

## Submission to the call for inputs on inclusive humanitarian assistance

1. Information on how obligations under article 11 of the CRPD and related provisions as well as commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 2475 are implemented in practice in humanitarian contexts.

According to the Working Group (WG) on Humanitarian Aid of the Austrian NGO Platform (Global Responsibility), Austrian humanitarian NGOs implement the obligations under Article 11 of the CRPD and UN Security Council Resolution 2475 by combining mainstreaming, targeted programming, and rights-based advocacy.

In the design phase of humanitarian actions, they strive to give particular attention to the specific needs of persons with disabilities (PWD). This includes needs assessments that collect disaggregated data and integrating vulnerability analyses into broader context, conflict, and risk assessments. Vulnerability and hazard analyses often consider at-risk groups.

In addition to mainstreaming disability inclusion across all sectors and project components, dedicated projects specifically focus on disability inclusion. This is particularly relevant in camp settings or protracted displacement contexts, where structural barriers - such as inaccessible infrastructure, lack of assistive devices, or exclusion from community decision-making - can be pronounced. Targeted interventions help address gaps that may not be sufficiently covered through mainstream programming.

Humanitarian actors increasingly adapt an intersectional approach and address compounding forms of discrimination. Women with disabilities often experience heightened risks of gender-based violence, social isolation, and economic exclusion, while facing physical and communication barriers to accessing support services. By integrating gender and disability perspectives, programmes aim to remove these layered barriers and ensure equitable access to assistance and protection.

Monitoring processes are also adapted. Efforts are made to ensure that feedback and complaint mechanisms are accessible and barrier-free, including through multiple communication channels and formats. Regular exchanges with a diverse range of stakeholders help verify whether vulnerable groups are effectively reached and responses are responsive to evolving needs.

Finally, humanitarian actors advocate and lobby for the rights of PWD. They engage with authorities and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the rights of PWD in emergencies.



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2. Challenges and barriers encountered by States and humanitarian actors in ensuring inclusive protection, assistance, and accessibility, through all stages of the humanitarian cycle (preparedness, assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring), as well as related good practices.

A key structural barrier lies in the inconsistent application of inclusion standards. While international organizations refer to frameworks such as the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, the IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, and the ICRC's Vision 2030 on Disability,<sup>1</sup> there is no uniform enforcement or mandatory funding schemes resulting in uneven implementation.

In the preparedness and planning phase, the absence of mandatory minimum inclusion criteria linked to funding remains a central challenge. Disability inclusion is often treated as an added value rather than a structural requirement. According to the WG on Humanitarian Aid, limited funding forces humanitarian actors to make difficult choices about who is considered “most vulnerable”. Disability inclusion risks being deprioritized unless minimum standards are tied to funding or explicitly required in project design.

In the assessment phase, data gaps further hinder effective action, as PWD are often underrepresented in assessments due to stigma, underreporting, or lack of reliable data. Tools such as Rapid Gender and Disability Analyses (RGDA) represent promising practice, as they systematically integrate disability into assessments and programming.

Protection presents additional challenges. While safeguarding standards, including PSEA, are often required by donors, they do not always explicitly address the specific risks faced by PWD. Feedback and complaint mechanisms may exist but are not consistently accessible. Humanitarian access constraints, insecurity, and remote management in active conflict settings further limit safe and inclusive outreach.

Accessibility is frequently perceived as costly or complex, particularly in emergencies. When funding is reduced, disability-focused programming is often among the first to be cut, as it is not always viewed as “life-saving.” As highlighted by the WG on Humanitarian Aid, this can leave PWD without support, isolated, and without access to critical medical care. Many require ongoing assistance, including financial support and maintenance or replacement of assistive devices that are rarely covered by short-term funding.

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<sup>1</sup> Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023) “Reply to parliamentary inquiry NEOs - 14017/AB 1 of 11 from 10.05.2023 on 14498/J (XXVII. GP)”



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A broader structural challenge noted by the WG on Humanitarian Aid is the lack of flexible and longer-term funding, including for sustainable approaches under the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, climate adaptation, and preparedness. Short project cycles hinder durable, inclusive systems.

Across planning, implementation, and monitoring, PWD are often included only if explicitly defined as a target group. A key good practice observed by the WG on Humanitarian Aid is to design all activities to work for vulnerable groups: if interventions are accessible for PWD, they work for others as well. Embedding inclusion as a universal standard strengthens overall effectiveness. Overall, the challenge remains to move from voluntary commitments to systematic, adequately funded, and monitored inclusion throughout humanitarian action.

3. Information on the extent to which persons with disabilities and OPDs are involved in humanitarian decision-making, coordination mechanisms, and programme cycles. Assessments of the structural, procedural, or resource-related barriers to meaningful participation, and how these affect the relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance for persons with disabilities.

