

**GP
CWD**

**GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP
ON CHILDREN
WITH DISABILITIES**



Activity Report
September 2012 - August 2013



United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group for the
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



ACRONYMS

AT	Assistive Technology
CoSP	Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DPO	Disabled People Organizations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GPP	Global Programme Partnership
GPE	Global Partnership on Education
GPcwd	Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities
GPDD	Global Partnership on Disability and Development
HLMDD	High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies sector
IDA	International Disability Alliance
IDDC	International Disability and Development Consortium
IRC	Innocenti Research Centre
LCD	Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre
NPcwd	National Partnership on Children with Disabilities
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Children with Disabilities
UNIASG	United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Members,

At the outset, let me congratulate you all on your work — individually and collectively — to put children with disabilities and their families higher on the global development agenda. The Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities is off to a great start!

It has been a productive first year with many advancements and lessons learned. Since the first Partners' Forum in September 2012, our membership has more than doubled from 220 to 522 members representing 275 organizations. We are now recognized as a major Global Programme Partnership (GPP) within UNICEF and more broadly. There is increasing awareness and recognition that disability is integral to development if we want to build more inclusive societies, and the issues facing children and young people with disabilities and their families (*referred to in this document as 'children with disabilities'*) must be at the forefront of all development processes. Our vision is becoming a reality - increasingly, children with disabilities are being included in the child-rights agenda as well as in the disability agenda.

From September 2012 to August 2013, the GPc wd organized the inaugural meeting of the partners made a global call to action for inclusive development thus raising awareness about the rights of children with disabilities and advanced the agenda specifically in the areas covered by the four task forces (education, nutrition, humanitarian action and assistive technology). As a result, the GPc wd partners' were able to develop a compendium of sample policies and programmes that address nutrition of children with disabilities; ensure children with disabilities were included in the 2013 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; advocate successfully for disability to be specifically mentioned in the latest Humanitarian Omnibus Resolution; establish an on-line community of practice around inclusive education of children with disabilities; and, advocate successfully for disability to be incorporated into the Global Partnership on Education (GPE) monitoring framework.

As the leading UN agency for children's rights, and at the request of GPc wd partners, UNICEF has been taking the lead and acting as the Secretariat for the GPc wd since its planning stage. We were pleased to be able to bring together our vast network of partners, and connect with new organizations and individuals to address the rights of children with disabilities and to promote inclusive development.

A major thank you to the 'Core Group' of partners who have been instrumental in developing the structure of the Partnership and providing strategic direction. These organizations include the International Disability Alliance (IDA), International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), Global Partnership on Disability and Development (GPDD), Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre (LCD), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), UN Partnership on the Rights of Children with Disabilities (UNPRPD), UN Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (IASG) and the UNICEF Office of Research.



Rosangela Berman-Bieler
Senior Advisor on Children with Disabilities, UNICEF
On behalf of the GPc wd Secretariat

BACKGROUND

The Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities (GPcwd) emerged from a series of high-level consultations in 2011 and 2012, initially organised around the 2011 Fourth Conference of States Parties to the CRPD. The need for global action was established to influence a post-2015 agenda on the promotion and mainstreaming of disability rights across goals, targets and indicators. In response, the GPcwd's (also referred to as the Partnership) inaugural forum was convened in September 2012 where 190 participants, representing 111 organisations examined ways to collaborate on reversing the trends of exclusion or marginalisation affecting children with disabilities at the global, regional and national levels.¹

Four task forces were established (education, nutrition, humanitarian action and assistive technology) with the aim to influence the mainstreaming of disability rights in global child-focused agendas. With the unique role and opportunity to improve the lives of children and adolescents with disabilities who often experience limited access to education, poor nutrition, compromised economic opportunities, and greater poverty and inequity, the task forces developed a plan of action for 2012-2013.

The Forum also discussed new ideas to stimulate collaborative action at the country level to ensure that children and young people and adults with disabilities are able to enjoy the same human rights and fundamental freedoms as others, to consider their best interest and to ensure that they are able to express their views.

