

Celebrating INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Toolkit for the International Development Sector



Australian **Disability+Development** Consortium

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CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, 3RD DECEMBER

This toolkit aims to support organisations and individuals working in international development in Australia to celebrate and mark International Day of People with Disabilities, or IDPD as it is referred to from here on.

It includes suggestions of how to mark the day with your colleagues and across your organisation as well as how to join the public conversation around disability equity and rights via social media and involving your organisation's supporters. It also includes tools to run an inclusive event or an inclusive online social media campaign.

We hope this inspires and supports you and your organisation to get involved in IDPD, celebrate the contributions of people with disabilities within your organisation as well as increase awareness and acceptance of disability-equitable practices throughout our communities.

If you have any questions or would like to share how you and your organisation are marking IDPD, please send us an email at info@addc.org.au. We would love to hear from you!

Thank you to those who have worked on this toolkit over the past years.

October 2024

Cover: Jeanet, 19 years old, from Vanuatu.
Photo: Erin Johnson ©CBM

Opposite: Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) members during group work at disaster risk reduction training in Myanmar.



Photo: Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DiDRRN)

WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD) is a sanctioned United Nations' Day celebrated annually. This important day aims to raise awareness and promote action around the rights of people with disability, their full inclusion and equitable participation in society. It falls on the 3rd of December each year. You can find global resources at the **UN's dedicated website for IDPD**.

IDPD presents a unique opportunity to work with your organisation to raise awareness of disability equity and celebrate the progress you have made to creating a more equitable world. ADDC is keen to support disability equity champions within the Australia international development sector to use IDPD as an opportunity to celebrate disability and diversity, amplify the priorities of people with disabilities, and raise awareness of the need for focussed efforts and resourcing on disability-inclusive development.

OUR APPROACH

Person-centred approach

The resources and suggestions in this toolkit are guided by putting the person with a disability at the centre of all events, activities, and communications.

ADDC encourages our members and disability champions to design events, activities and communications which elevate the voices and priorities of people with disabilities, both within their organisations and those they work with through their programs. This toolkit is made up of suggestions, content, tools and tips to help you design events, activity, and content which is inclusive and respectful of people with disabilities.

Language

Inclusive and respectful language towards people with disabilities means using 'person-first' language (person with disability). This recognises

the person before their disability, and that a person is not defined by their disability. Some people do prefer identity-first language (disabled person) and so following the lead of the person you are speaking with is recommended.

People with Disability Australia have put together a **helpful guide** on language and disability. This includes language for various disabilities and a good overview of ableism and ableist language.

Language has recently shifted from disability inclusion to disability equity. This shift has been led by the Pacific Disability Forum and the international disability movement. Equity is moving beyond inclusion. Equity calls for full, effective, and meaningful participation and leadership from people with disabilities to create long-term change that transforms systemic marginalisation and discrimination to the full realisation of rights.

INVITING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO LEAD

IDPD is a day for and to celebrate with people with disabilities. The first step to deciding how to mark the day is to invite people with disabilities within your organisation to participate, help develop the ideas and even lead the organising. Providing people with disabilities leadership opportunities is key to building a more equitable organisation and world.

First, the core value of the disability movement is 'nothing without us'. This means it is imperative that any events or activities are led by or amplifying the voices and priorities of people with disabilities.

Ways to do this include:

- Inviting a speaker with disability to talk at your event – there are some guidelines on this in [this booklet](#).
- Share a video or case study of a person with disability sharing their story in their own words. There is a huge range of [End the Cycle videos](#) and [Disability Justice Project videos](#) from a broad range of low and middle income countries that do just this. Or reach out to a person with disabilities involved in one of your organisation's programs to share their story virtually.

Get leadership involved


Many years of experience has told us that a key factor of increasing an organisation's commitment to disability equity is having leadership come to recognise its importance. IDPD provides a key opportunity to help raise awareness amongst your organisation's leadership, as part of a journey to getting them understanding and investing in improved disability equitable practices. Identify key leaders within your organisation to target: whether they be those holding particularly influential positions, or perhaps those with a particular interest in disability or disability equity.

Invite them to have some role in the event or activity: perhaps saying the welcome, introducing a speaker, being the one to send out a staff email or intranet article that you can help author, or even by getting them to do the IDPD social media action and sharing this via your organisation's digital media channels!

Now is a good time to help leadership showcase any work they or their organisation are doing in disability equitable practice: whether that be a strong international program, a Disability Action Plan, or improved reporting/data disaggregation.



A Bangladeshi man stands while holding a long wooden stick. A group of people sit in a circle in the background.



Delta, 14 years old, and her mother Delvina, from Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu.

IDEAS FOR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The possibilities are endless and depend on the resourcing (both people-power and financial) and what activities suit your organisation. Following are some ideas for events and activities that you can scale to meet your resourcing. The UN has a theme for their celebrations for IDPD each year. See their [website](#) for more information.

Organise an in-person or virtual morning tea for your organisation

Resources:

- A speaker with disability (see [further guidance on engaging speakers](#) in this booklet) – remember your speaker can join virtually!
- Share a video from a disability inclusive program you work with (see [End the Cycle videos](#)).

