

UNPRPD MPTF Strategic Operational Framework: Briefing on Cross-Cutting Approaches

Background

Persons with disabilities have been systematically excluded from all aspects of society, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural life. This is largely due to disability-based stigma and misperceptions that persons with disabilities need to be looked after rather than empowered, that they are not capable of making decisions or doing things that others can do, or that they are to be feared. In addition, persons with certain types of disabilities may experience even greater marginalization and exclusion. Furthermore, the barriers that persons with disabilities face are often exacerbated when multiple grounds of discrimination intersect, such as age, gender, race, ethnic origin, and other identities or characteristics. As a result, persons with disabilities have been excluded from decisions that affect them, leading to decisions made on their behalf, disempowerment, and broader social exclusion.

The process for drafting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) marked a fundamental shift, as persons with disabilities played a direct and significant role in ensuring their views and priorities were included in the text of the CRPD. The participation of persons with disabilities is both a core principle of the CRPD and a fundamental right and, therefore, an essential element of disability inclusive programs, policies, and processes funded by the United Nations Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-Partnership Trust Fund (UNPRPD MPTF).

This briefing supports the implementation of UNPRPD MPTF's five-year Strategic Operational Framework (SOF) 2020-2025. More specifically, this briefing provides UN entities and UN country teams (UNCTs) with concise information and practical guidance to incorporate UNPRPD MPTF's Cross-Cutting Approaches into UNPRPD MPTF-funded joint programs at country, regional, and global levels; knowledge management products and systems; and capacity building initiatives.

The three Cross-Cutting Approaches should be intrinsically considered and applied across UNPRPD MPTF structures, processes, and programs to ensure full and meaningful participation of all persons with disabilities. These approaches include:

- **Enabling full and effective participation of persons with disabilities**
- **Ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities**
- **Addressing gender inequality and advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities.**

Cross-Cutting Approaches

Enabling the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities are critical partners in UNPRPD MPTF structures and programs, and the most effective way to include persons with disabilities in UNPRPD MPTF programs is to partner with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). The active and informed participation of persons with disabilities in decisions that affect them is consistent with a human rights-based approach and ensures good governance and accountability¹ and the disability movement's motto, 'nothing about us without us'.

To ensure full and meaningful participation, UNCTs should systematically and openly approach, consult, and involve OPDs in a meaningful and timely manner. This includes the relevant measures to ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodations in these processes, which are outlined below, freedom from stigma, and respect for the views expressed. Reasonable accommodations are necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden to the organization, 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 rights². In addition, consultative processes should involve **all** persons with disabilities, recognizing every person's legal capacity³.

Ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities

All persons with disabilities face exclusion. However, the barriers of persons with certain types of disabilities and those who face intersecting discrimination with other identities and characteristics are often exacerbated. The views and requirements of these groups are often not well represented in policies, programs, and services, as well as in civil society engagement, including OPDs. It is, therefore, essential for all programs, policies, and processes to include the views and requirements of these underrepresented groups and for stakeholders to be aware of this dynamic and to take **concerted action** to include underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities in UNPRPD MPTF programs and processes in line with the Strategic Operational Framework 2020-2025.

¹ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, CRPD/C/GC/7, 9 November 2018, para. 2.

² Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 2 (2014) Article 9: Accessibility, CRPD/C/GC/2, 22 May 2014.

³ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 7 (2018) on the participation of persons with disabilities through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention, CRPD/C/GC/7, 9 November 2018, paras. 21-22.

Addressing gender inequality and advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities

Women and girls with disabilities face significantly more difficulties - in both public and private spheres – in accessing services and in achieving economic empowerment and security, and are at higher risk of violence than men with disabilities and women without disabilities. In addition, women with disabilities are underrepresented in decision-making processes and in civil society, including women’s organizations and OPDs. As a result, their voices and requirements are often not included in policies, programs, or processes to achieve women’s rights, disability rights, or the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. UNPRPD MPTF is committed to eliminating discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, promoting their empowerment, and promoting equality between men and women with disabilities in line with CRPD Article 6 and the [CRPD Committee’s General Comment No. 3 on women and girls with disabilities](#). UNCTs must use a gender lens across UNPRPD MPTF programming and ensure both targeted and mainstreamed interventions to ensure the inclusion and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities.

