optional Protocol that gives the monitoring body the power to hear individual complaints of violations of civil, political, social economic and cultural rights as articulated in the Convention. Optional Protocols must be separately signed and ratified by each State Party. Optional protocol entry in force when 10 countries will ratify it.

## **Participation**

Building of an inclusive society implies that excluded persons be the protagonists of inclusive process, as experts versus the way society has to treat them. This means that persons with disabilities have to be present with equal opportunities as other members

of the society in the decision making of all policies, actions and programs related to them. The participation of persons with disability and organisations representing them become a necessary methodology/action, based on the slogan/right “ nothing about us without us”.

### **Peer counseling**

Activity through which, trained and socially included disabled persons acting as peer counselors, can support a process of awareness, personal growth, and capacity building for other people with disabilities. Established in USA, peer counseling spread all over the world adapting to different cultures and situations. Many organisations of disabled persons developed expertise in this field, producing books and manuals.

### **People with disabilities**

International term to define persons with impairment who, due to attitudinal/environmental barriers, live limitations to their full and effective participation to society on an equal base with others.

### **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper - PRSP**

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper are in many ways the replacement for Structural Adjustment Programs, and are documents required by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank before a country can be considered for debt relief. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) are prepared by the member countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

### **Ratification**

Formal procedure by which a country becomes bound to a treaty. Process through which a State decide to introduce a Convention in its legal system. The ratification process procedures are: signature, Convention consistency versus national legal system, final approval of the law introduced into national legal system. The ratification tool is generally examined by Convention secretary and deposited care off United Nation General Secretary.

### **Reasonable adjustment**

Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

### **RUDs**

This acronym means “ Reservation, Understanding, and Declaration”. RUDs can be used to avoid subscription of parts of a Convention or to describe the interpretation of special languages. RUDs are presented by a country along with the ratification instrument.

### **Social impoverishment**

Disability is a cause and an effect of poverty. The different treatment reserved to people with disabilities has produced a social impoverishment in access to rights, goods and services, which is often associated to and further exacerbated by economic poverty, which ultimately triggers off a negative cycle leading to social exclusion. For this reason, people with disabilities account for almost half the world's poor, given that more than 80% of these people live in economically disadvantaged countries (CRPD, 2006) . To break this vicious circle it is necessary to act both on changing society's approach towards people with disabilities and through individual and social empowerment measures.

### **Social Inclusion**

Action supporting equal opportunities without any discrimination. Inclusion is therefore a process enabling included persons to have same opportunities and power to organize society as any other person. Inclusion is a right based on full participation of persons with disabilities in all fields of life, on equal base by the others, without discrimination, respecting dignity and enhancing human diversity through appropriate interventions, removing barriers and prejudices and supporting mainstreaming in order to live in local communities.

### **Stakeholder**

Stakeholders are the people who can influence and support, either directly or indirectly, a social, economic and cultural process or activity.

### **Sustainability**

The economic, social and professional balance condition allowing a certain activity to be performed over time, thanks to all the available necessary economic, social and human resources. Sustainability also refers to the environmental and human impact produced by its activities.

### **SWOT analysis**

SWOT is an abbreviation for **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**. SWOT analysis is an important tool for auditing the overall strategic position of a business and its environment.

### **Treaties**

Formal agreement between states that defines and modifies their mutual duties and obligations; used synonymously with Convention.

### **Treaty Monitoring Institutions**

Experts Committee charged to supervise and monitor a Convention implementation. Usually a Convention indicates the criteria for choosing members, when and where to meet and the monitoring power to adopt.

### **Twin track approach**

Definition utilized in International co-operation field indicating two action tracks in which operate: increasing the resources allocated by international co-operation

addressed to persons with disabilities and including disability in every co-operation project.

### **United Nations**

Intergovernmental States organisation set up in 1945. The main premises are based in New York and Geneva. The UN Charter (International Convention funding the UN) states that UN objectives are: to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

### **Universal Design**

Means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.





