# ADDC Bulletin: February 2024 edition

[ADDC news](#ADDC_News)

[In the news](#INTHENEWS)

[New resources](#_NEW_RESOURCES)

[Webinar recordings](#WebinarRecordings)

[Your input is needed](#YourInputIsNeeded)

[Upcoming events](#UpcomingEvents)

[Opportunities](#Opportunities)

Welcome to the first edition of our bulletin for 2024.

Right now, we have a once-in-a decade opportunity.

Last year, we saw the Australian Government shift their language from disability inclusion to disability equity in their International Development Policy. This shift in framing signals more ambition to drive change that is systemic, that champions equity with the leadership of people with disabilities and commits resources to lift the words off paper and into action and change.

Right now, the government is forming its third disability-focused strategy for its international development program, to be called the International Disability Equity and Rights strategy. This Strategy will set the path for Australian partnerships and investments in disability equity internationally for the coming 5 to 10 years.

I met with the Minister for International Development and the Pacific this month, along with Marc Purcell, ACFID CEO, and Jane Edge, CBM Australia CEO, to discuss the opportunities Australia has now with this Strategy, taking the Joint Call for Action that 37 organizations are supporting. See more on the meeting [here](#MIDPmeeting) and on the Joint Call [here](#JointCall). It is critical that Australia makes commitments within the Strategy to meet the International Development policy commitment of disability equity as a core area for action, and the promise of the strategy title, by establishing an ambitious, accountable and resourced approach to championing disability equity in partnership with people with disabilities and their representative organisations.

The Strategy is expected to be finalised and released in the coming months. Add your voice to the call for greater ambition on disability equity in Australia's international development program by signing and sharing our petition [here](#Petition). 37 organisations are supporting the Joint Call for Action on the Strategy, see more on this [here.](#JointCall) Our social media over the coming months will focus on driving this Strategy to be one that set Australia up as a true champion of disability equity and rights. Follow us and share on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-disability-and-development-consortium/), [X](https://twitter.com/addcnews) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/addcnews/).

We look forward to working with you, our ADDC members, to advocate for foundational pillars to building disability equity through international development. Thank you to all those members who made a submission to inform the Strategy at the end of last year. The ADDC submission is linked [below](#IDEARSsubmission).

On behalf of ADDC, we thank you for #ChampioningDisabilityEquity with us,

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# ADDC NEWS

## ADDC IDEARS submission

The Australian Government’s upcoming International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (IDEARS) is set to guide disability equity across Australia’s development program for the coming 5-10 years. The release of the Government’s first disability inclusive development strategy, *Development for All,* in 2009 paved the way for other donor governments, INGOs and multilateral organisations to follow in practising and promoting disability inclusion. The International Disability and Equity Rights Strategy (IDEARS) offers a similar opportunity for the Australian Government to champion globally disability equity in partnership with the international disability movement.

In our submission to the strategy, we recommend a framework explaining how DFAT can think and act to advance the realisation of disability equity and rights throughout our region and globally as part of the international development program. Drawing on this framework, a series of approaches, foundational commitments and recommendations are outlined as critical to delivering on this vision.

Now, more than ever, it is critical for Australia to have an ambitious, accountable and resourced approach to disability equity and rights in their international efforts.

Thank you to all those members who made a submission to inform the Strategy at the end of last year. For those that made a submission, please do share it with Kerryn via [email](mailto:kclarke@addc.org.au?subject=IDEARS%20submission) if have not already.

Our submission can be found in accessible [Word](https://www.addc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ADDC-Submission-Aust-Govt-IDEARS-strategy-Final-Dec2023.docx) and [PDF](https://www.addc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ADDC-Submission-Aust-Govt-IDEARS-strategy-Final-Dec2023.pdf) versions.

## Meeting with the Minister for International Development and the Pacific

This month, ADDC Executive Officer, Kerryn Clarke, ACFID CEO, Marc Purcell and CBM Australia CEO, Jane Edge met with Minister for International Development and the Pacific Pat Conroy to discuss the new International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy.

The discussion focused on the ample opportunities now available for the Australian Government to build on the advances supported in disability inclusion in the last decade through international development efforts, since their first strategy was released in 2009. And that the current moment was a critical opportunity for the government to commit to a clear vision on how their international development efforts will pave the way for disability equity and rights internationally to be realized for years to come. The Minister agreed to follow up the core asks of the Joint Call, with particular focus on the central disability allocation budget and setting similar targets and requirements for disability equity to bring in line with commitments for gender and climate change.

