

European Disability Forum: Presentation of Work on EU-Development Cooperation Policy

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Introduction: What is EDF

The European Disability Forum is the umbrella body of the European disability movement. Its members are organisations OF disabled people.

It exists to represent disabled people in dialogue with the European Union and other European authorities. Its mission is to promote equal opportunities for disabled people and to ensure disabled citizens' full access to fundamental and human rights through their active involvement in policy development and implementation in the European Union.

EDF has member organisations reflecting a broad geographical base and a wide range of concerns across the disability movement. The membership includes the national councils of disabled people from the 15 EU countries, plus Norway and Iceland, representing the national disability movements. It also has associate and observer members from the enlargement countries who will join as full members with the accession of enlargement countries to EU in May 2004. In addition, there are broad range of organisations representing different disability groups and campaign interests in Europe.

EDF was created by its member organisations in 1996 so that it could defend issues of common concern to all disability groups and be the independent and strong voice of disabled citizens in dialogue with the EU.

When and Why EDF became involved in Development Cooperation work

The Nordic members of EDF (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland) have been actively involved in development cooperation work for a number of years. In 2001 they requested that EDF give attention to lobbying the EU to ensure its development cooperation policy.

EDF's role is to mainstream disability in all EU policy areas – so this approach was needed towards shaping EU development cooperation policy also.

EDF cooperation with the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)

What is IDDC

IDDC is a self-managing group currently consisting of 16 international non-government organisations supporting disability and development work in over 100 countries globally. IDDC's aim is to more effectively and efficiently promote the

rights of disabled people through collaboration and sharing of information and expertise. To achieve this aim, IDDC believes development policy and practice should be inclusive.

For further information see:

<http://www.iddc.org.uk/about/about.shtml>

The work of EDF complements that of IDDC: EDF has expertise in lobbying the EU institutions; IDDC has expertise in field work on development cooperation and disability.

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Why mainstream disability in Development Cooperation:

Disabled people exist in every community throughout the world. Anyone can become disabled at any time, and as populations age, disability will be the experience of an increasing percentage of every society. Yet universally, disabled children, women and men lack access to basic human rights, and are marginalized, excluded and discriminated against.

Most disabled people (70% and 85% of disabled children) live in the economically poorer countries of the South where lack of access to human rights is first and foremost about the right to life, to food, water and shelter. Because poverty is both a cause and consequence of disability, some estimates state that as many as 1 in 5 poor people are disabled. This would mean that practically every family in a poor community would be directly affected by disability. Yet within development co-operation policy and practice aiming at poverty reduction, disabled people usually remain invisible and excluded.

Even when there is an awareness of the need to include disabled people in development co-operation activities, there is still a lot of misunderstanding and ignorance about what this means in practice. Many donors assume that it is a highly specialist area requiring lots of additional specialist resources. Yet the inclusion of disabled persons could progress a long way if projects just consulted with disabled people and paid attention to not putting up the barriers that exclude disabled people.

There are huge costs to society in not considering and including disabled persons that can only be estimated. Poverty reduction, universal primary education, employment and economic targets will never be met unless disabled persons are included. Reconstruction efforts in post-conflict situations need to realise the numbers of disabled children and adults increase as a result of conflict, and include them in the re-building of their society.

Lobby Strategy:

The Twin-track approach is essential in order to make mainstreaming effective. This means that as well as removing barriers within the mainstream, there should also be a specific focus on disability.

At the level of **Policy**, disability should be mainstreamed into general development policy, into gender, poverty-alleviation, health and education policies. There should also be specific disability policy (rights-based and promoting inclusion) that goes into more detail.

Barriers (e.g. access) should be identified and removed in the mainstream, and in addition, disabled people should be empowered to participate through strengthening DPOs, and creating access to appropriate rehabilitation and aids and equipment.

Structurally, ‘Disability needs to be approached vertically and horizontally within aid agencies.’ This means that aid agencies need to raise awareness amongst ALL their staff, but also appoint people with specific disability responsibility, to ensure the issue does not get lost.

