



Australian **Disability+Development** Consortium

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO  
THE STRATEGIC EFFECTIVENESS  
AND OUTCOMES OF AUSTRALIA'S  
AID PROGRAM IN THE INDO-  
PACIFIC AND ITS ROLE IN  
SUPPORTING AUSTRALIA'S  
REGIONAL INTERESTS

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## Key recommendations

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1. DFAT’s performance framework should include a strategic target that an ambitious percentage of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address disability inclusion in their implementation. This target should be determined according to the latest baseline data available, including the most recent AQC’s data.
2. DFAT’s annual *Performance of Australian Aid* report should include data on disability-inclusion investment performance by investment priority area (as per the 2014-15 and 2015-16 reports).
3. All investments aiming for women’s empowerment, and Aid for Trade should integrate disability analysis, including disaggregated data, identification of barriers for women/people with disabilities, and strategies for inclusion of women/people with disabilities.
4. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade should also take the findings of the Office of Development Effectiveness’s soon to be released evaluation of disability inclusion in Australian development assistance into consideration of this inquiry.

## Contents

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<b>Introduction</b> .....	2
<b>1. Empowering women and girls with disabilities</b> .....	3
Economic empowerment of women and people with disabilities in Sri Lanka .....	4
Skills, confidence and a micro-business for Helen .....	5
Supporting the ‘sisterhood’ to include women with disabilities experiencing violence in India ....	6
<b>2. Innovative approaches to disability inclusion in the aid program</b> .....	6
Accelerating Sign Language Development in Cambodia through InnovationXChange .....	6
Using theatre to empower and educate in Vanuatu .....	7
Advocating for disability inclusion to leverage resources of others .....	8
<b>3. Disability inclusion across the aid program: outcomes achieved and work to come</b> .....	9
Aid for Trade and Infrastructure: room for improvement .....	11
Agriculture, Fisheries and Water .....	12
<b>Key recommendations</b> .....	13

## Introduction

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As outlined in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, the current era of Australia's international activities and interests is marked by rapid change and diverse priorities—including for our aid program. These include the increased strains of food, energy and water; pressures from climate change and extreme weather conditions; global health risks; and growing recognition of the need to ensure aid not only overcomes poverty, but also reduces inequality and ensures long term, sustainable change.<sup>1</sup>

These complexities and nuances mean that while the development policy *Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability* and the aid performance framework, *Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid* provide the cornerstone frameworks of Australia's aid program, they cannot be assessed in isolation. There are other important contexts to consider in order to gain comprehensive insight into the effectiveness and outcomes of the Australian aid program.

Firstly, the development policy and aid performance frameworks have been implemented against a backdrop of substantial cuts and scale-backs to the Australian aid program. Australia's foreign aid budget has fallen 17.6 percent in nominal terms since 2013, or 32 percent when adjusted for to account for inflation.<sup>2</sup> This period has also seen the amalgamation of AusAID into the Department of Foreign Affairs, which lead to programming and personnel upheaval. While Australia's aid program continues to achieve significant outcomes despite these challenges, it must be noted that restored, long-term and predictable funding would significantly increase the capacity of Australia's aid program to deliver upon its aims of reducing poverty and promoting prosperity and stability in our region.

Secondly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its underlying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provide a critical international framework to respond to the challenge of global poverty and inequality. While Australia has committed to the SDGs, it is imperative to align our aid program more closely with them, including measuring the outcomes and effectiveness of our aid program against the SDGs. Of particular note is the SDGs' emphasis on that global development must 'leave no one behind'. This means that Australia must ensure that our aid program's work to reduce poverty and promote sustainable economic growth in developing countries includes the most marginalised people.

People with disabilities make up a significant proportion of these marginalised people. There are over one billion people living with disabilities in the world,<sup>3</sup> and the prevalence is even higher in developing countries where it is believed that over one in six adults in have disabilities.<sup>4</sup> In fact,

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, 2017, available from <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/> .

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Dornan and Stephen Howes, 'When will we stop cutting aid?', *Dev Policy Blog*, 9 May 2018, available from <http://www.devpolicy.org/2018-budget-blog-20180509/>

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation and World Bank, *World Report on Disability*, 2011, available from [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/), p 29.

