



United  
Nations



DISABILITY  
INCLUSION  
STRATEGY

# 4 ways consulting persons with disabilities makes the UN work better



Here are some concrete  
examples of how consultation  
has improved the UN's work





## Identifying and addressing barriers to inclusion

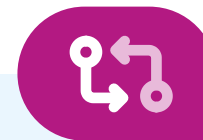
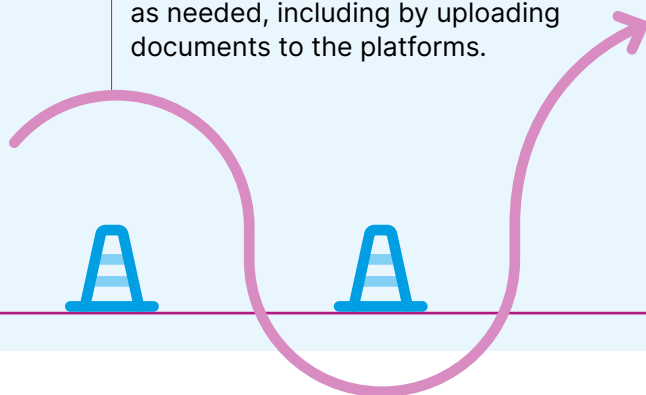
The country team in **Guyana** worked with the Guyana Council of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD), a national umbrella organization representing persons with disabilities, to include businesses owned by persons with disabilities in the Resident Coordinator Office's procurement system.

In the process, they learned that multiple barriers, both internal and external to the UN, made it difficult for these vendors to participate in procurement processes.

Many of the business owners experienced difficulties in opening bank accounts and conducting financial transactions, and thus could not meet the UN's requirement that all vendors have a bank account.

To help make national financial systems accessible, the country team engaged with the World Bank to develop a National Financial Inclusion Strategy as part of the Bank's ongoing work with the government.

GCOPD also noted that not all agencies had accessible vendor registration platforms; for instance, some were difficult to maneuver using a screen reader. Country team staff assisted the vendors as needed, including by uploading documents to the platforms.

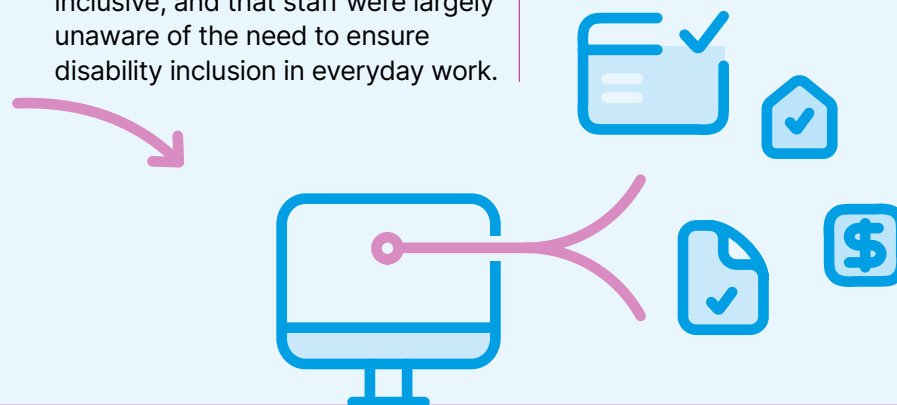


## Making buildings, digital systems and processes accessible

The country team in **Lesotho** undertook a holistic accessibility audit in 2022/2023, assessing the premises, ICT systems, human resources, procurement and programmes of all agencies working in the country.

Local organizations of persons with disabilities representing persons with intellectual, visual, physical and auditory disabilities were engaged to ensure the assessment considered diverse needs. Their feedback, along with a document review and interviews with senior staff, indicated that infrastructure, online systems, programmes and services were not disability-inclusive, and that staff were largely unaware of the need to ensure disability inclusion in everyday work.

The country team developed a 5-year Accessibility Improvement Plan, with a 6-month plan to address low-hanging fruit and additional improvements planned as funding becomes available. It also appointed disability focal points to drive implementation and identified resources for staff to learn about disability inclusion.



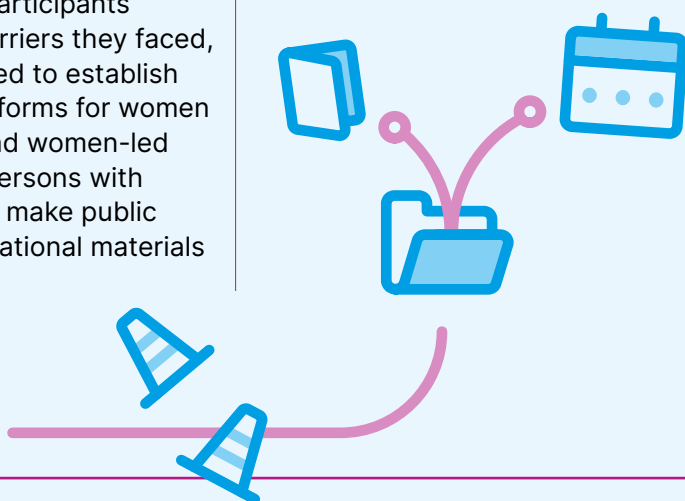


## Filling data gaps on the situation of persons with disabilities

In **Serbia**, national-level data are not yet consistently disaggregated by disability – but thanks to its engagement with organizations of persons with disabilities, the country team has been able to gather evidence on persons with disabilities.

Its 2021 and 2022 Results Reports incorporated data from reports produced by organizations of persons with disabilities and from meetings such as a 2021 ‘open door’ event co-organized by the Resident Coordinator and UN Women, focusing on the leadership and empowerment of women with disabilities. Participants highlighted the barriers they faced, pointing to the need to establish networks and platforms for women with disabilities and women-led organizations of persons with disabilities, and to make public facilities and educational materials accessible.

Accessible meeting spaces, processes and communications make it possible for persons with disabilities to participate in events like this one, which foster the open exchange of information and thereby strengthen the UN’s work on disability inclusion.



## Ensuring that planning processes leave no one behind

In 2023, the country team in **Nepal** piloted a disability inclusion advisory board, in collaboration with the International Disability Alliance, a network representing 14 global and regional organizations of persons with disabilities.

Seven advisors were selected, ensuring diversity in terms of impairment, gender, caste and ethnicity. To facilitate their participation, the country team provided reasonable accommodation and accessibility measures including sign interpretation, captioning and accessible transportation.

The board advised on the country team’s work to implement the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and mainstream disability inclusion in the Monsoon Preparedness and Response Plan, the country team Communications and Advocacy Strategy, and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment.

The country team informed the board about how its advice was applied, giving a rationale in cases where it was not.

This experience strengthened the country team’s partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities and broadened their engagement beyond disability-specific issues. While the board was dissolved once the pilot ended, maintaining such structures will be key to making consultation systematic.

**Persons with disabilities have the right to be actively involved in decision-making processes. They have first-hand experience of the barriers they face, and deep insight into what can be done to improve their well-being and realize their rights.**

Systematic consultation with persons with disabilities, on both disability-specific and mainstream issues, enables the UN to benefit from their irreplaceable expertise. To facilitate consultation, the UN must work to remove barriers by enhancing accessibility and building knowledge on disability inclusion.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, country teams across the world have stepped up their efforts to engage organizations of persons with disabilities across programming and operations.



To learn more about progress in the Strategy's implementation, visit: [www.un.org/disabilitystrategy/sgreport](http://www.un.org/disabilitystrategy/sgreport)