## Be part of shifting the dial towards disability equity in our region – sign and share our petition for IDPD

Did you know that one in six people globally has a disability? 700 million people have a disability in the Asia-Pacific region alone. People with disabilities remain among the most marginalised in any setting and continue to be excluded in all aspects of society. By signing and sharing our petition below, you can join the call for our government to step up its support for people with disabilities in our region.

The Australian Government is developing a new disability strategy for the Australian international development program, called the International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy. The strategy represents a major opportunity to set commitments, expectations and resources that will see us working in partnership with people with disabilities to support them, their families and communities.  We are calling on the Foreign Minister, Penny Wong, and Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Pat Conroy, to elevate the priorities of people with disabilities by ensuring the Disability Equity and Rights Strategy is ambitious, accountable and resourced.

Will you join us in amplifying this call to shift the dial towards disability equity?

Join us by adding your voice to the ADDC petition today.

Sign and share our petition to the Australian Government [here](https://www.addc.org.au/disability-equity/).

## Join our advocacy for an ambitious IDEARS

ADDC with ACFID are seeking to amplify the need for the forthcoming International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (IDEARS) to be ambitious, resourced and accountable. Thirty-seven organisations have pledged their support so far via the Joint Call to Action and there is still time for your organisation to join.

View the Joint Call to Action [here.](https://www.addc.org.au/joint-call/)

To add your organisation’s support, email Kerryn Clarke [here](mailto:kclarke@addc.org.au).

## Federal Budget 2024-2025 – ADDC’s submission to Treasury

ADDC’s submission to the coming Federal Budget for 2024-25 seeks increased funding committed within Official Development Assistance (ODA) to areas that will drive disability equity and rights. To meet this commitment, ADDC recommends resources in the forthcoming ODA budget for 2024-25 and beyond are allocated to disability equity and rights initiatives, both to disability-specific initiatives as well as ensuring disability equity is a key objective and modality within broad programs.

Our submission can be found in accessible Word and PDF versions [here](https://www.addc.org.au/file/our-submission-to-treasury/).

## Thanks to our volunteer, Swornima

In every organization, there are unsung heroes whose contributions often go unnoticed but whose impact is deeply felt and valued. ADDC shines a spotlight on one such individual who has been instrumental in our efforts in bringing this monthly bulletin to light.

Swornima Tuladhar has been a valuable member of our team, volunteering her time and expertise to crafting our bulletin over the past few years. We thank Swornima for her dedication and wish her every success in her future endeavours.

# ****IN THE NEWS****

## Disability Equity and Rights Strategy - what's critical for effectiveness?

Australia’s International Development policy released last year points to disability equity as a core area of action, referenced in the forewords of both Ministers and featured throughout the document. Australia has often identified as a leader in this space – but after inconsistent core budget allocations and the devastating effects of the pandemic, translating this ambition into reality could be a tough task. Australia is now developing a new strategy on disability equity in its international engagements, called the International Disability Equity and Rights strategy.

Development Intelligence Lab asked the experts what the key to effectiveness will be in the new Strategy as drafting gets underway. You can read what they said [here](https://www.devintelligencelab.com/intel/02november2023).

## ACFID’s submission to IDEARS

Achieving equity for people with disabilities across the Indo-Pacific has been a slow but forward moving effort by local organisations, OPDs, states, regional bodies and disability rights advocates. While gains have been made, the effects of COVID-19 have amplified and entrenched long-standing inequalities experienced by people with disabilities. As we move beyond the halfway point towards the Sustainable Development Goals’ 2030 Agenda, people with disabilities are the group left furthest behind.

In setting out a vision to achieve disability equity, in its submission to IDEARS, ACFID recommends to DFAT the framework set out in the Australian Disability and Development Consortium that disability equity is understood and advanced through the four interconnected dimensions of ‘access, processes, quality and outcomes.’

Read more and access the submission [here](https://lnkd.in/gV9AYfJp).

## CBM’s submission to IDEARS

The recommendations of CBM Australia’s submission offer specific ways in which Australia can step up its delivery on our commitments to disability equity and rights, and meaningful partnerships, in support of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. Almost without exception, the recommendations could be realised within the existing and forecast future ODA budget.

