

Preconditions to Inclusion Issues Paper:

Community-Based Inclusive Development

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What is Community-Based Inclusive Development in the Pacific?

Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) involves addressing cultural, social and economic challenges experienced by persons with disabilities, their families, and communities in practical ways through their inclusion in development activities. CBID does so through specific activities such as community awareness-raising, mobilising community resources, advocacy, referrals, and investment. This helps achieve disability inclusion, by working with and through local groups and institutions to remove barriers to participation.

Persons with disabilities in the Pacific face unique challenges in accessing services, resources and community participation – such as climate impacts and the distance between countries and the population spread within countries across islands. This should not, however, deter the equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in all aspects of life, including education, livelihoods and accessing support services when needed to participate in the community life. Taking advantage of the strong community values and systems which the Pacific is known for, CBID is a key strategy within general community development for equalising opportunities and social inclusion of all persons with disabilities that is particularly suited to overcome the challenges of the Pacific context.

Role of CBID as a precondition in the Pacific

Despite the geographical location of persons with disabilities, whether they live in main population centres, isolated communities or outlying islands, the CBID approach complements national sectoral policies and pays attention to the diversity of disabilities in ways that reduce inequalities for persons with disabilities. CBID is a multi-sectorial, cross-disability and rights-based approach involving health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment components. It mobilises community networks and systems towards advocacy, outreach, referrals, supports and service delivery. Together, these community resources are mobilised to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities across all aspects of programming and everyday life. In fact, in the Pacific, CBID approaches are a key and essential pathway to ensuring that persons with disabilities can access multisectoral programs and services.

Examples of what this will involve include facilitating grassroots advocacy to ensure mainstream programs in the community are more accessible, and by offering referral and outreach components to deliver services to persons with disabilities in the community, particularly those marginalised by barriers such as distance or stigma. CBID is therefore a key precondition to inclusion as, without it, many persons with disabilities would be excluded from accessing everyday life, opportunities or mainstream inclusive services. It brings change in the lives of persons with disabilities at community level by working with and through local groups and institutions to remove barriers to participation.

CBID under the CRPD

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) all persons with disabilities have an equal right to live in the community where they are treated equally, participate on the same grounds as others, and decisions and choices are of their own making. Article 19 specifically requires governments to provide community support services and personal assistance necessary to support inclusion in the community and prevent segregation, as well as to ensure mainstream community services are fully accessible. CBID also strongly relates to other CRPD articles including those regarding education (Article 24), health (Article 25), (re)habilitation (Article 26), work and employment (Article 27), social protection (Article 28) and the right to representation through Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) (Articles 4.3 and 32). Where there are CBID programs, their work may also relate to other CRPD articles depending on the focus areas of the programs, and the priorities that arise.

Current status of CBID in the Pacific

One important aspect of CBID in the Pacific is understanding the availability of services for persons with disabilities. In 2019, Pacific Disability Forum undertook a mapping exercise involving 17 countries to provide vital information for persons with disabilities accessing health, education, employment, and social sectors. While this information is a helpful start, much further work is required in terms of resourcing and developing CBID programs and approaches to ensure access to existing services and community resources, and to address the many gaps identified by the mapping. The mapping is also by now quite outdated, and an update is required.

Key issues for CBID in the Pacific

- **The need to raise awareness and train Pacific Island Countries and Territories governments, donors and stakeholders** regarding CBID approaches. While many community and inter-national development programs align with or would be strengthened by CBID approaches in practice, there is often low knowledge and capacity about what CBID involves or how it can be utilized for shared outcomes.

- **Insufficient resourcing** for CBID programs, including for CBID workers in communities.
- **Policy and governmental structures** are needed to support and coordinate CBID approaches. Within governments, CBID is often allocated only under one ministry, such as the Ministry of Health for example in Fiji and Solomon Islands. However, since CBID is by nature a multisectoral approach and program, it is vital that it can be coordinated and set up to have strong cross-ministry linkages. Failure to do so is often a key reason for lack of momentum and progress of CBID in countries.
- The need to ensure that **CBID approaches are informed by persons with disabilities** as active contributors and leaders and take a **rights-based approach aligned with the CRPD**. This includes ensuring that CBID approaches have empowerment and community mobilisation as foundational strategies, alongside service-delivery components.
- **Each country is in critical need of more sophisticated systems for mapping** disability services and other community resources, and updating such records, so that donors, governments, OPDs and community members can **identify key gaps and formulate strategies for addressing these** through CBID approaches. The majority of services are provided in urban areas, whilst the availability of disability services is rare in rural areas and outer islands. Mapping clearly demonstrates this, as well as identifying community resources and networks that can be mobilised through CBID approaches to increase the rights of and support to persons with disabilities.