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organisation and World Bank, as above, p. 27.

eighty percent of people with disabilities live in developing countries. People, particularly women and girls, with disabilities in developing countries tend to be poorer, and face higher levels of discrimination, exclusion and violence than the rest of the population. When considering the effectiveness and outcomes of Australia's aid program, it is therefore imperative to consider what is being done to ensure that all people with disabilities are being included within all development efforts.

Australia has recognised the importance of this through the first *Development for All: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009 – 2014* and the subsequent *Development for All 2015 – 2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program*. The outcomes and effectiveness of work under these strategies will be outlined in depth in the forthcoming report of the Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) into Australia's disability-inclusive development (DID) work, and ADDC recommends that once it becomes available, the JSCFADT include this report in their consideration of this Parliamentary Inquiry.

This submission further aims to inform the Parliamentary Inquiry primarily through case studies of aid programs implemented by Australian NGOs that demonstrate strong effectiveness and positive outcomes for people with disabilities, and contextual discussion of these. Our discussion is arranged around the three themes of the Parliamentary inquiry Terms of Reference:

1. Including women with disabilities within all work to empower women and girls.
2. Innovative approaches towards including most marginalised people with disabilities within aid outcomes.
3. Progress made in mainstreaming disability inclusion across the aid program, and need to continue this work—with particular regard for the Infrastructure and Aid for Trade sector.

## 1. Empowering women and girls with disabilities

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DFAT has recognised the importance of promoting gender equality as a cross cutting issue across all aid programs, including specifically pursuing efforts that target women's economic empowerment. DFAT's *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy 2016* recognises that women are not a homogeneous group, and particular attention must be paid to women with disabilities. This reflects the fact that women with disabilities often experience double discrimination on account of their disability and their gender. This makes them more vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion, and restricts their access to opportunities such as education, employment and social participation, and basic services. Women with disabilities also experience sexual and physical violence at rates two to three times higher than women without disabilities.<sup>5</sup> This means that all aid program efforts aimed at empowering women must include strategies to ensure women with disabilities are included equally. It also means there is a need for targeted programs to specifically reach and empower women with disabilities.

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<sup>5</sup> CBM Australia, *Inclusion Made Easy*, 2011, available from [https://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/78851/CBM\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_-\\_Women.pdf](https://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/78851/CBM_Disability_Inclusion_-_Women.pdf)

The following case studies demonstrate outcomes that have been made through Australia's aid program to empower women with disabilities in line with Australia's commitments to women's economic empowerment, fostering women's leadership, and eliminating violence against women.

*Economic empowerment of women and people with disabilities in Sri Lanka  
Case study contributed by World Vision Australia.*

World Vision (WV)'s Sri Lanka Gender and Disability Inclusive Economic Development Project (iLIVE), supported by the Australian Government, aims to increase incomes of 8,000 vulnerable people in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka—including people with disabilities and women—by thirty percent by 2021. The project will reach an additional 16,000 community members and other stakeholders through awareness raising activities aimed at changing attitudes on disability and gender.

Sri Lanka struggles to achieve inclusive economic growth (World Bank 2014). Over 90% of Sri Lanka's poor live in the project target areas in the rural North and East, (European Commission 2013). Participation rates of women in the labour force is low (at around 30 per cent) and people with disabilities are also more vulnerable to poverty.

The project takes a multilayered approach to overcoming the barriers to economic empowerment. It involves:

- Increasing incomes of vulnerable women and people with disabilities by focusing on areas of work that are easily accessible and yet lucrative, such as growing mushrooms and nuts, and strengthening access to markets, skills and technology.
- Addressing inequitable household decision-making and negative attitudes in the wider community to the economic empowerment of women and people with disabilities, as these challenges can negate the positive impact of increased income.
- Strengthening Disabled Peoples Organisations, as these organisations are renowned as the most effective and sustainable avenue to improving conditions in developing countries for people with disabilities.

The project has so far been implemented for two years. In this short period of time:

- 80 percent of the producer groups and small-scale savings groups established under the project are comprised of women.
- 7.5 percent of producer groups and 10 percent of savings group members are people with disabilities.
- The remaining balance of groups are made up of impoverished men in the community that need support.

The success of specifically targeting and working with people with disabilities is evident in that approximately 50 percent of all female participants and 32 percent of all male participants in the project have disabilities.