Who to involve:

- Encourage all staff to attend.
- See guides on [hosting an inclusive online event or meeting](#) in this booklet. Make sure you invite leadership to join, and if possible, have someone from leadership speak (such as doing the introductions).
- When you begin planning, ask any staff who identify as having disabilities if/how they would like to be involved and what they would like to do to mark the day.

Raise awareness amongst your team or organisation by sharing resources via:

- Email
- Intranet article
- During a team meeting



Resources:

- Share a 'good news' story from your organisation's work to increase equitable practices within the organisation or with partner organisations in the field.
- CBM releases a video on IDPD to mark the day and raise awareness on a particular issue. Watch their [website](#) for more information and [join the mailing list](#) to receive the video straight into your inbox to share with your team and organisation.



Who to involve:

- Leadership – ask them to be involved. For example, they could send out an all-staff email. You can offer to help write this for them.
- Your team or all staff members, as appropriate.

Launch a new disability inclusion initiative within your organisation



Resources:

- IDPD is a great opportunity to launch any disability initiative that your organisation may have been considering for some time. For example, a Disability Action Plan or a Disability Working Group.
- It could aim to have a final product ready to be shared on IDPD, or if you are at the start of your journey, you can use IDPD to launch this initiative or call for any interested staff to get involved.
- A public or shared announcement of intention on something like this can be a powerful means of accountability.

- For guidance on steps to building organisational inclusion, see ACFID's Code of Conduct guidance for [writing a Disability Inclusion Plan](#).



Who to involve:

- Leadership endorsement.
- Any other disability 'champions' or people interested in promoting disability equity and rights in your organisation.

Play a virtual disability equity game or activity with your team



Resources:

- Get your team together or a small group of people from your organisation to play a game or activity virtually.
- See [several suggested games or activities](#) to be done virtually in 20 to 40 minutes.
- Follow the activity with a conversation about disability equity and rights and what people learnt.
- Encourage people to have a hot drink or lunch to eat while playing in a relaxed learning environment.
- See guides on [hosting an inclusion online event or meeting](#).



Who to involve:

- Invite your team to undertake an activity together.
- Alternatively, target several people who you work with across your organisation to raise the need for increased disability inclusive practises.
- If there are people with disabilities working or volunteering with your organisation, recommend reaching out to them to see whether they would like to help facilitate the session or discussion, or participate in anyway.

MAKING YOUR EVENT ACCESSIBLE

It is important to live out the principle of inclusion however you mark IDPD. Resources on how to make your event inclusive are readily available, including an **in-person event accessibility checklist** and a **virtual event accessibility guide** from Respectability.

Your communications team publicising the event or activity can directly ask people to let you know if they have any accessibility requirements, which should always be provided free of cost to them in accordance with their rights.

Inclusive and accessible content

When developing the content for your event, there are some general rules to follow to make sure your content is accessible and inclusive.

Aa Text

- Write text in plain English/plain language so that it can be quickly and easily understood. Avoid jargon and long sentences, and if you do have to use technical or specific words, explain what the word means.
- Avoid using caps which screen readers can misinterpret.
- Capitalise hashtags so that it is easier to read and understand, for example instead of saying #championingdisabilityequity, write #ChampioningDisabilityEquity.
- Put hashtags and @ mentions at the end so that these disrupt screen readers less.
- Use minimum font size of 12 points.
- Keep sentences short and space your sentences rather than write a long paragraph.
- Avoid ableist language. The PWDA Disability Language Guide is a great resource to learn about using respectful and inclusive language about people with disability. The guide is available for [download here](#).
- Share documents in Word versions with plain text that can be read by a screen reader.



Images and videos

- Include video captions – check online for how to best do this given the platform you’re using. There are many videos on YouTube with tips for adding captions in most online platforms.
- Try adding video descriptions which give depth and detail beyond video captions. You could use descriptive audio, a descriptive transcript, or live described video. There’s lots of information about these methods online.
- Do not use green-red and blue-yellow combinations, since they are challenging to read.
- Do not use text on images as it can be difficult to read. Use a solid background or an opaque overlay.
- Use descriptive captions and alternative text (alt text) to help people visualise what they can’t see. Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn provide specific fields for you to add alt-text for images and GIFs, and when it’s not possible to add alt text, include descriptive captions. There are some useful resources online about writing alt text directly as well.
- **Disability Justice Project videos** provide excellent examples of how to make your videos accessible with captioning and video descriptions weaved throughout.

INVITING A SPEAKER WITH A DISABILITY

When inviting a speaker with a disability to share your event consider the following:

Be clear about what will be involved in speaking: length of time, format (e.g. presentation or interview), purpose or focus of the event. This will help the invited speaker to gauge whether it's an activity they can commit to. Make sure that your event actually allocates enough time for them to speak, including allowing some extra time if they are using interpreters, and that they are invited to stay for the whole event (such as a morning tea). Remember you might need to engage an interpreter or captioner for your virtual event too.