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# **APPENDIX**

**MONGOLIA: AIFO PATHWAY DATA SHEET – 1991-2015 (IN PROGRESS)**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>START / END YEAR</b>	<b>CO-FINANCING BODIES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING BODIES AND OTHER PARTNERS</b>	<b>DPOs</b>
WHO/Aifo joint Mission to assess the feasibility and the overall disability situation in Mongolia	1991	WHO	AIFO	
CBR Pilot project in Mongolia	1992-1997	EU	AIFO WHO UNDP Government of Mongolia Rehabilitation and training center (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Mongolia)	Federation of Mongolian DPOs
Mongolia CBR	11/1997-06/2001	EU	AIFO Government of Mongolia Rehabilitation and vocational training center (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Mongolia)	Federation of Mongolian DPOs
Strengthening the skills of the National Federations of DPOs of Mongolia in promoting and defending the rights of persons with disabilities	2006-2008	EU Italian local authorities UNDESA	AIFO	Federation of Mongolian DPOs and individual local DPOs DPI Italy
Community Based Rehabilitation for persons with disabilities in Mongolia	2008-2011	EU Italian local authorities PROSOLIDAR	AIFO AIFO Mongolia Tegsh Niigem	Federation of Mongolian DPOs and individual local DPOs DPI Italy
Promoting an inclusive society for persons with disabilities in Mongolia	2011-2015	EU Italian local authorities PROSOLIDAR	AIFO AIFO Mongolia Tegsh Niigem Human Rights Commission of Mongolia	Federation of Mongolian DPOs and individual local DPOs DPI Italy DPI Asia-Pacific
Protecting the rights of the persons with disabilities in Mongolia through capacity building of civil society organizations	2015 - in progress	EU Other donors	AIFO Tegsh Niigem (leader) UN Convention monitoring Committee	Federation of Mongolian DPOs and individual local DPOs DPI Italy DPI Asia-Pacific IDA

**BOSNIA: EDUCAID PATHWAY DATA SHEET – 1996-2009**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>START / END YEA</b>	<b>CO-FINANCING BODIES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING BODIES AND OTHER PARTNERS</b>	<b>DPOs</b>
Tuzla Project	1996	CEIS	Department of Special Education of the University of Bologna Tuzla Canton Schools Italian Cooperation University of Tuzla	
Bridge Project	1997	UE CRIC	CEIS CRIC Department of Special Education of the University of Bologna Tuzla School teachers and managers Italian Cooperation University of Tuzla	
Bosnia and Herzegovina Project	1998-1999	MAE Regione Emilia Romagna	CEIS Tuzla School teachers and managers Department of Special Education of the University of Bologna University of Tuzla	
Protection and reintegration of minors with physical and mental disabilities and promotion of social entrepreneurship in the territory of the Federation and of the Republika Srpska - Bosnia and Herzegovina	2005-2009	MAE Regione Emilia Romagna Regione Marche	Educaid Onlus Consorzio Fuorimargine Regione Emilia Romagna Regione Marche Ministries of Health, Social Affairs and Education of the Federation and of each canton 40 schools of the whole Federation territory Welfare Service Community-based teams	Local DPOs

**PALESTINE: EDUCAID PATHWAY DATA SHEET – 2001-2015 (IN PROGRESS)**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>START / END YEAR</b>	<b>CO-FINANCING BODIES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING BODIES AND OTHER PARTNERS</b>	<b>DPOs</b>
Psychosocial support to the children of Gaza Strip	2002	ECHO	CRIC / EducAid Canaan Institute El Amal REC	
Psychosocial intervention in favour of children victims of war in the Gaza Strip	2003-2008	Regione Emilia Romagna Municipality of Rimini Municipality of Riccione Municipality of Ravenna	EducAid REC Ministry of Education (of Palestine) Ministry of Social Affair (of Palestine)	
Ga-s-ink: Promotion of Gaza school inclusion	2009-2012	European Commission Regione Emilia Romagna Municipality of Rimini Municipality of Riccione Municipality of Ravenna Province of Rimini	EducAid UniBo REC Ministry of Education (of Palestine) Ministry of Social Affair (of Palestine)	
INCLUDE - Socio-economic empowerment of women with disabilities in Gaza Strip IDEE: Female Entrepreneurship & Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, Empowerment & Education	2013-2015	European Commission Regione Emilia Romagna Municipality of Rimini Municipality of Riccione Municipality of Ravenna	EducAid AIFO El Amal Social Developmental Forum	DPI Italy FISH
PARTICIP-ACTION: active participation and social inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Palestine through the empowerment of DPOs	2014-2016	MAE	EducAid Ministry of Social Affair (of Palestine)	Stars of Hope Society General Union of persons with disabilities
Empowerment of DPOs promoting WWDs rights in West Bank IN.S.I.E.M.E.: SOCIAL INCLUSION Intervention promoting employment INTEGRATION opportunities for women with disabilities, EDUCATION for disadvantaged CHILDREN and EMPOWERMENT of local stakeholders in PALESTINE (the Palestinian Authority Territories)	2014-2016	European Commission Regione Emilia Romagna Municipality of Rimini Municipality of Riccione Municipality of Ravenna	EducAid Ministry of Social Affair (of Palestine)	Stars of Hope Society General Union of persons with disabilities

**EL SALVADOR: EDUCAID PATHWAY DATA SHEET – 2005-2015 (IN PROGRESS)**

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>START / END YEAR</b>	<b>CO-FINANCING BODIES</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTING BODIES AND OTHER PARTNERS</b>	<b>DPOs</b>
Development of an experimental educational center in Sonsonate	2005-2009	Italian Cooperation	Italian Cooperation MINED SNF (National Secretariat of the Family)	CONAIPD (National Council of Persons with Disabilities)
Support for inclusive school promotion and development in El Salvador	2009-2014	Italian Cooperation Department of Education Sciences of the University of Bologna	EducAid Unibo MINED	
Strengthening of full-time inclusive school in El Salvador	2012 - in progress	Italian Cooperation	Educaid with Uni.Bo technical assistance for the educational component of the project MINED	