During Austria's 2023 State review, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities criticised the insufficient involvement of OPDs in Austrian Development Cooperation. The Committee recommended establishing a framework to guarantee the active participation of OPDs in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of international cooperation programmes, alongside the development of measurable indicators.<sup>2</sup> To date, no comprehensive framework has been adopted, and participation continues to rely largely on established practice rather than enforceable standards.

At operational level, OPDs are involved in several coordination mechanisms. The Inclusion Working Group of the Austrian NGO Platform brings together representative organizations and exchanges with the Humanitarian Aid WG, which is linked to the Austrian Humanitarian Coordination Platform (HUKOPLA). The Inclusion Working Group of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs also serves as a multi-stakeholder forum. OPDs participate in processes such as the evaluation of the National Action Plan on Disability. However, these mechanisms are primarily consultative and lack binding provisions regarding the scope or influence of participation.

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<sup>2</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2023) "Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Austria", CRPD/C/AUT/CO/2-3, <https://docs.un.org/en/CRPD/C/AUT/CO/2-3>, p.14



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Structural and procedural barriers persist in programme cycles. Disability inclusion is generally stronger where organizations with a dedicated disability mandate are involved. Mainstream humanitarian actors may lack technical expertise, partnerships with local OPDs, or knowledge of local disability networks. Where funding guidelines do not explicitly require disability inclusion, the systematic involvement of OPDs and the application of accessibility standards are often limited.

Contextual factors further affect meaningful engagement. Inclusion efforts tend to be more advanced in development cooperation contexts, where planning cycles are longer and participation more feasible than in humanitarian settings, where time pressure, insecurity, and access constraints limit consultation with local OPDs.

Resource-related barriers also play a critical role. Although Austria refers to a twin-track approach targets remain modest. Under the [National Action Plan on Disability 2022-2030](#) at least 10% of operational funds should meet OECD DAC Disability Marker 1 or 2. Civil society organizations have criticized this target as insufficient, particularly as the application of the marker remains voluntary and harmonized contractual obligations across funding bodies are lacking.

Positive practices include consortia models in which specialized disability organizations collaborate with mainstream actors, thereby strengthening technical quality and inclusion. Regular dialogue platforms between government and civil society also contribute to policy coherence. However, these approaches are not yet systematically anchored in funding frameworks.

#### 4. Good practices related to the collection and use of disability-disaggregated data in humanitarian settings. Challenges in collecting, analysing, and using disability-disaggregated data for humanitarian decision-making.

A major challenge at the international level is the lack of reliable data. Stigma and invisibility often mean that PWD are not captured in national statistics. Where data is collected, the use of sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data (SADDD) is typically driven by donor requirements. This can ensure that disability is included in reporting frameworks, but it also risks limiting data collection to predefined indicators, rather than enabling a more comprehensive understanding of needs. Consequently, the quality and usefulness of data depend heavily on how indicators are designed and how far they allow for meaningful analysis beyond minimum reporting requirements.

Another challenge lies in access and outreach. Humanitarian organizations often reach PWD through community-based or volunteer structures, which can be effective but uneven. Direct engagement with OPDs remains limited, reducing opportunities for more systematic and representative data collection. In addition, disability-disaggregated data collection and use strongly depend on available budgets, institutional capacity, and technical know-how within implementing organizations.



Despite these constraints, good practices have emerged. One example is the [SIRA \(Situation Analysis Rapid Assessment\) tool](#) developed by Light for the World and OPDs. This tool enables the rapid identification of barriers and facilitating factors in humanitarian emergencies. The approach also draws on the Washington Group Questions, including attention to psychosocial dimensions.

5. Information on funding, capacity building, and institutional support for disability-inclusive humanitarian action, including support provided to OPDs to enable their sustained participation in humanitarian action.

At the institutional level, [Austria's Strategy on Humanitarian Aid \(2023\)](#) explicitly refers to the inclusion of PWD and acknowledges intersectional discrimination. However, the operationalization of these commitments is still limited, as inclusive budgeting and systematic resource allocation for disability inclusion are not consistently embedded in funding instruments. Similarly, while [the National Action Plan \(NAP\) on Disability](#) includes relevant measures, it is not always clear to what extent these are backed by dedicated and predictable funding streams. In the broader context of shrinking aid budgets, there is concern that cuts disproportionately affect programmes supporting vulnerable groups, including PWD.

Some binding requirements exist, such as contractual obligations on violence prevention, human rights training, and CRPD awareness in projects funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. Proposals to strengthen institutional support include Austria joining the [GLAD Network](#), introducing earmarked funding, and integrating disability criteria or a dedicated section in funding applications<sup>3</sup> to elevate disability inclusion as a cross-cutting issue as recently stressed by Mozambique in its recommendation during the recent Universal Periodic Review of Austria. However, such reforms face increasing resistance in a constrained funding environment, where additional conditionalities are sometimes perceived as burdensome.