Practical guidance to apply UNPRPD MPTF’s Cross-Cutting Approaches

Identifying and engaging with OPDs

OPDs are non-governmental, representative organizations or groups of persons with disabilities, where persons with disabilities constitute a majority of the overall members, staff, board, and volunteers, at all levels of the organization. They may work locally, nationally, regionally, or internationally and may be organized as a network. OPDs may focus on one group of persons with disabilities, for example, by type of disability, women, children, refugees, etc., and some operate in specific geographic locations. OPDs raise awareness, advocate on disability rights, support their constituencies / members, and in some cases may deliver services or support service delivery by others. Not all organizations that provide service delivery to persons with disabilities are OPDs, and many are not representative of persons with disabilities. For more detailed information, on defining an OPD, please refer to [CRPD General Comment No. 7 on the participation of persons with disabilities](#).

Most countries have at least one national umbrella OPD, a number of cross-disability OPDs, and OPDs specifically focused on a particular group. In addition, there are local OPDs that cover provinces or districts who have specialist knowledge of their region. The national umbrella OPD is a good starting point for connecting with other OPDs but should not be the only point of engagement.

Identifying underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities

The groups of persons with disabilities that are the most underrepresented vary depending on the context, e.g., history, culture, efforts to reverse marginalization, etc. As a result, each underrepresented group may experience differing degrees of marginalization and discrimination from one country to another, and a group may be significantly underrepresented in one country but not in another. The first step to ensuring the inclusion of underrepresented groups of persons with

disabilities in UNPRPD MPTF programs and processes is to identify the underrepresented groups in the country or region.

The identification of underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities should be carried out by UNCTs for each country through a collaborative process, working closely with OPDs, CSOs, government, and other relevant national stakeholders, bearing in mind that there may be some groups that are not represented by an OPD⁴, including the umbrella OPD. This process should involve a contextual analysis, as some groups may be marginalized due to the history or culture of the country. The lists of common underrepresented groups below can serve as a starting point for discussions at country level.

Where possible, contacts of leaders or interlocutors for these underrepresented groups should be established to ensure inclusion in planning and programming. Many of these groups may not be represented in OPDs. In these cases, it may be necessary to reach out to peer, self-help, or service-user groups or other stakeholders. It is important to avoid working through a proxy (such as a parents' or professional group) when consulting underrepresented groups; however, parents' and professional groups can provide links to underrepresented groups or individuals where there is no OPD to represent them. If this identification process has not taken place before UNPRPD funding calls, then UNCTs should include this analysis in their program planning.

Underrepresentation based on disability type

Underrepresentation based on disability type is often grounded in communication and / or attitudinal barriers or stigma. In addition, invisible disabilities are not commonly recognized and may therefore lead to marginalization. Persons with high support needs, regardless of the type of disability, are also often underrepresented due to the complexity of support and cost of participation. Some groups that are commonly underrepresented may include persons with/who are:

- Acquired brain injury
- Albinism
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Deafblindness
- HIV/AIDS
- Intellectual disabilities
- Learning disabilities
- Little people / persons of short stature
- Multiple disabilities
- Psychosocial disabilities

Underrepresentation based on intersectionality

Persons with disabilities represent a diverse group with multiple identities and characteristics.

⁴ Where there is no OPD to represent a marginalized group, it may be possible to engage with peer, self-help, or service-user groups in order to engage directly with these groups.