Now a network of 250 organisations, including international NGOs, national/local NGOs, Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs), governments, academia and the private sector, the GPcwd second Forum will take place September 24, 2013. This report is intended to acknowledge the GPcwd progress, achievements and challenges of 2012-2013.

PRINCIPLES & STRATEGIES

In keeping with the mutually reinforcing human rights instruments -namely the Convention on the Rights of Persons (CRPD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the partners committed to the following principles and strategies:

- Create a platform to promote synergy across all stakeholders, to address legislative, policy and programming issues and concerns related to the integration of children with disabilities.
- Ensure all efforts undertaken by the GPcwd should be grounded in an ethos of partnership.
- Promote a balance between including issues related to children with disabilities in all development efforts and delivering disability-specific programmes within sectors.
- Facilitate strong collaboration in countries and engage governments to deepen national investments to overcome institutional barriers regarding political will, fiscal space, coordination and data collection.
- Empower children with disabilities, their families and their representative organizations to advocate on their own behalf and foster child-to-child approaches to advocacy and human rights awareness.
- Place disability issues at the core of equity and sustainable growth agendas, highlighting how equity viewed through the lens of disability, can be a means to test the universality of rights, access and development in a sustainable and peaceful society for all citizens.
- Prioritise investments / commitments to improve data collection to better respond to historic gaps in knowledge around issues of children with disabilities and to facilitate informed decision-making in the development of inclusive policies and programmes.

¹ The full report of the 2012 Forum is available online at http://www.unicef.org/disabilities/index_65775.html

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Text from Humanitarian Omnibus Resolution:

(OP22) Requests Member States, relevant humanitarian organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant humanitarian actors to ensure that all aspects of humanitarian response, including disaster preparedness and needs assessments, take into account the specific needs of the affected population, recognizing that giving appropriate consideration to, inter alia, gender, age and disability is part of a comprehensive and effective humanitarian response, and in this regard encourages efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to include the needs of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction, in humanitarian and recovery programming and, as appropriate, in post humanitarian emergency reconstruction.

Notable accomplishments in the first year include:

- Increased awareness and coordinated promotion of the rights of children with disabilities at major events including the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sixth Conference of States Parties to the CPRD;
 - High-level advocacy on and visibility of children with disabilities around the launch of UNICEF's 2013 State of the World's Children Report dedicated to children with disabilities and the preparations of the 2013 UNGA High Level Meeting focus on Disability and Development;
 - Launch of a *Call to Action* from the partners to meet the critical need for inclusive, integrated, collaborative rights-based development with a focus on children with disabilities;
- Successful advocacy for inclusive development concepts to be incorporated in the 2012 Humanitarian Omnibus Resolution;
 - Successful advocacy for inclusive education with a specific focus on children with disabilities to be incorporated into the strategies of the Global Partnership on Education (GPE) and reading achievement, as well as the Global Learning Metrics²;
 - Successful advocacy for children with disabilities to be discussed during the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development 2013 and included in the outcome document;
 - The compilation of the first compendium of policies and programmes that specifically include or target children with disabilities in relation to nutrition;
 - Government, civil society and UN Collaboration on inclusive development action taken at the country level;
 - GPcwd was featured as a major highlight in UNICEF's 2012 Annual Report; and,
 - Children with disabilities actively participated in the 2013 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

² <http://www.globalpartnership.org/media/Board/Brussels-2013/2013-05-Board-Meeting-Implementation-Plan-presentation.pdf>

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

“It is a reality that, for people like us, it is almost impossible to be accepted in a mainstream school. But it is even harder for us to be allowed to become productive members of a society. Under these circumstances, we become isolated and a burden to society. We deserve to be given the opportunity to grow in all areas. We must be valued for what WE have and NOT for what we LACK. We must have the same opportunities at all levels, health, education, sports, and jobs.”

***– Ariel Ary,
Special Olympics Global Messenger***

With the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) fast approaching and a near absence of acknowledgment of the rights of people with disabilities, the GPcwd is advocating to ensure the rights of children will not be left on the margins for future development agenda. While many partners have been developing specific strategies, GPcwd places an emphasis on keeping the partners informed and mobilised throughout the Post-2015 planning process and on ensuring that children’s voices are heard and supported on issues that affect their lives.

