

# Disability Inclusion Network Newsletter # 18 – “Politically excluded”

Dear Disability Inclusion Network colleagues,

Welcome to the October edition of the GIZ Disability Inclusion Network newsletter! This time, we put a spotlight on political participation and provide an update on other current GIZ activities around disability inclusion. We wish you an informative reading and all the best! For feedback or questions please contact us via [disabilitynetwork@giz.de](mailto:disabilitynetwork@giz.de).

Your GIZ Disability Inclusion Team

## SPOTLIGHT ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation is a basic democratic right not least declared specifically for persons with disabilities in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Persons with disabilities find themselves, however, excluded in many ways from public decision-making. With our work we can contribute to full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life – both (1) as representatives to vote and be elected, and (2) in public affairs and decision-making processes in general (CRPD, e.g., [Article 29](#)).

This newsletter provides exemplary insights into recently discussed barriers and good practices related to political participation of persons with disabilities.



## "Nothing Without Us" – Global pledges for and barriers to political participation

The "Nothing Without us" claim of the disability movement expresses – even more than the former motto "Nothing about us without us" – that persons with disabilities should get involved in all decisions, and not only in those directly concerning them. This pledge has also been taken up by political leaders globally during the last Global Disability Summit ([GDS](#), 2022): Several speakers, including some governments such as the United States, Spain or Denmark, pledged to do more to include persons with disabilities in decision-making ([PR Web](#), 2022; [IFES](#), 2022). Not least the recent analysis on the right to vote and stand for elections made by the European Disability Forum in the 6th edition of its Human Rights Report shows that many

barriers to political participation still exist ([EDF](#), 2022). There is still a lot of ground to cover to fully reach the "nothing without us" demand in public decision-making processes. Let's get inspired by initiatives such as the one from the Disability Rights in the European Election ([DREE](#)) project and activities heading towards the 2024 EU elections.



Photo: Global Disability Summit



## Research shows:

### Progress on funding, standstill on public decision making

Participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations is not yet notable as regards to the standards set by the CRPD – This is the conclusion of several participatory research projects after looking at different levels of public decision-making, e.g., at designing, planning, or monitoring stages of policies, programmes, plans, or projects (Cote, 2020, p. 5; IDA, 2020, IDA, 2022).

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2018, p. 2), acknowledges progress made over the past decade when it comes to funding and other support for the inclusion of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) in public decision making. It sees, however, still large gaps between claims of the CRPD (articles 4 (3) and 33 (3)) and the reality of public decision making. The International Disability Alliance has, therefore, come up with a discussion paper for promoting OPD participation in development and humanitarian action (IDA, 2022). It aims at unpacking what meaningful participation is to the movement.

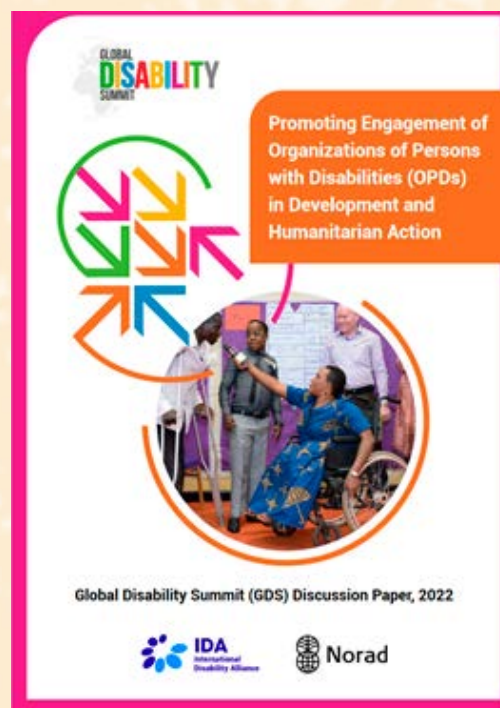


Photo: IDA



## FURTHER NEWS

# Advocating for Participation of Women with Disabilities in Local Government Planning and Budgeting Processes

By Joseph Arthur Wabwire

People with Disabilities have a right to participate in all decisions, especially issues that affect them, and ultimately contribute to their community and national development just like other citizens. However, this is not the reality on ground for many persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls. Due to inaccessibility challenges at public places, people with disabilities are excluded from the crucial process of political planning and budgeting for resources, leaving their voices unheard in policymaking. In daily life, this results in persons with disabilities having limited access to health services, education, and employment, among others.

Strengthening skills and disseminating knowledge to effectively include people with disabilities, especially women and girls, in policy-making processes are among the activities of IDIWA initiative in Uganda. Inclusion in political processes at the sub-national level of districts matters for district plans and budgets to reflect the voices of all citizens.