Over the next year the project will also:

- Respond to identified need by providing a three-day training program regarding the rights of people with disabilities with eight Disabled Peoples Organisations.
- Undertake a labour market analysis focussed on labour needs and opportunities for people with disabilities and women, as to guide how the project can best provide appropriate training to enable these groups to fill labour gaps—thereby leading to economic empowerment.
- Establish more savings groups to expand the number of members who are people with disabilities or women, thereby maximising their economic empowerment.

To ensure value for money through efficiency, the project leverages World Vision’s previous work, particularly in agricultural value chains, and operate within WV’s existing project areas which enables costs-sharing for a large portion of the physical and human resources to support implementation.

### *Skills, confidence and a micro-business for Helen*

*Case study contributed by Oxfam Australia, originally collected by Vanuatu Civil Society Disability Network in partnership with Oxfam in Vanuatu.*

Helen Popaul is 22 years old and lives in the Turtle Bay area on Santo Island Vanuatu. She is a young member of the Sanma Frangipani Association (SFA) which is an organisation based in Santo that supports people with disability. Helen was born with a physical impairment in her legs, which means that she walks with her hands. Helen did not attend school because of the conditions of the roads and the fear that people would ridicule her.

“The road to the school is covered with rocks and gravel, which I am sure would have made it unbearable for me to travel to and from there. Once there, I don’t know how people would have treated me, if they would have accepted me,” Helen explains.

Helen joined SFA in 2009, and was then eligible to receive trainings about tailoring and micro-business management. SFA provided her with a wheelchair, a sewing machine and sewing equipment which she uses to sew skirts, pants, island dresses and pillow cases. She sells her products to family, relatives and other people in the village.

“At first I didn’t know how SFA would help me but when I went to their trainings, I was given mobility equipment to help me move around more easily and also given tools and skills so I can make an income. I began to understand that SFA supports people with disability to become more independent, confident and empowered to speak out about their rights as a person with a disability,” says Helen.

“I am a woman who has a disability but I am also an advocate, a business owner and a woman with dreams just as big as anyone else. I will never look at myself as a victim but as victorious. I have defeated the odds and will continue to enjoy and have a fulfilling life. I hope that other people with disabilities are empowered to do the same,” she says.

SFA receives funding through a network supported by the Oxfam Governance, Leadership and Accountability program, which is funded through Australian Government Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

*Supporting the ‘sisterhood’ to include women with disabilities experiencing violence  
Case study contributed by CBM Australia.*

In the Ranchi region of India, CBM Australia are supporting mainstream organisations to widen their approaches to involve women with disability. In this region, a mainstream development organisation, Chotanagpur Sanskritik Sangh (CSS), concentrates on grassroots activism and advocacy to promote women’s rights with the local police, judiciary and Jharkhand government. CSS have developed a “sisterhood” network of women in the community with a dual purpose of personal support and also advocacy in changing gender dynamics within households, community and government. When an incident such as an assault against a woman occurs, the “sisterhood” is activated to ensure that the woman gets support at all levels including counselling, legal redress, personal support, and high level advocacy at the state and media levels to ensure that cases are elevated and actioned. CBM Australia, supported by ANCP funding, are now ensuring that women with disabilities can benefit and participate equally in this program. This has resulted in supporting women with disabilities who have been gang raped to file complaints and reports.

## 2. Innovative approaches to disability inclusion in the aid program

The disability and innovation sectors have long gone hand in hand. People with disabilities face physical, communication or attitudinal barriers to engaging equally in society, and as such need to find innovative new approaches to overcome these barriers. These new approaches often drive improvements for the community as a whole; for example, the typewriter was created to support a woman who was blind to draft letters. It went on to spark a revolution in how all people would write. For this reason, approaches to disability-inclusive design are often referred to as ‘universal design’.

The following section overviews some case studies of innovations delivered through the Australian aid program. They provide people with disabilities the support they require to participate equally in their community and access development outcomes, and they have the capacity to drive change for wider segments of their communities.

*Accelerating Sign Language Development in Cambodia through InnovationXChange  
Case study provided by Save the Children, funded through the InnovationXChange.*

Despite decades of development and strong economic growth in Cambodia, children with hearing impairments remain highly marginalised. Awareness of Cambodian Sign Language remains low and formal sign language education is only available in urban centres, leaving children with hearing impairments who live in more remote areas of Cambodia isolated from opportunities to learn even basic sign language.