In relation to **Budgets**, mainstreaming needs to be supported by appropriate funding, this could be by allocating a certain percentage of every mainstream budget to disability (The Indian government allocates 3%). In addition, a specific budget is required for activities such as training and awareness raising across the board, providing they exist in order to promote mainstreaming, and not to fund inappropriate ‘vertical’ projects that promote segregation.

The donor organization - structure and ethos: The donor agency needs put into practice what it is recommending in its development cooperation. This includes:

Central role of DPOs in the South

Importance in empowering and supporting disabled peoples organisations in the South: they have a crucial role in lobbying the EU delegations to influence the development of the Country Strategy Papers and the work programmes of the delegations.

Exchange of information between DPOs in the North and DPOs in the South to build up mutual support networks – to coordinate the lobbying strategy.

Key priorities:

-Implementation of the European Commission Guidance note on Disability and Development Cooperation

http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/human_social/lib_health1_en.htm

<http://www.iddc.org.uk/latest/latest.shtml>

-Organising disability awareness training of European Commission staff – planned for 2004

-Using the Guideline document to influence the Country Strategy Papers

The CSP and Regional Strategy Papers are instruments for guiding, managing and reviewing EC assistance programmes. As part of the reform programme of the EC development assistance, new guidelines have been drafted for the production of the CSP and RSP.

CSPs focus on poverty – the emphasis is on country ownership, involve consultation with civil society and focus on a limited number of areas. Also to incorporate a number of cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality and environmental concerns.

Promote implementation of the guidance note via the mid-term review.
Examine the extent to which the country programmes are responsive to the needs of disabled persons.

-The Inter-service Quality Support Group

The Inter-service Quality Support Group is in charge of reviewing the CSPs and promoting good practice.

Aim: to ensure the IQSG includes disability in their criteria for reviewing the effectiveness of CSPs

- European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights EIDHR

Influencing the European Commission programme document for EIHDR (2000-2004) – in order that the fifth mainstreaming element will be on disability.

Update of EIHDR - early 2004.

Lobbying of EIDHR programming identification missions who are responsible to define sub-priorities identified for each country.

EIDHR regional conferences and seminars organised by the Commission

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/eidhr/index_en.htm

-Evaluation Unit

In charge of evaluation of the European Commission's cooperation and development programmes in third countries. It manages evaluation of sectoral policies eg education and transport.

-EU Budget

Using the EU budget lines on development cooperation to mainstream disability across relevant EU funding programmes.

Examples of Outcomes so far

Increased visibility in the European Parliament

EU-ACP Resolution on health issues, young people, the elderly and people living with disabilities (2001)

RESOLUTION on the rights of the disabled people and older people in ACP countries (2001)

RESOLUTION on children's rights and child soldiers in particular (2003)

Fringe meetings around EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assemblies (2001/2002)

Role of the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament – has organised meetings on development cooperation

EU Budget – Increase in the number of references to disability in the budgetary remarks

European Parliament Resolutions on EU Human Rights includes a specific section on disability and human rights

Increasing visibility in the European Commission

Regular contacts are being made with DG DEV, DG RELEX, DG AIDCO, ECHO and relations with these different DGs is becoming closer.

First concrete result, the Guidance Note on Disability and Development cooperations

Building awareness in the Member States

EDF national disability councils have played an important role in liaising with their respective development cooperation Ministries to build awareness and support to increase disability issues as a priority in development cooperation.

Active members – the Nordic countries; Italy and Spain

Importance of contacts and building relations with development cooperation NGOs

Current and Future Priorities

- Implementation of the Guidance Note – on-going
- Work to get disability included in the 2004 work programme
- Influencing the Country Strategy Papers – 2004 mid-term review
- On-going work to influencing the Interservice Quality Support Group – instruments for screening the CSPs
- Organising Disability Awareness Training in 2004

- Introduce disability into impact assessment of the EIDHR
- Press for a European Commission Communication on Social Policy and Development Cooperation
- Continue to press for a Commission communication on Disability and Development Cooperation