In 2013, UNICEF and IDA jointly moderated the Inequality and Disability on-line discussion within the broader Inequalities Consultation, part of the post-2015 consultation series. GPcwd members actively engaged, and their contributions were incorporated into the final report with recommendations. Disability is also a focus of UNICEF’s messages and recommendations for the post-2015 framework.

The GPcwd Education Task Force, in collaboration with UNESCO and UNICEF, made contributions which UNICEF, on behalf of the Partnership, used to ensure disability inclusion was featured in UNICEF’s background paper on health for the post-2015 on-line consultation.

In support of the preparations of the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on Disability and Development (HLMDD) held in New York in September 2013, UNICEF and UNDESA hosted a global on-line consultation with recommendations for the outcome document, where children with disabilities were active and visible.

TASK FORCES

Task Force on Education

Disability carries multiple stigmas that are the basis for exclusion from society and school. Attitudes toward children with disabilities, as well as a lack of resources to accommodate them, compound the challenges they face in accessing education.³ While lack of access to school is an issue for children with disabilities, of equal concern is the lack of opportunity in school to get a quality education. UNESCO estimates that 98% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school, and that 99% of girls with disabilities are illiterate.⁴ In addition, almost half of the schools in developing countries do not provide healthy learning environments with water and sanitation facilities that are accessible for children with disabilities. No matter what mode of education children with disabilities receive, they are entitled to a full and equal education.⁵

³ Epstein, A (2010) Making the Case for an Equity Focus in Education, New York: UNICEF

⁴ United Nations (2007) From Exclusion to Equality: Realizing the rights of persons with disabilities – Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, United Nations, Geneva www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/ipuhb.pdf

⁵ UNESCO. Education for All. <http://www.unesco.org/new/index.php?id=18646&L=0>

A child’s right to equity should be realized in and through education. While the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Education For All framework aim to meet the learning needs of all children and youth, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recalls those obligations and further specifies that “States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children”⁶, and “ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning”.

During the 2012 Forum, the partners identified inclusive education as a major focus. Coordinated by UNICEF and UNESCO, the plan of action and accomplishments for the first year include:

Planned Activities	Progress and achievements
Produce an advocacy document to influence the strategies of the Global Partnership on Education and Reading achievement, as well as the Global Learning Metrics.	- Advocacy document developed and introduced during the meeting of the GPE’s Board of Directors in November 2012 in Paris and as a result of discussions during the May 2013 meeting of the GPE Board the GPE Implementation Plan now includes an outcome specific to inclusive education.
Develop guidance addressing the full implementation of Article 24 of the CRPD and use it to influence the High Level Meeting on Disability and Development.	- A submission was made to the global on-line Education Financing and Governance Consultation on Post-2015 hosted on the World We Want portal in February 2013.
Establish a coordinating procedure to link all interested parties in a global community of interest and map a network of all interested stakeholders to develop concrete proposals and follow through on developing documents related to item 2.	- An advocacy note was circulated during an inclusive education side-event organized by UNICEF’s Regional office (Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States) alongside the Human Rights Council Meeting in Geneva in March 2013.
Establish a list-serve to share promising practices.	- A submission was made to the on-line consultations on HLMDD hosted by UNICEF and DESA. UNICEF closely followed and provided inputs into the negotiations on the outcome document for the HLMDD. - UNESCO and UNICEF rolled out a ‘knowledge community’ on inclusive education on behalf of the Education Taskforce. The portal is hosted by UNESCO and provides a platform for discussions, consultations, exchange of resources and information. An on-line discussion and a survey regarding recommendations on the implementation of Article 24 of the CRPD were launched.

⁶ UNCRPD – Article 7 and 24

Task Force on Nutrition

Children and adults with disabilities are often excluded from health and social welfare services that benefit people without disabilities. Moreover, general campaigns, including those that address nutrition and hunger, are often not designed to ease accessibility for persons with disabilities. Children with disabilities are equally entitled to all nutrition and health resources.