Field observations by Save the Children and partner staff, as well as local education authorities, show that children with hearing impairments in Bakan district who do attend school are unable to understand their teachers or peers, and rely on family members to interpret for them. These children have limited educational achievement. Later in life, young people and adults with hearing impairments are more likely to be excluded from employment opportunities and are vulnerable to exploitation, including forced marriage and other human rights abuses.

With funding obtained through the InnovationXchange, Save the Children has partnered with Krousar Thmey, a leading national disability inclusion NGO, and the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (particularly the Special Education Department) on the Accelerating Sign Language in Cambodia project. This creates an enabling learning and social environment for children with hearing impairments by filling a gap in provision of sign language education for children living in remote areas of the country in a low cost and innovative way.

The project develops open source video tutorials (and supporting materials) on sign language for children with hearing impairments, and their families and teachers. These tutorials are made available via laptops, tablets and smart phone devices, and delivered by Learning Facilitators in primary schools. The project uses an iterative design approach with frequent user testing to build a foundation of evidence for future use of digital technology to enable children in very remote areas of Cambodia to access sign language.

### **Progress so far:**

While still in the first 'landscape assessment phase', the impact and potential of this project is already apparent. Within the first five months, the following key results have been achieved:

- Training of 18 participants on basic screening methods to identify hearing impairments.
- Basic screening of 3,023 children (including 1,451 girls) from ten primary schools.
- Identification of 46 children (including 17 girls) suspected of having hearing impairments. Of this group:
- 20 children have since been confirmed to have hearing impairment, including:
  - 10 children with profound hearing loss,
  - 3 children who are out of school, and
  - 15 children who require hearing aids.

Save the Children will support all of these children to access sign language education through the project.

Further work to establish the project baseline report and to develop tools and guidelines to assess the sign language proficiency of the different target groups has also been undertaken.

### *Using theatre to empower and educate in Vanuatu Case study contributed by Oxfam Australia.*

Rainbow Theatre is a group of actors with disabilities who tour Vanuatu performing plays, facilitating workshops, and conducting radio dramas about the abilities and rights of people with a disability. This theatre group was formed with initial support from Wan Smolbag (WSB) and Vanuatu Society for People with a Disability (VSPD). Rainbow Theatre's post performance discussions demonstrate how drama is an effective mechanism to initiate discussion around human rights issues that are often challenging to talk about. Plays and performances bring the focus back to the real-life experiences of people, in a way that is accessible to varying education levels and ages. Rainbow Theatre actors believe their messages are delivered more effectively through their performances as actions speak louder than words.

WSB (which receives DFAT ANCP funding through Oxfam Australia, and Rainbow Theatre members are also part of the Disability Network which is supported by the Oxfam GLA program through DFAT ANCP funding.

### [Ellie's story](#)

Ellie Enock is a young woman from Atchin Island, Malekula. When she was 20 years old, Ellie was in a car accident while driving with a friend. "My foot became detached from my leg and my leg was crushed during the accident, so it had to be amputated. I was unconscious until I woke up at the hospital."

"I used to work as an Administrative Officer and a Hair & Makeup artist at the Rina's Island Spa but I stopped working there after the accident. I had to learn how to use crutches to move around, and many of the buildings are not accessible for people with a disability. There are only a few ramps, most buildings have only stairs."

In 2013, Ellie's friend, Francis, asked her if she was interested in joining Rainbow Disability Theatre.

Ellie recalls, "I was painfully shy, I didn't know what people would think of me. I used to be really active and outgoing but lost a lot of confidence after my leg was amputated. The thought of being in front of people scared me. However, I agreed to visit the theatre and see for myself what they do, and if it was something I was interested in, I would join."

With Rainbow Disability Theatre, Ellie had the chance to learn about the rights of people living with disabilities and was also given acting lessons. Acting helped to develop Ellie's confidence and enabled her to come out of her shell and overcome her fears about being in public as an amputee. She became a member and has been with Rainbow Theatre since 2013. Ellie travels with the team around Vanuatu acting and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities.

"I used to look down on people with disabilities as if they had less rights than me, that they weren't important. But now that I have a disability I have insight into how that discrimination feels. I have now been taught about the rights of people living with disabilities, and I realised how wrong and discriminative my views were, so I want to help change the negative perceptions other people have about us," said Ellie.

This increased confidence and empowerment enabled Ellie to decide to start her own private hair salon business.