Like everyone, people with disabilities have a lot of competing priorities for their time and what they can give themselves to. While your IDPD event will definitely be enriched by a speaker with disabilities, it is important to recognise that doing so requires time and effort on their part and arranging for them to speak should be approached thoughtfully.

Consider inviting a representative of an Organisation of People with Disabilities that your organisation partners with to the event.

Remember whether you are meeting in-person or virtually, a speaker can present online from anywhere in the world (time zones permitting), so think broadly and consider inviting a speaker from a partner organisation in one of the countries your organisation works in. However, make sure to consider all the other tips listed here in that context too as they are all relevant.

Ask what the speaker's speaking fee is - do not expect them to participate for free. Like all of us, their time is valuable! If the event is in-person, the fee should cover their travel costs and any reasonable accommodation requirements such as sign language interpreters or captioning if required. If the speaker's fee is out of your range, politely explain this and that you won't be able to engage them this time - do not ask or expect them to reduce their fee for you.

Before approaching the speaker, get clear on what you want them to talk about. It might help to think up a specific title for your event, such as "Why disability equity matters in your organisation's work?", "A look at disability-equitable WASH programming in Indonesia", or "What does a disability equitable organisation look like?" Providing this clarity is important for a few reasons:

- Approaching speakers without a clear purpose or topic in mind can often create the impression that their involvement is tokenistic, rather than because you specifically want to learn from them on a particular issue.
- A clear topic allows you to make sure that they have appropriate expertise or knowledge on this area. If you are unsure of their expertise, you can discuss this by proposing the general theme of your activity and asking if/what they feel they could best speak to within this.
- You can also ask them if there are any particular messages or themes that they would like to raise within this theme. Ideally their speaking will be a mutually beneficial activity for both your organisation and the speaker.
- When you confirm the booking with the speaker, ask how they would like to be introduced. Include this wording clearly in the event notes/ speaking notes for whoever will introduce them.

Remember people with disabilities have diverse backgrounds and identities. Not all their areas of expertise are the same, and it is important to engage speakers from broad range of backgrounds including gender, age, type of disability, location, and Indigenous and LGBTIA+ people.



Remember that in order for your IDPD event and involvement of a speaker with disabilities to not feel tokenistic, this activity needs to be made alongside work to improve disability-equitable policies and practices within your organisation, both before and after the event.



A member of the Disaster Management Committee using a DRR kit for an emergency situation in Bangladesh.

Photo: Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DiDRRN)

Finding a speaker

If your organisation is at the start of their disability inclusion journey, it can take a little time to find a speaker with a disability. You could consider reaching out to:

- People within your organisation who identify as having a disability – ideally they should have already been invited to be involved with the activity planning when you first started. If any have indicated they do want to be involved, you can ask if they want to speak themselves, or if not, if they can help introduce you to appropriate speakers.
- A local organisation that provides information about disability – such as a local Organisations of People with Disabilities or representative group – and ask to book a presenter with a disability. Be aware they are well placed to speak about disability in general, rather than necessarily in a development context.
- There are various people with disabilities on social media who are also available to be booked to speak.
- If your organisation partners with any disability groups overseas, it may be an option for them to speak online too. Be mindful of cross-cultural communication and power dynamics that may exist if your organisation funds them, and any need for local spoken and/or sign language interpreters.

CELEBRATING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Use your organisation's online tools to raise awareness about disability and poverty issues this IDPD. Ask your organisation to share a post regarding disability and IDPD on your website, in online newsletters and communications and via social media.



Resources:

- If your organisation has any projects focusing on people with disabilities, or case studies of how people with disabilities have accessed their work, IDPD is a great opportunity to showcase them.
- If you don't have access to a case study or story like this, your organisation can still share some key facts about disability equity and rights from [ADDC's page](#) as well as [thematic linkages between disability and climate change, disability and gender](#) and [disability and humanitarian and disaster risk reduction \(DRR\)](#) through social media.
- Share photos of your IDPD activity or event through your organisation's digital channels.



Who to involve:

- Ask the digital communications team to help design and share the content.
- International Programs or Policy teams may have a case study to share.
- Ask your CEO or leadership to engage and share online your organisation's IDPD posts.

#CHAMPIONINGDISABILITYEQUITY

To unify all our efforts online in the lead up to and during IDPD, use the hashtag **#ChampioningDisabilityEquity** in your social media posts and ADDC will share your stories, case studies and videos as well.

Follow the conversation to building a **#ChampioningDisabilityEquity** via ADDC's [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



If IDPD falls on a weekend, use the preceding week to share on social media and talk about disability equity.

Friana, 20 years old, from Vanuatu.



AUSTRALIAN DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM

Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC) is an Australian based, international network focusing attention, expertise and actions on disability in the majority world, building on a human rights platform for disability advocacy.

Join ADDC for free and find out more about our work at addc.org.au.

For more information each year on IDPD become an ADDC member and receive updates in your inbox.

Contact us

We would love to hear from you and your plans to mark IDPD. Email ADDC at info@addc.org.au.

We look forward to marking IDPD with you and advancing conversations about disability inclusion and rights.

Follow the conversation on #ChampioningDisabilityEquity via ADDC's [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



Australian **Disability+Development** Consortium