‘Multiple discrimination’ refers to a situation in which a person experiences discrimination on two or more grounds, leading to discrimination that is compounded or aggravated. ‘Intersectional discrimination’ refers to a situation where several grounds interact with each other at the same time in such a way as to be inseparable.⁵

Disability-based discrimination and exclusion can be exacerbated by multiple and intersecting identities and characteristics, and vice versa. The combined effects of intersectional discrimination and exclusion are complex and under-studied. However, underrepresentation of persons with disabilities based on intersectional factors is often due to multiple attitudinal barriers, i.e., disability-based stigma, which is associated with curses, disease, dependence, and helplessness, and identity-based stigma, which is often linked to negative stereotypes of perceived deviant behaviour. In addition, there may be other forms of stigma based on characteristics, such as geographical origin or socio-economic status.

The overlapping nature of intersectional stigma and discrimination is not easy to disentangle⁶, and experiences of disability-based discrimination can easily eclipse other intersectional factors, particularly where the disability is visible. Persons with disabilities who experience intersectional discrimination often do so both within the disability sector and within other sectors, resulting in exclusion and underrepresentation across society. Groups of persons with disabilities who experience intersectional discrimination and underrepresentation vary from country to country and may include:

- Children, youth, and older persons
- Ethnic, national, cultural, linguistic, racial, and religious minorities or groups
- Migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees
- Indigenous people
- Women and girls
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex individuals
- Political minorities
- Individuals from slums, inner-city, rural, or stigmatised geographic regions
- Individuals living in poverty, from low-income or working classes, hereditary social groups, and caste groups
- And other groups, depending on the national context, such as single parent households, veterans, former child soldiers, children without birth certificates, etc.

Identifying women’s OPDs

Women’s OPDs are non-governmental, representative organizations or groups of women with disabilities, where women with disabilities constitute a majority of the overall members, staff, board, and volunteers, at all levels of the organization. They may work at local, national, regional, or international levels and focus on issues concerning women and girls with disabilities, such as sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, family rights, women’s economic empowerment,

⁵ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment No. 3 (2016) on women and girls with disabilities, CRPD/C/GC/3, 25 November 2016, para. 4c.

⁶ Intersectional or multiple discrimination that is expressed as ‘double discrimination’ fails to represent the complexity and intertwining nature of multiple layers of discrimination, which produces new forms of discrimination that are unique.

etc., as well as the structural inequality of OPDs, women’s organizations, and government to push for greater representation of women with disabilities.

Connecting and engaging with women’s OPDs will help to ensure that the voices of women and girls with disabilities are included in UNPRPD MPTF programs. However, not all countries have women’s OPDs⁷. In some cases, umbrella OPDs or cross-disability OPDs may have working groups that focus on women with disabilities. However, the extent of their influence and capacity should be assessed, as some may only focus on policy issues and not on structural inequalities. Where there are no formal women’s OPDs or established groups that are able to focus on the wide range of issues concerning women and girls with disabilities, it may be possible to organize a diverse, informal group of women with disabilities to ensure that their voices are heard.

Create partnerships and dialogue

It is important to establish a dialogue with OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women’s OPDs, to better understand their situation and the overall barriers that they face before engaging with them on a focused project. This will help to build relationships and help UNCT staff gain a better picture of participatory approaches to including them.

OPDs have varying levels of experience and capacity even between OPDs in one country. They do not have many forums to share their experiences, which means that it may take several meetings to ensure that they have had sufficient time and space to share their views.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a good way to establish a working relationship with OPDs for UNPRPD programs, but these can also extend beyond the scope of UNPRPD MPTF programs. It may be necessary to work with the umbrella OPD to help facilitate representation of all groups or organize a forum of many groups with elected, rotating representatives who can speak on behalf of the wider group in order to ensure a fair process. Regardless of the configuration of the partnership, it is essential that UNCT staff develop an understanding of methods for inclusive facilitation and meeting organization and ensure that budget is allocated to enable meaningful consultation, including the provision of reasonable accommodations throughout all stages of programs. In addition, UNCTs can play a role through UNPRPD MPTF programs in encouraging and supporting umbrella and cross-disability OPDs to be diverse and representative of persons with disabilities across the country, e.g., by prioritizing engagement with OPDs that are diverse and working with underrepresented groups.

