



Lessons learned

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## Capacity development of the organizations of persons with disabilities, strengthening the disability inclusion in local inclusive humanitarian action

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Somaliland

June 2024

LL 25-4



## Background

The practice was collected as part of the 'From Guidelines to Action' (FG2A) project “supporting the operationalization and localization of **IASC Guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action**” funded by ECHO and CDP. This practice was collected from the Somaliland National Disability Federation (SNDF)<sup>1</sup> working in Somaliland. This organization attended the review, adapt, action and learning (RAAL Lab) in May 2023 with three staff from their senior management. The RAAL Lab is a capacity strengthening initiative and was used in combination with the adapted version of the **DRG Learning modules**, which were designed to operationalize the **IASC guidelines on disability inclusion**. During the RAAL Lab workshop the participants applied IASC guidelines to their project cycle management. As part of the technical follow up process, the Humanity & Inclusion (HI) team collected best practices to understand better, how the organization was taking forward the learning from the RAAL Lab. During the RAAL Lab workshop the participants applied IASC guidelines to their project cycle management. As part of the technical follow up process, the HI team collected best practices to understand better how the organization was taking forward the learning from the RAAL Lab.

## What challenge is this practice addressing

SNDF as an umbrella organization has nascent capacity to play a role in supporting capacity strengthening of its members and other humanitarian actors, such as local authorities, to take on disability-inclusive humanitarian response. There was a lack of input by SNDF on the specific requirements and rights of persons with disabilities towards humanitarian actors which could improve the humanitarian response ability to address specific requirements.

SNDF's Staff members required an appropriate understanding on disability in humanitarian action to advocate for and support disability inclusion.

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**1** The SNDF was formed in 2004 as an umbrella Organization for organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and disability service providers. It is currently composed of 30 local NGO members, with representations from regions. SNDF's main activities serve to enhance the situation of persons with disabilities via advocacy for human rights of persons with disabilities, public awareness raising organized on the yearly event of the International Day of Persons with disabilities and capacity building for member organizations. It also serves as a forum for coordination and information sharing between the OPDs and other agencies.

## How the practice developed

SNDF wanted to enhance its organizational practices for disability inclusive data collection and monitoring, as well as building the capacity of their staff on disability mainstreaming to deliver disability inclusive humanitarian action and meaningfully involving people with disabilities in their programming. Three SNDF staff members actively engaged in the training on mainstreaming disability in humanitarian action using DRG Learning modules.

Following the RAAL Lab workshop, SNDF participants met with their other team members to put their learnings into action. The key actions prioritized were that SNDF will apply the IASC guidelines on disability inclusion, starting with an internal training on the IASC guidelines for most of their members in Somaliland. They also agreed that all their activities will be applying the four must do actions and the twin-track approach in their programming. They have adapted their assessment and monitoring tools to more disability inclusive.

After the RAAL Lab, the SNDF's senior members co-facilitated the next RAAL Lab workshop with the HI technical team, trained their members using the disability Reference Group DRG modules and taken chair of Somaliland Disability Inclusion Taskforce (SDITF).

## The most significant changes include

1. The SNDF's commitment to implement the IASC guidelines on inclusion has strengthened their advocacy efforts for disability inclusive humanitarian programming
2. SNDF adapted their assessment tools and registration documents, adding [Washington group short set of questions \(WG-SS\)](#) to disaggregate data on disabilities and advocate for disability inclusive data. Adapting disability inclusive data collection tools and using Washington group questions by OPD members, will contribute towards the availability of appropriate data on disability in the future.
3. Capacity building of SNDF member OPDs on 'introducing disability in humanitarian action, using the DRG modules, which is expected to enhance their capacities for ensuring disability inclusive humanitarian action at community level

4. SNDF has made changes to their office structures for enhanced accessibility
5. SNDF became the Chair for the Somaliland Disability Inclusion Taskforce (SDITF). The SDITF, is an inter-agency and inter-cluster technical task team established to support the humanitarian and development system in advancing disability inclusion issues in Somaliland, guided by and promoting the four must-do actions<sup>2</sup> defined by the IASC Guidelines.

## What were key influencing factors or drivers for change

1. SNDF's staff as a Co-facilitator with HI technical team for RAAL Labs enhanced their capacity to implement their own action plans for disability inclusion in SNDF's programming
2. SNDF mandate: as an organization of persons with disabilities its task is to coordinate the OPDs and disability services providers and disability inclusion in Somaliland.

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2 The "Must Do Actions" in the IASC Disability Guidelines relates to all types of humanitarian programming. "Must do actions" are structured around four key approaches: 1. Promoting meaningful participation; 2. Empowering persons with disabilities and supporting them to develop their capacities; 3. Analyzing and removing barriers; 4. Disaggregating data – both quantitative and qualitative data – for monitoring inclusion.



## Recommendations to facilitate the replication of this practice

1. Umbrella organizations are in a good position to train and influence their members as well as other humanitarian actors using the DRG Modules
2. If given a chance umbrella organizations of persons with disabilities can gain capacities on disability-inclusive humanitarian action to a point that they can play an important role in providing technical support to overall humanitarian action in the country



# Copyright

## Cover Image

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The illustration is set in the office of the organization of persons with disabilities located in a rural environment.

The office entrance is accessible, with a ramp where a person in a wheelchair is seen passing.

There is an accessible bathroom clearly indicated by a disability sign.

Members of the organization of persons with disabilities are seated in an organizational meeting.

Among the meeting participants are individuals with physical disabilities using wheelchairs or crutches, individuals with visual impairments using white canes, individuals with hearing impairments using sign language, and individuals without disabilities.

One of them is pointing to a board and presenting decisions regarding the implementation of the IASC guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Emphasizing four must do actions to be taken:

1. A graph showing data including disability statistics.
2. A wheelchair user unable to access a location due to barriers, and then the same user accessing the location after barriers have been removed.
3. Disability training for individuals.
4. Inclusive disability meeting, with several users with disabilities meeting with users without disabilities.

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Funded by European Union Humanitarian Aid and Center for Disaster Philanthropy.



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June 2024

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The collection of case studies was a part of the '[From Guidelines to Action \(FG2A\)](#)' project, supporting the operationalization and localization of [IASC Guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action](#), funded by ECHO and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy.

The eight case studies come from protection and food security humanitarian organizations who are working on the Syria and Somalia responses. These organizations participated in Review, Adapt, Action and Learning (RAAL) laboratories on how to make food security or protection programming more disability inclusive. The RAAL Lab is a capacity strengthening initiative and was used in combination with the adapted version of the [DRG Learning modules](#), which are designed to operationalize [the IASC guidelines on disability inclusion](#).

The case studies demonstrate how humanitarian tools and/or operational practices were adapted to become more disability-inclusive.

We hope these case studies will contribute towards fostering inter-agency learning and enhance disability inclusive practices in humanitarian action. We would like to thank the participating organizations for their input and willingness to engage in this process. Please note that for reasons of security the names of organizations from some of the case studies have not been included.

Find out more by contacting us at [inclusion@hi.org](mailto:inclusion@hi.org)