"I realised that I can put my skills to good use by running a private hair salon business at home. This way I can earn additional income to support my family," said Ellie. "Rainbow Theatre helped increase my knowledge in disability issues and has also taught me things about climate change, domestic violence, and life skills. After my accident I thought that that life was over for me, but Rainbow Theatre (WSB) allowed me to realise that even with a disability, I can still bring positive changes in my life and in other people's lives."

[\*Advocating for disability inclusion to leverage resources of others\*](#)

[\*Discussion of the findings of the 2017 ODE report 'Unfinished Business: Evaluation of Australian advocacy for disability-inclusive development.'\*](#)

A key aspect of Australia's *Development for All* strategies has been to act as an international leader on DID and advocate for other agencies to increase disability inclusion. This is an innovative approach, which vastly expands the outcomes delivered via Australia's aid program for people with disabilities across the world by strategically influencing other agencies' work towards disability inclusion. It also supports Australia's international standing and credibility.

The outcomes of this innovative strategy are outlined in the ODE's 2017 report *Unfinished Business: Evaluation of Australian advocacy for disability-inclusive development*.<sup>6</sup> This report found strong evidence that DFAT's international advocacy work on DID has been:

- Innovative and provided a model for others.
- Effective and provides good value for money: small investments have been successfully used to strategically leverage other funding and change the approaches of other agencies towards disability inclusion.
- Successful in establishing DFAT as influential and the leading advocate and go-to partner for disability inclusion.

In terms of specific outcomes achieved through DFAT's advocacy on DID, the report found evidence that this had contributed to:

- Ensuring that global policies, the international architecture around development and humanitarian action, and the policies of some of Australia's development partners are more inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Improved data collection on disability and supporting the development of the tools needed to provide the basis of systems to collect disability data.
- Facilitating Disabled People's Organisations' engagement in major development policy process, including the World Humanitarian Summit, Sendai and the 2030 Agenda.

It is important to note that the ODE report also notes that the 'hard won' successes that Australia has achieved from its international advocacy on disability inclusion would be undermined if DFAT were to pull back from this work, and doing so would moreover have negative consequences for Australia's standing, 'presence' and reputation more broadly.

### 3. Disability inclusion across Australia's aid program: outcomes achieved and work to come

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The 2017 ODE report also found that Australia's credibility as a global leader on DID relies upon it committing funding to disability inclusive programs as well as its advocacy work on this topic. Moreover, it reported findings that the effectiveness of DFAT's advocacy stems from the credibility of

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<sup>6</sup> Office of Development Effectiveness, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017, *Unfinished business: Evaluation of Australian advocacy for disability-inclusive development*, available from <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/strategic-evaluations/Pages/unfinished-business.aspx>

Australia as an advocate—which is owing to a range of factors including supporting its ‘talk’ around DID with funding and action. This means that it is imperative that Australia continues funding for DID, and also focuses efforts on improving DID practices in areas that have not performed so well on this.

The *Performance of Australian Aid* reports for 2014/15 and 2015/16 assessed the disability-inclusive performance of individual aid investments through two questions in the Aid Quality Checks:

- Question 1: the investment identifies and addresses barriers to inclusion and opportunities for participation of people with disabilities.
- Question 2: the investment actively involves Disabled People’s Organisations in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

The results are as follows:

Sector:	2014/15 <sup>7</sup>		2015/16 <sup>8</sup>	
	Q 1	Q 2	Q 1	Q 2
Education	83	69	85	80
Health	61	49	83	76
Whole of aid program	56	48	60	53
Building resilience	51	41	59	59
Effective governance	48	46	50	44
Agriculture, fisheries and water	38	31	44	28
Infrastructure and trade	38	28	37	30

Unfortunately, this data was not published in the 2016/17 report, which hinders analysis and accountability of most recent progress on these questions. We address this omission in our recommendations below.

This data firstly shows that the aid program is effectively making progress towards disability inclusion. In the short time period covered by these two reports, there was movement towards higher levels disability inclusion across the whole of the aid program and in most sectors: the answers to all but three questions were higher percentages of inclusion in 2015/2016 than in 2014/2015.

This implies that the dedicated work of the DFAT Disability Section and *the Development for All Strategy* is being effective in achieving outcomes towards greater inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities. Particularly strong outcomes were achieved in increasing levels of disability inclusion in the Education and Health sectors between 2014/15 – 2015/16, and this reflects the concerted strategies and funding that has been prioritised towards disability inclusion in these sectors.