CBM Australia is an active member of the Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC). We endorse the ADDC submission as complementary to our own. Further, as members of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), we have engaged with ACFID on its submission, and promote that submission for DFAT’s attention.

Access the submission [here](https://www.cbm.org.au/resource/international-disability-equity-and-rights-strategy-submission).

## PDF submission to IDEARS

‘Inclusion can ensure we have a seat at the table, but it is equity that will transform and reconfigure that table to guarantee our full, effective and meaningful participation.’ – Setareki Macanawai, CEO, Pacific Disability Forum.

This is the main underlying theme of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)'s submission to Australia’s International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (IDEARS).

Disability inclusion has been on the agenda for our region since 2009. Since that time, we have seen progress in many areas. Many mainstream development donors and investments now have disability inclusion policies or strategies. PDF congratulates and thanks the Australian Government for leading the way in this area since its first *Development for All* strategy, and its successor, and are pleased to have this opportunity to provide their recommendations to strengthen the direction of DFAT’s new International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (IDEARS).

Access the submission [here](https://pacificdisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Pacific-Disability-Forum_IDEARS-Submission_FINAL_Jan-10_2024.pdf).

## Renewal and reinforcement of the International Disability Alliance

On the 13 February 2024, the International Disability Alliance (IDA) held an election for a new executive committee to lead the alliance towards the renewal, reinforcement and reaffirmation of its core principles and its strong commitment to transparency and accountability. The new leadership will continue to honour IDA’s mission to advance disability inclusion across the United Nations and globally, building on the trust and confidence of our valued members and partners.

Read more in this media release [here](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/newExecutiveCommittee).

## Disability inclusive education: a call to action to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education

In order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, The Disability Inclusive Education Call to Action below was launched by civil society organizations at the Transforming Education Summit (TES), in support of all TES Action Tracks, and has since been endorsed by approximately 200 stakeholders–including civil society, governments, multilateral institutions, and advocates from around the globe. UNICEF’s goal for this Disability Inclusive Education Call to Action is to advance the achievement of SDG 4 towards ensuring access to quality, inclusive, safe education for all learners across the humanitarian-development continuum, in particularly those with disabilities, and to encourage decision makers to continue building more disability-inclusive education systems.

Access the call to action [here](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384964).

# ****NEW RESOURCES****

## CBM paper: Measuring disability equity – why the disability policy marker matters

In 2018 the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) established a policy marker – a tag that can be attached to aid activities when related financial flows are reported to the OECD by donors – on the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. The marker provides a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on projects, accountability and transparency around Australia’s development efforts on disability equity. CBM Australia recently explored Australia’s performance against the marker, how it adds value to our existing reporting system, and the opportunities at hand to extend use of the marker as part of the forthcoming International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy.

Access the paper [here.](https://devpolicy.org/measuring-disability-equity-why-the-disability-policy-marker-matters-20231214/)

## DRF/DRAF funding outcomes in Fiji

Funding provided by Disability Right Fund/Disability Right Advocacy (DRF/DRAF) Funds to grantees in Fiji has played a critical role in the advocacy of disability-inclusive COVID-19 response and improved the political participation of persons with disabilities during the 2022 Fijian elections.

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, DRF awarded a grant to the Fijian Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF), a national cross-disability umbrella organization, to lead a survey to collect data on the lived experiences of persons with disabilities. The survey results revealed the palpable impact of the pandemic on their livelihoods, health, and education, building evidence to advocate for a more inclusive and disability data-based national and community response from the Fiji government.

Funding also equipped FDPF to create the Election Disability Access Working Group. The Group would go on to advocate successfully for the inclusion of postal voting for persons with disabilities who could not access polling stations and more! “These achievements signify progress towards a more inclusive society where persons with disabilities have equal opportunities, participation, and access to essential services and decision-making processes,” shared a grantee with the evaluators.

Read the spotlight reports on Inclusive Electoral Policies for Persons with Disabilities and Disability-Inclusive COVID-19 Response [here](https://disabilityrightsfund.org/independent-evaluation-of-drf-draf-in-fiji/).

