ICAI Independent Commission for Aid Impact

DFID's approach to disability in development

A rapid review
Approach paper

February 2018

Contents

1. Purpose, scope and rationale

The International Development Committee (IDC) concluded in April 2014 that DFID was not sufficiently ambitious in its work on disability inclusion, given the UK government's considerable international efforts to promote a 'leave no one behind' agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals.[1] DFID responded with a Disability Framework in late 2014, and began to put in place teams and structures to support a more ambitious disability strategy. As this area is a ministerial priority, ICAI has decided to review DFID's progress on disability and development.

ICAI has decided to make this a rapid review for two reasons. First, an early report would be timely. This is a moment of major attention to disability: the Secretary of State emphasised the importance of disability in a November 2017 speech, and has called a global summit on disability for July 2018. Second, notwithstanding the 2014 Disability Framework, visible DFID investments are relatively recent, both in staffing and in programming. It would be premature to judge the effectiveness of this work at this time. There is a strong case for doing something rapid and real-time.

As a rapid review, it will not attempt to score DFID's performance, but will focus on the learning and relevance of DFID's approach and the potential to deliver impact. We will examine the evidence to date and, if necessary, comment on issues of concern.

The review will explore DFID's work on disability and development since the publication of the 2014 IDC report. It will look at DFID's approach to building an evidence base on what works, gathering data, mainstreaming disability across the department, designing programmes that address barriers to disability inclusion, engaging with disabled people's organisations and building international coalitions.

2. Background

Across the world, an estimated one billion people live with a disability, 80% of them in developing countries, and there is a well-established link between disability and poverty.[2] Yet, as the IDC report noted, people with disabilities were left behind in progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged the error of ignoring disability in the wording of the Millennium Declaration and its accompanying guidelines, pointing out that, "as a consequence, periodic reviews of the MDGs that are underway within the UN do not include reference to disability issues".[3] The IDC went on to say, "if DFID is serious that no-one should be left behind in future work, a strong commitment to disability will be essential".[4]

DFID in reply published a Disability Framework in December 2014, which was updated and expanded in 2015.[5] In December 2016, the then Secretary of State announced that DFID would aim to lead a "step-change in the world's efforts to end extreme poverty by pushing disability up the global development agenda" and "establish DFID as the global leader in this neglected and under prioritised area".[6] In November 2017, the incoming Secretary of State declared that she wanted "to ensure that people with disabilities are at the heart of all we do in development".[7] The UK government will co-host a high-level global disability summit with the government of Kenya and the International Disability Alliance in July 2018.

DFID's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-18 envisages a country office and policy scale-up, so that "the Secretary of State's ambition is rolled out to all country offices and policy teams across DFID". More widely, the action plan aims to create a global coalition, and a focus on countries collecting data on disability.[8] At a programme level, the Disability Framework committed DFID to a twin-track approach, aiming to mainstream disability in policies and programmes as well as supporting disability-targeted programmes.

1. *Disability and Development,* IDC, April 2014, link.
2. *World Report on Disability*, World Health Organization and World Bank, 2011.
3. *Realising the MDGs for persons with disabilities through the implementation of the WPA and the UNCRPD*, Report of the Secretary-General A/RES/63/150, United Nations, 2009, p. 5, link.
4. *Disability and Development*, IDC, April 2014, p. 8, link.
5. *DFID Disability Framework 2014*, DFID, December 2014, link; *DFID Disability Framework 2015*, DFID, December 2015, link.
6. "UK to make disability a global priority", DFID news story, 3 December 2016, link.
7. Secretary of State's speech at the Solutions to Disability Inclusion event, 30 November 2017, link.
8. Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-18, unpublished.

As of 2017, DFID has begun to map spend towards the inclusion of people with disabilities across its programming (the disability inclusion marker) via the aid management platform. There were 851 programmes classified on the system, at the implementation stage in mid-November 2017 and/or with spend to date in 2017-18. Of these, there were:

- Seven active programmes marked 'principal', where inclusion of people with disabilities was the primary objective, with a combined budget of £90 million.
- 203 marked 'significant' because they contained activities to support the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- 641 programmes which did not deliberately focus on inclusion of people with disabilities ('not targeted').[9]

Figure 1: Disability focus of DFID's programmes
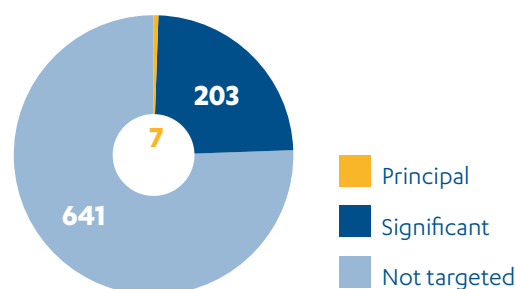
Source: Data provided by DFID, and as of November 2017.