Establish reasonable accommodations

UNCTs will need to work with OPDs to ensure diverse representation in UNPRPD MPTF programs and should work with OPDs to identify the requirements of participants and make reasonable accommodations, ensuring that underrepresented groups are not excluded. Many groups are underrepresented because there are significant barriers to their participation, such as communication or perceptions about their abilities or behaviours, e.g., persons with intellectual disabilities are often

⁷ Women Enabled has compiled a map of 690 women’s OPDs at <https://www.womenenabled.org/mapping.html>. However, it is best to inquire about women’s OPDs in a country through the regional OPD and the national umbrella OPD, who can both provide current information on the status of women’s OPDs.

excluded because meeting content and materials have not been adapted and organizers may perceive that they are unable to participate. It is, therefore, critical for UNCTs to take steps to ensure their inclusion and to allocate resources to support this. For example, this may require working in advance with underrepresented groups so that they are prepared to participate or paying the participation costs of personal assistants for participants. Barriers to their participation should be fully understood by UNCTs and creative solutions should be sought to ensure participation. UNPRPD MPTF program budgets should include the costs of reasonable accommodations to avoid financial barriers to participation and also consider other financial barriers to participation, such as requesting unpaid time from OPD participation for lengthy periods.

Twin track approach

A twin track approach should be applied to UNPRPD MPTF program planning, which involves supporting targeted programs to address the specific requirements of underrepresented groups and women with disabilities, as well as mainstreamed efforts to include underrepresented groups and women with disabilities in all programs. This includes putting measures in place when organizing all program activities to ensure that consideration of underrepresented groups and women with disabilities has been incorporated into all activities, outputs, and processes.

Checklist for applying cross-cutting approaches to the program cycle

UNCTs should facilitate the inclusion of OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women's OPDs, in UNPRPD MPTF program proposal development, program planning and governance structures, program activities, and monitoring and evaluation. The following checklist will help to guide steps in applying the cross-cutting approaches to the program cycle.

Setting up partnerships with OPDs

- Analysis and identification of the underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities in the country
- Analysis of OPDs in the country, including their effectiveness and capacity to engage in UNPRPD MPTF-funded programs and inclusion of underrepresented groups and women; this should inform the partnership model adopted by UNCTs. The model should be under periodic review, as the context and OPDs change
- OPDs, including OPDs of underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities and women with disabilities, have been identified and contact has been established
- Partnership model for working with OPDs (including persons with disabilities who do not have an OPD) is established, e.g., by working with the umbrella OPD, setting up a platform, preparing an MOU, etc.

Analysis and design of UNPRPD MPTF joint programs

Expression of Interest (EOI) and Situational Analysis

- OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women's OPDs, are meaningfully involved in the design of UNPRPD MPTF joint programs:
 - In the EOI, including overall focus of the proposed priorities⁸
 - In the Situational Analysis
- Targeted programs that address the specific requirements of underrepresented groups and / or women with disabilities are considered
 - If pursued, there is close consultation with those groups at the EOI, Situational Analysis, and Full Proposal phases
- Accessibility requirements, reasonable accommodations, timing, and the costs associated with participation are considered at the planning stages, since some groups may have specific requirements
- Situational Analysis includes detailed information on underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities and women with disabilities
- EOI demonstrates how OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women, have been included in the planning process (e.g., meetings, working groups, focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Situational Analysis demonstrates how OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women, have been included in the process

Design process and Full Proposal

- OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women with disabilities, are full partners during the program design
- Mainstreamed programs that aim to reach all persons with disabilities include gender analysis and analysis of underrepresented groups, even if the proposed program is not going to focus on these specific groups
- A program committee, including diverse and fair representation of persons with disabilities from OPDs, is established with clear roles and responsibilities, overseeing the development of the full proposal
- The participation of OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women's OPDs, are built into a majority of program activities

⁸ Consultation processes should not be used to confirm pre-determined program concepts and should facilitate forums that are open to new ideas within the parameters of UNPRPD MPTF's call for proposals.