**AIFO – Associazione Italiana amici di Raoul Follereau** (Italian Association Friends of Raoul Follereau) is a NGO working in the socio-sanitary field. It is recognized by the MAECI and the European Union. It is official partner of the WHO. In Italy, AIFO leads awareness campaigns and development education activities. In Africa, Asia and South America, AIFO leads projects that deal mainly with physical, mental and socio-economic rehabilitation, social inclusion and community development, following the approach of the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR).

AIFO main principles are centred on the dignity of each person, being careful for rights and needs, taking into account the historical and socio-cultural context and local resources and potentials.

AIFO - via Borselli 4/6 - 40135 Bologna  
Tel.051 4393211 - Fax 051 434046 - N.ro verde 800550303  
[www.aifo.it](http://www.aifo.it) - [www.aifo.it/en](http://www.aifo.it/en) - [info@aifo.it](mailto:info@aifo.it)

**DPI Italia onlus** is the Italian section of Disabled Peoples' International, a worldwide organization present in 135 countries and recognized by major international and European agencies and institutions. In addition, it joins DPI Europe, FISH, CDN (National Council of Disability) and is a member of EDF (European Disability Forum).

DPI works to promote and protect human and civil rights of persons with disabilities through the direct leadership of persons with disabilities. Indeed, they are major experts in affording the problems concerning them and looking for possible solutions.

Disabled Peoples' International Italia onlus - Via dei Bizantini, 97 - 88046 Lamezia Terme (CZ)  
[www.dpitalia.org](http://www.dpitalia.org) - [info@dpitalia.org](mailto:info@dpitalia.org)

**EducAid** is an NGO working in the educational and social field. It works in different countries establishing relationships of help in the educational sector, improving and empowering response capacities of different educational systems to the needs of excluded people because of their disability, women and children at socio-economical risk or at war risk.

Within the perspective of decentralized cooperation, EducAid recognizes to come from a specific territory and culture, giving the most to what such belonging means when it is involved in a relationship, as equal as possible, with other cultures and their territory.

EducAid is in partnership with CEIS (Centro Educativo Italo Svizzero), the social cooperative "Il Millepiedi" of Rimini and "Tanaliberatutti", a social cooperative of Riccione. It works in strict cooperation with the Department of Education of Bologna University and also with pedagogues, teachers, educators, psychologists and volunteers of Rimini province.

Educaid - Via Vezia, 2 - 47900 Rimini  
Tel. 0541.28022 - [www.educaid.it](http://www.educaid.it) - [info@educaid.it](mailto:info@educaid.it)

**FISH – Federazione Italiana per il Superamento dell'Handicap** (Italian Federation for Overcoming Handicap), founded in 1994, is an umbrella organization for the most representative associations operating at national and local levels in policies aimed at social inclusion of people with different disabilities.



Through collaboration with the Italian Forum on Disability (FID), the body that represents Italy within the European Disability Forum (EDF), it connects the national policies with those at transnational level, bringing the contribution of the Italian movement of persons with disabilities into European Union and the United Nations. FISH collaborates with E.net Agency to design and manage projects and initiatives, according to participatory planning, promoting collaborations with institutions, local authorities and the academic world.

FISH Onlus - Federazione Italiana per il Superamento dell'Handicap - Via G. Capponi 178 - 00179 Roma  
[www.fishonlus.it](http://www.fishonlus.it) - [presidenza@fishonlus.it](mailto:presidenza@fishonlus.it)

The RIDS (Rete Italiana Disabilità e Sviluppo), Italian Network on Disability and Development, formed by AIFO, DPI Italy, EducAid and FISH, expresses a strategic alliance between NGOs and DPOs in the appraisal of the synergy of their respective expertise and know how, aimed at implementing and endorsing projects based on the respect of human rights of persons with disabilities, according to the principles Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, CRPD.

RIDS enhances the inclusion of persons with disabilities through various initiatives and joint events, at national and international levels, in the field of development cooperation, emergency and fight to poverty. It promotes accessibility, empowerment of persons with disabilities and DPOs, the improvement of development strategies in a more inclusive and participative way and the monitoring systems of CRPD.

It supports advocacy, capacity building and training processes devoted to development operators with disabilities or interested to disability.

It promotes appropriate practices and inclusive policies of persons with disabilities through the awareness of institutions, public and private entities at national and international level.

*“Nothing on us, without us”*

Cover's Picture: Adriano Lostia - EducAid, 2015

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