In terms of capacity-building, several initiatives exist at national and international levels to strengthen disability-inclusive humanitarian and development practice. Global Responsibility has developed [guidance materials on disability inclusion](#), providing practical tools for implementing organizations. New publications such as the 2026 "[Disability-Inclusive Crisis Response](#)" guide by the Essl Foundation further support practice.

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<sup>3</sup> AGGV AG Inklusion (2023) „Strategie der Humanitären Hilfe Österreichs 2023 - Beispiele für eine inklusive Umsetzung im Sinne der UNBRK mit Fokus auf Katastrophenvorsorge, langanhaltende Krisen und inklusives Funding“, p. 4-5



Training activities have expanded in response to demand from member organizations, including foundational training on disability inclusion in 2023 and a follow-up exchange in 2025. Additional training on inclusion markers has been requested. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) has expressed openness, when ongoing revisions of the OECD DAC marker handbook are finalized. Further support is provided through [ADA e-learning modules](#) and guidance on disability inclusion in project cycle management.

Despite these efforts, structural challenges remain. Capacity-building is often project-based rather than systemic, and smaller or local organizations, including OPDs, frequently lack stable funding to ensure sustained participation. While consortia approaches and partnerships between specialized disability organizations and mainstream actors have proven effective in strengthening technical capacity, they are not yet consistently supported through dedicated funding mechanisms.

6. Analysis of how current humanitarian reform processes, including the Humanitarian Reset, affect disability-inclusive humanitarian action. Evidence of risks or opportunities arising from efforts, and of how the rights and needs of persons with disabilities are considered with humanitarian reform processes. Examples of measures necessary to ensure that reform strengthens, rather than weakens, inclusive humanitarian assistance.

Current humanitarian reform processes, including the Humanitarian Reset, are unfolding amid shrinking aid budgets and growing pressure for efficiency and prioritization. In Austria, bilateral development cooperation is facing its strongest budget cuts in two decades.<sup>4</sup> These financial constraints risk sidelining cross-cutting priorities such as disability inclusion if they are not explicitly safeguarded.

At policy level, civil society actors such as Global Responsibility stress that inclusion of PWD remains a core thematic priority. However, concerns remain that increasing selectivity in funding - where support is directed towards strategically defined priorities rather than greatest need<sup>5</sup> - may weaken consistent application of inclusion markers and reduce incentives for systematic disability mainstreaming. Such shifts may further exacerbate existing inequalities for PWD.

Reform discussions also create opportunities. They open space to rethink humanitarian architecture in a more inclusive and participatory way, with stronger emphasis on listening, localisation, and

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<sup>4</sup> ÖFSE (2025) „Bilaterale EZA: Stärkste Kürzungen der letzten 20 Jahre“, [Aktueller Kommentar Mai 2025 - Österreichische Forschungsförderung für Internationale Entwicklung](#)

<sup>5</sup> AGGV (2025) „Mehrjahresprogramm 2026-2028“, p. 4



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innovation.<sup>6</sup> However, it remains uncertain whether this will translate into concrete structural improvements for disability inclusion.

A key risk of current reform processes is that increased emphasis on speed and efficiency may inadvertently marginalize OPDs. Without explicit safeguards, disability-specific expertise may be bypassed, participation weakened, and targeted programmes reduced or absorbed into general programming without adequate resources.

At the same time, upcoming policy processes, such as the evaluation of Austria's National Action Plan on Disability in 2026/2027<sup>7</sup>, provide an opportunity to reassess targets, indicators, and measures related to humanitarian action and international cooperation. This could help strengthen alignment between reform processes and disability inclusion commitments.

To ensure that humanitarian reform strengthens rather than weakens disability inclusion, it must be embedded as a non-negotiable requirement within reform frameworks backed by dedicated funding, meaningful participation of OPDs in reform design and implementation, and maintaining disability-disaggregated data and inclusion markers as standard accountability tools. Without such safeguards, reforms risk reinforcing rather than reducing exclusion.

*Word count without questions: 1.990*

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<sup>6</sup> AGGV (2026) „Process Findings: New perspectives for humanitarian action“, <https://www.globaleverantwortung.at/process-findings-new-perspectives-for-humanitarian-action/>

<sup>7</sup> WU Vienna (2026) „Nationaler Aktionsplan Behinderung 2022-2030 - wissenschaftliche Begleitung und Bewertung“, <https://www.wu.ac.at/npocompetence/forschung/projekte/aktuelle-projekte/nationaler-aktionsplan-behinderung-2022-2030-wissenschaftliche-begleitung-und-bewertung>