3. Review questions

The review is built around the evaluation criteria of **learning** and **relevance**. It will address the following questions and sub-questions:
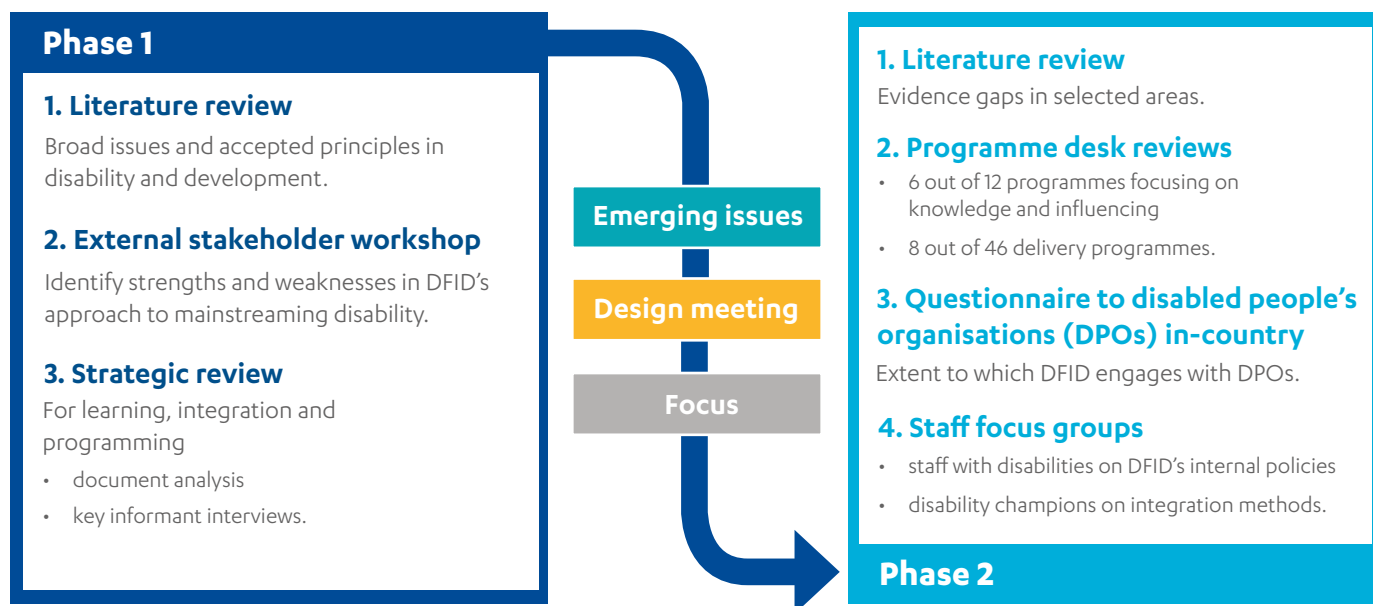
Table 1: Our review questions

Review criteria and questions	Sub-questions
1. Learning: How well is DFID identifying and filling knowledge and data gaps on disability and development?	• Does DFID have an appropriate strategy for building its knowledge on what works in improving conditions for people with disabilities? • How well is DFID addressing data gaps on disability in development within its own programming and at the national and international levels? • Does DFID have an appropriate strategy for sharing new knowledge and evidence both internally and externally?
2. Relevance: Has DFID developed an appropriate approach to disability and development?	• Does DFID have a suitable approach to mainstreaming disability issues into its programming across the department? • In DFID programmes that include disability-related activities, is the approach likely to deliver meaningful results? • Is DFID adopting a suitable approach to promoting disability in the global development agenda?

4. Methodology

As this is a rapid review, we have followed an iterative design process. We conducted a first round of evidence collection, prior to the development of this paper, and then assessed the information we had obtained against our review questions and determined further areas of enquiry.

[9.] Programme list from DFID. In addition, 294 programmes were as yet not marked.

Figure 2: An iterative design process

Phase 1

1. Literature review
Broad issues and accepted principles in disability and development.

2. External stakeholder workshop
Identify strengths and weaknesses in DFID's approach to mainstreaming disability.

3. Strategic review
For learning, integration and programming
• document analysis
• key informant interviews.

Emerging issues

Design meeting

Focus

1. Literature review
Evidence gaps in selected areas.

2. Programme desk reviews
• 6 out of 12 programmes focusing on knowledge and influencing
• 8 out of 46 delivery programmes.

3. Questionnaire to disabled people's organisations (DPOs) in-country
Extent to which DFID engages with DPOs.

4. Staff focus groups
• staff with disabilities on DFID's internal policies
• disability champions on integration methods.

Phase 2

Phase 1 (already completed):

A short **literature review** to identify guidance on the broad issues and accepted principles in disability and development – including the implications of the Sustainable Development Goals. It also covered the requirements for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which the UK has ratified, in particular under Article 32 (international cooperation).

An **external stakeholder workshop** and associated interviews with non-governmental organisations and academics working on disability, to collect views on the strengths and weaknesses of DFID's approach to integrating disability across the organisation.

A **strategic review** of DFID's approach to disability and development, with three elements:

• On learning, we examined DFID's approach to identifying evidence gaps and commissioning research, its plans for disseminating the learning and its work to improve the collection of disability data, both globally and within DFID programmes.

• We examined the process of mainstreaming disability into DFID's work across the department. This involved looking at the integration of disability into DFID's business processes and programme management systems, and at efforts to encourage and support a focus on disability across the department, especially by making skills and knowledge available.