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<sup>7</sup> Based on the DFAT publication, *Performance of Australian Aid 2014-15*, February 2016, available from <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/performance-of-australian-aid-2014-15.aspx> p.76.

<sup>8</sup> Based on the DFAT publication, *Performance of Australian Aid 2015-16*, May 2017, available from <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/performance-of-australian-aid-2015-16.aspx> p. 94.

These figures also show, however, that there is still much work to do in order to ensure people with disabilities are actively included throughout the aid program. The sectors of Infrastructure and Trade, and Agriculture, Fisheries and Water have particularly low performance in this regard. It is simply not the case that disability inclusion is not relevant to these sectors. While the ‘cross over’ or need for disability inclusion within education and health sectors may be easier to identify and act upon, it is just as important to ensure that Infrastructure, Trade, Agriculture, Fisheries and Water investments also inclusive of people with disabilities, given the economic opportunities that they provide. Discussion of the need for disability inclusion in these sectors, and room and means for improvement to doing so, forms the final part of this submission.

### *Aid for Trade and Infrastructure: room for improvement*

Aid for Trade accounts for around 40 percent of all funding to Asia and the Pacific,<sup>9</sup> and as a hallmark piece of DFAT’s program it presents important opportunities to reduce poverty and economically empower people with disabilities. Indeed, between 2000 and 2015, trade in Asia and the Pacific multiplied from \$1.8 trillion in 2000 to \$6.8 trillion in 2015, and per capita GDP grew from \$4,102 to \$11,411.<sup>10</sup>

These opportunities and growth, however, are often not easily realised for people with disabilities. In recent years there has been increasing recognition that the progress achieved through trade is not distributed equally within countries and communities. A recent Asian Development Bank report noted that vulnerable groups are often excluded from the benefits of trade, as they do not have access to the means to exploit entrepreneurial and employment opportunities.<sup>11</sup> This report went on to outline trade investments that can promote gender equality – such as improved internet access – and inclusive strategies for ensuring that women can gain access to globalising markets, such as by ensuring the benefits of trade reach women working downstream in value chains.<sup>12</sup> While this approach to gender equality is welcomed, it must be noted that similar barriers to accessing the benefits of trade investments exist for people with disabilities, who make up over 1 billion people worldwide. Unless Aid for Trade investments begin to increase similar strategies for becoming more disability inclusive, they will be ineffective in benefitting the approximately one in five people in developing countries who live with disabilities.

There is a similar pattern to infrastructure investments. Infrastructure is critical to social and economic participation and empowerment: from transport, to built environments and urban settings, to energy and technology. When any of these elements of infrastructure are inaccessible for any particular groups of people—such as women or people with disabilities—it excludes those groups

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Lloyd, ‘Supporting Aid for Trade in Asia and the Pacific’, *DFAT Blog*, 7 September 2017, available from <https://blog.dfat.gov.au/2017/09/07/supporting-aid-for-trade-in-asia-and-the-pacific/>

<sup>10</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Aid for Trade in Asia and the Pacific*, 2017, available from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/329166/aid-trade-asia-pacific-2.pdf> p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Asian Development Bank, as above.

<sup>12</sup> Asian Development Bank, as above.

excluded from opportunities for employment, health, education, and social engagement.<sup>13</sup> This need for inclusive infrastructure has been recognised by DFAT through their commissioning a review of approaches to gender equality and infrastructure in one of their key multi-donor infrastructure development partners, including recommendations for further progress for mainstreaming gender equality.<sup>14</sup> Again, however, no similar review or strategy has been made to progress disability inclusion within infrastructure investments.

In this context, it is concerning to see that in 2015/2016, only 37 percent of Infrastructure and Trade investments identified and addressed barriers for people with disabilities, and only 30 percent actively involved Disabled People's Organisations. Explicit and concerted, yet ambitious, targets are required to ensure that DFAT's work continues to improve upon these outcomes, and transparent publication of this data is required to ensure accountability on this.