- The program activities build and encourage relationships between OPDs and other program partners, such as government, broader civil society, research institutes, etc.
- Capacity building of OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women, are included in UNPRPD MPTF program budgets
- Avenues for tapping into OPD expertise based on lived experience, such as serving as training facilitators, reviewing knowledge management tools, reviewing program outputs, etc., is considered and built into the program activities
- The program budget is gender-responsive and includes the necessary costs to support OPD engagement throughout the delivery of the program, including reasonable accommodations for each activity

Implementing UNPRPD MPTF programs

- OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women's OPDs, are meaningfully involved in the implementation of UNPRPD MPTF joint programs, including:
 - Program oversight committees
 - Program activities
 - Program budgets, including reasonable accommodations that enable participation
 - Monitoring and evaluation of the program, as beneficiaries, program partners, technical experts, program committee members, and other roles

Capacity building

Capacity building through training and technical support is a core component of UNPRPD MPTF joint programs and should adopt a multi-stakeholder approach.

- OPDs attend UNPRPD MPTF-funded trainings that support programs
- Persons with disabilities and OPDs serve as technical experts and trainers⁹

Promoting OPD representation

- In the context of delivering UNPRPD MPTF-funded programs, the representation of OPDs in UN, government, and CSO structures, such as CRPD and / or SDG monitoring mechanisms, UN planning mechanisms, legislative and policy review committees, national human rights institutions, CSO network boards or stakeholder groups, etc., is encouraged

⁹ For example, UNCTs and governments should build understanding of what works to support the inclusion of OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women. OPDs are well-suited to provide training or technical support for UNCT staff and other UNPRPD MPTF program partners to build understanding and practical knowledge and can facilitate training and dialogue among partners.

- OPD representation in UN, government, and CSO structures includes underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability, and women with disabilities

Collaborating with CSOs on intersectional issues

CSOs have systemically excluded persons with disabilities, often perceiving disability as a separate issue to be addressed by disability-focused organizations. Many of them do not understand the central importance of OPDs as leaders in the disability sector and may not distinguish them from disability service providers or parents' groups.

- OPDs and other relevant civil society constituent groups, such as women's organizations, LGBTQI groups, religious/ethnic/Indigenous leaders, and other organizations, are invited to engage with OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women's OPDs.
- Dialogue between OPDs and CSOs is encouraged and facilitated, allowing space for each group to discuss past differences and barriers and to identify solutions
- CSOs are encouraged to include persons with disabilities within their memberships and structures

Monitoring and evaluation

- Good practices on the engagement with OPDs should be documented and shared through UNPRPD MPTF reporting and knowledge management systems¹⁰
- OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women's OPDs, are included in the design of the program monitoring and evaluation system, including a results framework with specific, measurable outcomes and indicators for OPD involvement, gender equality, and inclusion of underrepresented groups, in both mainstreamed and targeted programs
- Program data is collected and disaggregated by sex and disability, using the Washington Group Questions, which can be analysed to capture underrepresented groups¹¹

Role of the UNPRPD MPTF Technical Secretariat

The Technical Secretariat will provide knowledge management tools, advice, and links to experts on strategies to include OPDs, including underrepresented groups and women's OPDs, throughout all stages of the planning and program cycle.

¹⁰ For example, learning can be captured on accessibility standards and adaptations made for underrepresented groups, tools for conducting gender analyses, methods for OPD engagement, case studies, and briefs, to generate and share learning.

¹¹ For more info, see <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/> or contact the UNPRPD MPTF Technical Secretariat for guidance.