## Reflection on barriers to accessing assistive technology in low- and middle-income countries

Assistive technology (AT) has immense potential to improve independence, participation, and productivity, facilitate access to education, employment, and family life. However, the [Global report](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240049451) on AT published by the World Health Organization revealed that one billion potential users are denied access to AT. In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), only 3% percent of those who need such life-changing products have access to them. This article reflects on key barriers to assistive technology in LMICs. These reflections are from IDA’s Assistive Technology User Fellows from Africa (Uganda), Asia-Pacific (Bangladesh and Pakistan), Middle East and North Africa (Sudan) and Latin America (Peru), as well as from participants of assistive technology workshops from amongst Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (-OPDs) in Kenya and Rwanda held in November-December 2023.

Access the full report [here](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/blog/reflection-barriers-accessing-assistive-technology-low-and-middle-income-countries).

## Survey on Disability Data Advocacy Toolkit: lessons learned

The International Disability Alliance, the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, and CBM Global Disability Inclusion carried out a survey with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) and other stakeholders to assess the use and gaps of the Disability Data Advocacy Toolkit. The survey further explored data gaps and gathered OPD-led citizen-generated data.

The OPDs data priorities show that more than a shift from the medical model to the social model of disability in data, organizations and advocates show an interest in a reframing data from the medical model to the human rights model of disability, to support their advocacy. Finding the barriers in society is not enough anymore, and it is essential to collect data with the intent to foster political change. The report suggests the urgent need for qualitative data on personal experiences and individual barriers and facilitators faced by persons with disabilities.

Access the report [here.](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/documents/reportdisabilitydataadvocacytoolkitlessonslearnedfinal-pdf)

Access the compilation of case studies [here](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/documents/reportcasestudiesofdatageneratedbyopdsfinal-pdf).

## Disability Rights in Climate Policies: 2023 Status Report

This status report has been jointly developed by McGill University's Disability Inclusive Climate Action Research Program (DICARP), and the International Disability Alliance (IDA). The report provides an updated analysis of the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their human rights in the domestic climate policies adopted by the 195 parties to the Paris Agreement.

This report demonstrates that States continue to fall far short of the obligations they owe people with disabilities in the context of the climate crisis.

A minority of parties to the Paris Agreement include persons with disabilities in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and climate adaptation policies. Moreover, in cases where disability has been included, it is largely to indicate the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to the impacts of climate change or to signal the need for their inclusion, without providing concrete measures to protect their rights or enhance their resilience and adaptive capacity.

The status report is available [here](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/blog/disability-rights-climate-policies-2023-status-report).

## Adjustments to and innovations in the implementation of qualitative research with people with disabilities: the case of Bangladesh

Empowerment of people with disabilities is an important aspect of commitment to human rights and inclusive development. However, the tasks of reaching out and engaging with people with disabilities and gathering and articulating sensitively the lived experiences of people with disabilities who encounter multiple challenges – physical, social, and cultural – is anything but easy. These challenges are particularly daunting in Bangladesh, where disability is also taboo and often seen as a social and economic burden. Based on a four-year research project with people with disabilities in Bangladesh, the article highlights the challenges of reaching out and the adjustments and innovations that have been applied through qualitative research. The researcher employed a probe-reach-out-learn-and-apply-as-you-go approach, which included extensive networking, extreme sensitivity, extensive attention to the issues of dignity and health of the interviewees, continuous attention and adjustments to interview conditions, and to the researcher’s own emotions and health challenges during and following the interview phases.

Access the article by Dr Debashish Sarker [here](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09614524.2023.2286196?src=exp-la).

# WEBINAR RECORDINGS

## Unlock the everyday: Advancing the SDGs through the power of assistive technology (AT)

The event was hosted by Devex on January 16, 2023, in partnership with AT scale. This event on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos explored the transformative power of assistive technology, or AT, to revolutionize the lives of people living with disabilities and older people and shape a more inclusive future. An estimated 2.5 billion people are AT users, needing to access eyeglasses, wheelchairs, prosthetics, or hearing aids. Ninety percent of that need is not met in low-income countries, where the potential to unlock lives and achieve the SDGs is immense. Research from AT scale has demonstrated a remarkable return on investment in AT, with a $9 return on every dollar invested. Improved educational outcomes, healthier lives, and enhanced productivity are just a few of the transformative benefits of investing in AT.

Watch the full webinar [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WE8wChTWROg).