• On programming and external influence, we examined the extent to which plans have been put in place to implement the priorities identified in the Disability Framework, and to promote disability and development issues at the international level. We identify gaps between policy commitments and practice to date.

The strategic review consisted of a review of documents and key informant interviews. In addition to DFID staff, officers in other bilateral and multilateral development agencies were interviewed, both to provide comparators with DFID and to gain their views on DFID's work.

Phase 2 (to be completed):

The work completed in Phase 1 allowed us to develop our subsequent methodology, and to write this approach paper. Phase 2 of the review will include:

A **desk review of a sample of programmes** across a number of sectors, to assess the extent to which their design draws on good practice and incorporates learning, as identified through the literature review.

A **survey of disabled people's organisations in DFID priority countries**, to collect feedback on their level of involvement in the design and implementation of programmes, and in DFID's policy advocacy, and to obtain feedback on the quality of DFID's work.

Two **focus group discussions** to take forward the analysis of DFID's methods of mainstreaming disability across the department. Focus groups provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on each other's perspectives, often taking discussions to a deeper level than would normally be possible within individual interviews. In one set, disability champions across DFID will discuss how they are planning to mainstream disability in their departments and extend the proportion of programmes including disability, whether they are resourced effectively, and which methods they have found most effective in promoting engagement from staff and the adoption of learning and good practice. In the other focus group, staff with disabilities will be asked about their experience of DFID's internal policies and procedures and the mainstreaming approach. The literature review has indicated that we should expect links between internal policies and effective mainstreaming.

5. Sampling approach

We have sampled programmes active or in the pipeline since the beginning of 2017 – on the assumption that they could reasonably be expected to have addressed disability given that the first Disability Framework was adopted in 2014. We have focused on programmes marked 'principal' or 'significant' in DFID's management information system, and where the disability percentage is set at at least 10%. These criteria yielded a pool of 58 programmes.

These were divided into two separate groups for sampling purposes: those focusing on knowledge building and/or international influencing (12), and those designed to deliver results in particular countries (46), which we refer to as delivery programmes.

Knowledge and influencing

We selected six out of the 12 programmes, as follows:

- All four programmes that focus solely on disability.
- Two of the eight programmes that include a significant disability component. These were chosen because they address two of the priorities of the DFID Disability Framework – stigma and discrimination, and humanitarian programming.

Delivery programmes

From this group, we chose a sample that reflects a range of sectors. We chose to focus on education and humanitarian programmes, as these are indicated in the Disability Framework as at a relatively advanced stage of incorporating disability, and on economic development and mental health, which are indicated as priority sectors but are not as advanced.

Our sample also covers a range of countries. Four countries have been identified by DFID as trailblazers for the 'leave no one behind' agenda: Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Nepal. We would therefore expect an early focus on disability there, and so have included two of those trailblazer countries, chosen because they include programmes in the chosen sectors. To get a geographical spread, we have ensured that programmes come from at least two other countries, as well as one centrally managed programme, and that both African and Asian countries are represented. There are too few programmes in our sample universe to choose specific countries before looking for programmes.

The size of sample required in order to satisfy these criteria was eight programmes, of which two are marked 'principal'. This is a very small sample, and clearly illustrative rather than statistically representative.

6. Limitations of the methodology

This methodology is designed for a rapid rather than a comprehensive assessment of DFID's work on disability and development. While providing an overview of DFID's efforts to date to integrate disability into the work of the department, it is not designed to:

- Calculate the proportion of DFID programmes that address disability. DFID itself has undertaken this assessment through the disability marker in its management information system. Our focus in the sampling will be on programmes that have already been identified as addressing disability.
- Assess the effectiveness of disability-focused programmes, many of which remain at an early stage of implementation. It will, however, collect data from annual reviews on progress towards disability-related milestones and targets, in so far as this is available within our sample.

As a rapid review looking at only a small sample of DFID programmes, our findings may not be representative of DFID's work on disability across its portfolio and across different sectors and country contexts. We will mitigate this by interviewing informants, both inside and outside DFID, who are aware of the overall situation. Our findings will be expressed as specific to the programming that we have examined, while pointing to issues that are likely to have wider significance across the portfolio.

7. Quality assurance and ethics

The review will be carried out under the guidance of ICAI chief commissioner Dr Alison Evans, with support from the ICAI secretariat. The review will be subject to quality assurance by the service provider consortium.

Both the methodology and the final report will be peer reviewed by Dr David Cobley from the University of Birmingham. He is an expert on disability in international development.

The review team will respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence. We will ensure informed consent for all interviews and focus groups, and that the participants are aware of how the information they provide will be used. Information collected during interviews will only be used in an anonymised form, unless the express consent of the individual or institution is obtained.

8. Timing and deliverables

The review will be completed within six months, starting from late November 2017.

Phase	Timing and deliverables
First phase	November 2017 to January 2018
Second phase	January 2018 to February 2018
Analysis	Emerging findings presentation: February 2018
Reporting	Final report: May/June 2018

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This document can be downloaded from www.icai.independent.gov.uk/

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