There are numerous links and points of convergence between nutrition and disability. First, under-nutrition in children can lead to lifelong impairments that are otherwise preventable. Undernourished infants and children are at risk of a number of disabilities linked to specific micronutrient deficiencies. Having a disability can also lead to under-nutrition in new-borns and infants with potential results of poorer health outcomes and acquiring avoidable secondary conditions. Moreover, some specific impairments or medical conditions can directly cause under-nutrition. For example, some new-borns and infants with disabilities may have poorer nutritional intake or greater nutritional needs.

The Task Force on Nutrition set out to influence the global agenda in several ways: raising awareness of the link between nutrition and disabilities; increasing access for children and mothers with disabilities to nutrition services; and, promoting the need for a twin-track approach, which includes both disability mainstreaming and special services where needed, to reach children with disabilities and their families and caretakers. Coordinated by UNICEF, the 2012-2013 plan of action and accomplishments for the first year include:

Planned Activities	Progress and achievements
Develop a comprehensive mapping of all of the major stakeholders working in nutrition around the world identifying who the actors are, what they are doing, and where they are working. The mapping will be made available and maintained on a website.	- Completed a mapping of existing policies and programmes that address nutrition and disability. Led by Global Partners United and Handicap International this effort resulted in a compendium or overview of examples of programmes and policies from around the world.
Collect all relevant evidence and technical content in order to underscore the importance of disability and nutrition and actions needed sector wide.	- An evidence-based paper on the links between nutrition and disability was elaborated by Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre on behalf of the task force and published in September 2013.
Draft simple and clear messages, converting technical content into accessible advocacy and communication messages that articulate the importance of considering disability and nutrition together.	- Awareness of these issues was further raised through an article published by the Lancet Global Health Journal (“Inclusive Nutrition for Children and Adults with Disabilities”, August 2013 ⁷).
Target and engage key global mechanisms and players, such as the SUN and REACH and Promise for Renewal Campaigns. Integrate disability in the highest level of their agenda through the use of developed technical and communication materials.	

⁷ [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(13\)70056-1/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(13)70056-1/fulltext)

“It is time that an understanding of disability issues and the needs of persons with disabilities, girls and boys, must be an integral part of both humanitarian actions in emergencies and long-term development planning. In order to become real, disability issues, including those for children, must be also on the international agendas, as post 2015 and Rio+20.”

- Ann-Marit Sæbønes, Special Adviser, Ministry of Children, Equality and Inclusion, Norway

Task Force on Humanitarian Action

Children with disabilities face particular and exacerbated risks during emergencies and conflict. These children often experience some of the worst effects of humanitarian crisis due to their physical, emotional and social level of development, as well as the lack of protection, age and disability appropriate physical and psychosocial support and resources. Human rights treaties and guiding frameworks, such as the CRPD and CRC, demand the protection and security of people with disabilities in situations of risk.

UNHCR Global Trends 2011 reported that 46% of refugees worldwide are under the age of 18 years. It is estimated that for every child that dies through

conflict, three times as many are injured or permanently disabled (Pearn 2000). The ICRC estimates that in Afghanistan alone, a million children have been disabled in the on-going conflict.⁸

During the 1st Forum, the partners identified inclusive humanitarian action as a major focus for the first year. Led by the International Disability and Development Consortium, the plan of action and accomplishments include:

Planned Activities	Progress and Achievements
Create a web-based platform on disability inclusive emergencies with the GPwcd	<p>- Advocated successfully for the inclusion of disability in the latest Humanitarian Omnibus Resolution (2012) - further work is underway to have a specific ECOSOC resolution on inclusive humanitarian action in 2013.</p> <p>- Led by IDDC and the Disability Inclusive DRR Network for Asia Pacific youth with disabilities were well represented and actively engaged in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A side event on Disability in DRR organised by the DiDRRN, the Nippon Foundation and GIZ with persons with disability as speakers alongside experts on DRR and Disability; ✓ Two IGNITE stage presentations took place: one picturing the participation of woman with disability in disaster management committee in Bangladesh, the other having youth with hearing impairments performing an awareness raising show on DRR;
Disseminate information and share good practices through the platform, facilitating more global access to good practices, check lists, documents, policies and programmes, which are currently available but have sporadic dissemination (link with already existing mechanisms where possible).	
Support successful adoption of the General Assembly Resolution on disability in humanitarian action	
Ensure inclusion of disability inclusive disaster risk reduction in the Hyogo Framework for Action on DRR.	