### *Agriculture, Fisheries and Water*

It is finally worth noting the importance of such explicit strategies towards disability inclusion within Agriculture, Fishers and Water, which also had fairly low prevalence of disability inclusion in the 2015/16 *Performance of Australian Aid* report. In the Melanesian region, up to 50 per cent of households obtain their primary or secondary income through coastal fisheries, and the economic value of the coastal environments—such as marine fisheries, mangroves, coral reefs, seagrasses, coastal tourism and carbon absorption—is valued at around US\$5.4 billion, broadly equivalent to the combined GDPs of Fiji and Solomon Islands.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, agriculture has been identified as one of the most successful ways of overcoming extreme poverty,<sup>16</sup> and around one in three workers globally are employed in agriculture.<sup>17</sup>

This scale of the importance of agriculture, fisheries and water to economic empowerment and stability in developing countries, particularly in our region, means that these investments cannot afford to exclude the one in five people living in relevant areas who will have a disability. Yet in 2015/16, only 44 percent of investments identified and addressed barriers to the exclusion of people with disabilities, and only 28 percent actively involved DPOs.

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<sup>13</sup> Anjlee Agarwal and Andre Steele, *Disability considerations for Infrastructure*, 2016, available from <http://www.disabilityrightsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Disability-Considerations-for-Infrastructure.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> See <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/infrastructure-programs-gender-review.aspx>

<sup>15</sup> World Wildlife Fund International, *Reviving Melanesia's Ocean Economy: The Case for Action*, 2016, available from [http://ocean.panda.org.s3.amazonaws.com/media/Reviving\\_Melanesia%27s\\_Ocean\\_Economy\\_Full\\_Report-WWF-LowRes.pdf](http://ocean.panda.org.s3.amazonaws.com/media/Reviving_Melanesia%27s_Ocean_Economy_Full_Report-WWF-LowRes.pdf) p. 7; see also Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *A new song for coastal fisheries – pathways to change: the Noumea strategy*, 2015, available from [http://mddb.apec.org/Documents/2015/OFWG/HLPD-FSBE/15\\_hlpd-fsbe\\_015.pdf](http://mddb.apec.org/Documents/2015/OFWG/HLPD-FSBE/15_hlpd-fsbe_015.pdf), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals and Sustainable Agriculture*, available from <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/overview/fao-and-the-post-2015-development-agenda/sustainable-agriculture/en/>

<sup>17</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, *FAO Statistical Yearbook 2012*, 2012, available from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2490e/i2490e01b.pdf> p. 18.

## Key recommendations

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ADDC therefore concludes this submission with the following recommendations:

1. **DFAT’s performance framework should include a strategic target that an ambitious percentage of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address disability inclusion in their implementation. This target should be determined according to the latest baseline data available, including the most recent AQC’s data.**

This target mirrors the strategic target that was set for empowerment of women and girls. Even in areas where this gender target has not been met, it has provided a strong benchmark and signalled the high level of commitment that DFAT has taken towards gender equality. A similar display of commitment is necessary to solidify Australia’s position as global leaders on disability inclusive development, particularly as this agenda gets picked up by other governments and donors.

We note that while this target would be ambitious, the ODE report’s findings that Australia has achieved its standing as an international leader on disability inclusion by being ‘ambitious’ and ‘innovative’.<sup>18</sup>

2. **DFAT’s publications *Performance of Australian Aid* should include data on disability-inclusion investment performance by investment priority area (as occurred in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 reports).**

The above discussion of the progress that has been made towards mainstreaming disability inclusion across the aid program drew upon data included in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 *Performance of Australian Aid reports*. This data was not included in the 2016/17 report. This omission is disappointing as it prevents analysis of progression of mainstreaming DID work within the aid program, and raises questions about what the data may entail. Even if the data does not show strong progress, we would welcome the publication of this as transparency and accountability is vital to promoting partnerships and identifying areas where concerted effort is required. There are also concerns that the shortened discussion of disability inclusion in the 2016/17 report may signal a diminishing prioritisation or commitment to DID within DFAT, which again undermines Australia’s position as a global leader on this.

3. **All investments targeted towards women’s empowerment and Aid for Trade should integrate disability analysis, including disaggregated data, identification of barriers for women/people with disabilities, and strategies for inclusion and empowerment of women/people with disabilities.**

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<sup>18</sup> <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/strategic-evaluations/Documents/evaluation-australian-advocacy-disability-inclusive-development.pdf>

- 4. The Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade should also take the findings of the Office of Development Effectiveness's soon to be released evaluation of disability inclusion in Australian development assistance into consideration of this inquiry.**

## About us:

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The Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC) is an Australian-based community of over 600 individuals and organisations working across Australia, the Asia Pacific and globally on disability and development issues. We seek to promote the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in international development activities and advocate for disability inclusion to be fully integrated into all Australian development programs and policies.