Meeting in Mayuge District between persons with disabilities and local government officials:  
Presentation of District planner on the local government planning cycle  
Photo: IDIWA



With technical and financial support from GIZ Governance and Civil Society Support Programme, [Integrated Disabled Women Activities \(IDIWA\)](#) organized dialogues with duty bearers and persons with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, in three Ugandan districts. A focus was put on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Gender Based Violence (GBV) and disability financing mainstreaming in the planning and budgeting processes of the three local governments. The meetings in the Mayuge, Kaliro and Iganga districts provided an opportunity for direct engagement between persons with disabilities and duty bearers on inclusion of perspectives of people with disabilities in local government planning and budgeting.

Persons with disabilities, especially women and girls, used their voices to raise awareness about their rights and highlighted the most significant gaps and barriers to inclusive services delivery, planning and budgeting in the districts. Specifically, challenges of poor access to education, health facilities, places of employment and other physical infrastructure were discussed. People with disabilities reported having no proper access to most buildings in public places such as schools, hospitals, district offices, police, courts of laws, and many private buildings. This is due to the fact that many buildings do not have facilities such as ramps. Furthermore, in most cases, persons with disabilities cannot access information provided by both electronic and print media which are the most commonly used.

As a result of the dialogues, the local government representatives made several commitments on making the district budgets for the financial year 2024/2025 more inclusive to the needs of PWDs, especially to women and girls. These included, among others, recruiting more teachers for special needs, supplying health centers with emergency wheelchairs, providing sign language interpreters at major public buildings and adjustable health beds for expectant mothers with disabilities.

Contact: Joseph Arthur Wabwire – [joseph.wabire@giz.de](mailto:joseph.wabire@giz.de)



# Podcast on “Financial Inclusion of Women with Disabilities”

By Marie Schliesser

In a recent podcast Paul Horsters from the GIZ Global Project “Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities” teamed up with Mary Asare (GIZ Ghana), Ana de la Vega Núñez (GIZ Mexico) and Sheru Muuo (Sightsavers Kenya) to discuss the topic of “Financial inclusion of women with disabilities”. During the talk, Ana, Mary and Sheru provided insights from their respective projects and shared plans on how financial inclusion is advancing.

Persons with disabilities belong to the largest unbanked population worldwide with women often facing greater barriers to financial inclusion. Financial inclusion refers to the ability of individuals and businesses to access and use financial services according to their needs and means. In order to reduce poverty, promote economic growth, and enhance social welfare, advancing financial inclusion is highly relevant. During the talk, Ana de la Vega Núñez from GIZ Mexico points out that making financial services more accessible for people with disabilities can also prove to be an advantage when competing for clients.

Sheru Muuo from Sightsavers stresses that gender is an important dimension in this context as women are frequently left out of financial decision-making while also being more likely to become disabled in their course of life. Including women financially can provide them with tools to take control of their own finances and decisions.

All three interlocutors have been involved in studies on the financial inclusion of persons with disabilities in their respective projects. Mary Asare from GIZ Ghana recounts that ATMs were often not accessible, whereas online banking proved to be hard for people with visual impairment. In Mexico, persons with disabilities also face barriers stemming from a lack of staff sensitivity and accessibility of mobile banking apps, as well as due to challenges caused by the use of biometric data. The Sightsavers study found that being financially excluded in



some cases results in people keeping their savings in cash or focusing on chamas, informal investment groups which are common among women in Kenya. To advance financial inclusion, GIZ Ghana distributed its findings to stakeholders and is currently planning to train persons with disabilities in financial literacy. In Kenya, Sightsavers conducted trainings for staff of financial institutes with funding from GIZ.

To dive deeper into the topic of financial inclusion of women with disabilities, listen to the podcast [here](#). For information on the podcast: Paul Horsters – [paul.horsters@giz.de](mailto:paul.horsters@giz.de)

Contact: Marie Schliesser – [marie.schliesser@giz.de](mailto:marie.schliesser@giz.de)



#LIVING INCLUSION

#LivingInclusion

Stay up-to-date with the work of the GIZ Global Project Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Check out our storytelling campaign "[Living Inclusion](#)"



✕ Please find more information on disability inclusion on our Twitter Account: <https://twitter.com/GPIInclusion>

Are you interested in becoming a member of the Inclusion Network? You are welcome to join the MS Teams room via this link: [GIZ Disability Inclusion Network on MS Teams](#) or contact us via [disabilitynetwork@giz.de](mailto:disabilitynetwork@giz.de). To find out more about the network, please find the flyer [here](#) and feel free to share it with other interested colleagues who may be interested.