⁸ ICRC ‘Promotion and protection of the rights of children: ICRC statement to the United Nations, 2011’17-10-2011 Statement to United Nations, General Assembly, 66th session, Third Committee, item 65 of the agenda, statement by the ICRC, New York, 17 October 2011.

- ✓ A market place organized by Handicap International;
- The Disability Inclusive DRR Network for Asia Pacific produced a policy brief on Disability in DRR.
- The IDDC Task Group on Disability, Conflict and Emergency initiated a mapping of existing resources to facilitate the inclusion of persons with disability in humanitarian/disaster risk management projects and plan to consolidate them a single online location.

Task Force on Assistive Technology (AT)

The task force on assistive technology committed to address a range of cross-cutting issues for children with disabilities, including gaps in research, products, services and provision of technologies. The aim of this task force is to promote awareness about the need for and benefit of assistive technology, particularly to assist children with disabilities to access education as others, and influence the availability, affordability and development of assistive technology. Led by WHO and UNICEF, the plan of action and accomplishments include:

Planned	Progress and Achievements
Develop a position paper on Assistive Technology which sets out global standards.	-Members of the task force developed coordinated messaging on assistive technology to influence the outcome document of the HLMDD.
Identify a range of open source assistive technologies, which can enhance inclusion and access to education for children with disabilities and test in 3 GPE countries	-WHO and UNICEF, with feedback and inputs from the task force, are currently developing a discussion paper on assistive technology to advance knowledge and understanding in this important area.
Work with partners to select 2-3 innovation programmes/projects/activities on assistive technologies.	

SCALING UP NATIONAL COOPERATION

With the aim to increase cooperation and effectiveness at all levels, particularly at the country level, representatives from eight country and regional government delegations provided an overview of what was happening in their respective contexts vis-à-vis children with disabilities and inclusive development. The delegations were able to interact with the partners using a marketplace methodology designed for small groups to engage in one-on-one discussions. This approach enabled them to begin detailing specific ways to collaborate. The exercise was also intended to ensure that the work of the GPc wd will be highly interactive and operational in countries and across regions. Each country utilized the networking exercise to forge key contacts among the participants, ranging from DPO representatives, governmental organizations, UN agencies, NGOs and academic institutions, to support the advancement of their work at country level. More details on what was discussed with each country and the UNICEF Regional office of CEE/CIS is available on the GPc wd website.

SECRETARIAT

As the leading UN agency for children's rights, UNICEF took the lead and acted as the Secretariat for the GPc wd. With support from many of the partners, the Secretariat:

- developed a one-year strategic plan (September 2012 - August 2013);
- supported the communications and work of the four task forces focused on education, nutrition, humanitarian action and assistive technology;
- expanded its means and modes of communication to accommodate the growing number of members;
- elaborated guidelines for strengthening National Partnerships; and
- developed a concept note for the future governance structure of the Partnership.

LESSONS AND CHALLENGES

Over the period of one year, the GPc wd has made significant progress in advancing the rights of children with disabilities to ensure that they are able to enjoy the same human rights and fundamental freedoms as other children, and to ensure that they are able to express their views. However, there remains a need for better cooperation and collaboration at the national, regional and international levels for children, youth and adults with disabilities to realise their rights in full force.

As the post-2015 agenda is being finalised, there is a pressing need to articulate GPc wd strategy to ensure partner engagement and that contributions accompany each of the post-2015 milestone events and decision-making fora planned over the next two years. Additionally, there is an immediate need to establish an efficient GPc wd governance structure and to identify and secure the resources required to continue to support Partnership actions in the areas of advocacy, communications and work to strengthen collaboration and coordination at the national level.



www.unicef.org/disabilities/index_65775.html
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