## Data and persons with disabilities: an assessment and findings

The International Disability Alliance, the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, and CBM Global Disability Inclusion carried out a survey with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) and other stakeholders to assess the use and gaps of the Disability Data Advocacy Toolkit. The survey further explored data gaps and gathered OPD-led citizen-generated data. A webinar was held on the 7th of February 2024 elaborating on Disability Data Advocacy Toolkit: lessons learned, and compilation of case studies of data generated by organizations of persons with disabilities, explaining the importance of these findings and speaking on the way forward.

Access the webinar [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krSRqHW2f88).

# ****YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED****

## EBU's Braille Working Group Questionnaire about the usage of Braille Displays

# European Blind Union (EBU)’s Working Group invites blind and partially sighted people to complete a questionnaire about the usage of Braille Displays. The survey covers different key aspects of that subject, such as the daily uses that people with visual impairment make of these tools or if they use them alongside other devices like computers or smartphones. Overall, EBU’s aim is to help improve the access to electronic braille by using the information collected to talk to Braille Display and screen readers producers.

# The deadline for submitting the form is 29th February 2024.

Access the form [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdTwXqIiE018k3wMOeTqALmMaggvd1sGqOm3VCkbrDUIzHu7A/viewform).

## Make Your Voices Count! Calls for Input from Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

In line with Article 4(3) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), persons with disabilities and their representative organisations should be closely consulted and actively involved in matters concerning them. This includes persons with disabilities in all their diversity- children, women, older persons, persons with diverse SOGIESC, Indigenous peoples, migrants and others, as well as persons representing different disability constituencies.

The unique perspectives offered by persons with disabilities draw on their own expertise and experiences and can help shape and inform programmes, policies and practices – including beyond disability-specific matters- to strengthen inclusion for everyone.

Disability Rights Fund have created [this page](https://disabilityrightsfund.org/make-your-voices-count-calls-for-input-from-organizations-of-persons-with-disabilities/) to provide current opportunities for input. This page will be updated regularly.

# ****UPCOMING EVENTS****

## Support your next disability leader

Registrations are now open for Disability Leadership Institute (DLI)’s Foundations of Disability Leadership program.

Open to all people with disabilities everywhere, this program will enhance their understanding of how to operate as a leader in the many places disability leaders work.

If you are interested in registering a disability leaders for the program, you can register and read more about the program [here](https://disabilityleaders.helloclub.com/public/event/652896ad55b7ccb4312d6e87/foundations-of-disability-leadership?mc_cid=43daa7239e&mc_eid=9c57e2d73f) or email [here](mailto:engage@disabilityleaders.com.au) to discuss options.

# ****OPPORTUNITIES****

## Program Coordinator – Pacific Team

CBM Australia | Flexible and hybrid working environment

[LEARN MORE HERE](https://www.cbm.org.au/career/program-coordinator-pacific-team).

## Senior Disability Inclusion Advisor

CBM Australia | Flexible and hybrid working environment

[LEARN MORE HERE.](https://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/members/CBMHR/senior-disability-inclusion-advisor-2)

## Inclusion Coordinator, Fiji

Pacific Labour Facility

[LEARN MORE HERE](https://palladium.csod.com/ux/ats/careersite/2/home/requisition/21065?c=palladium&referralToken=_WbZuulmjEWkhAkMjzcBPg).

# ABOUT US

ADDC is an Australian, international network focusing attention, expertise and action on disability issues in developing countries; building on a human rights platform for disability advocacy. To join ADDC (membership is free) or find out more, please visit our [website](http://www.addc.org.au).

This bulletin aims to provide information on Disability Inclusive Development across organizations working to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities both here in Australia and across the world. Generic disability and domestic information will be included in our Bulletins when possible as part of our commitment to disability advocacy and strengthening partnerships; however, our focus remains on disability and development issues.

**Acknowledgment of Country:**ADDC recognizes the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We acknowledge their resilience, contributions and connection to land, culture and water. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and future. 45 per cent of Aboriginal Australians live with a disability or a long-term, restricting health condition. They are 2.1 times more likely to live with a disability than non-Aboriginal Australians, and 5 times more likely to experience a mental health condition. Aboriginal people with disabilities participate in cultural activities at the same rates as those without disabilities. We pay our respects to their enduring spirit and inclusivity.

**Disclaimer:** This bulletin is a compilation of other organizations’ articles and material. While every effort made is to validate content, ADDC does not endorse all opinions and views contacted within the Bulletin.