

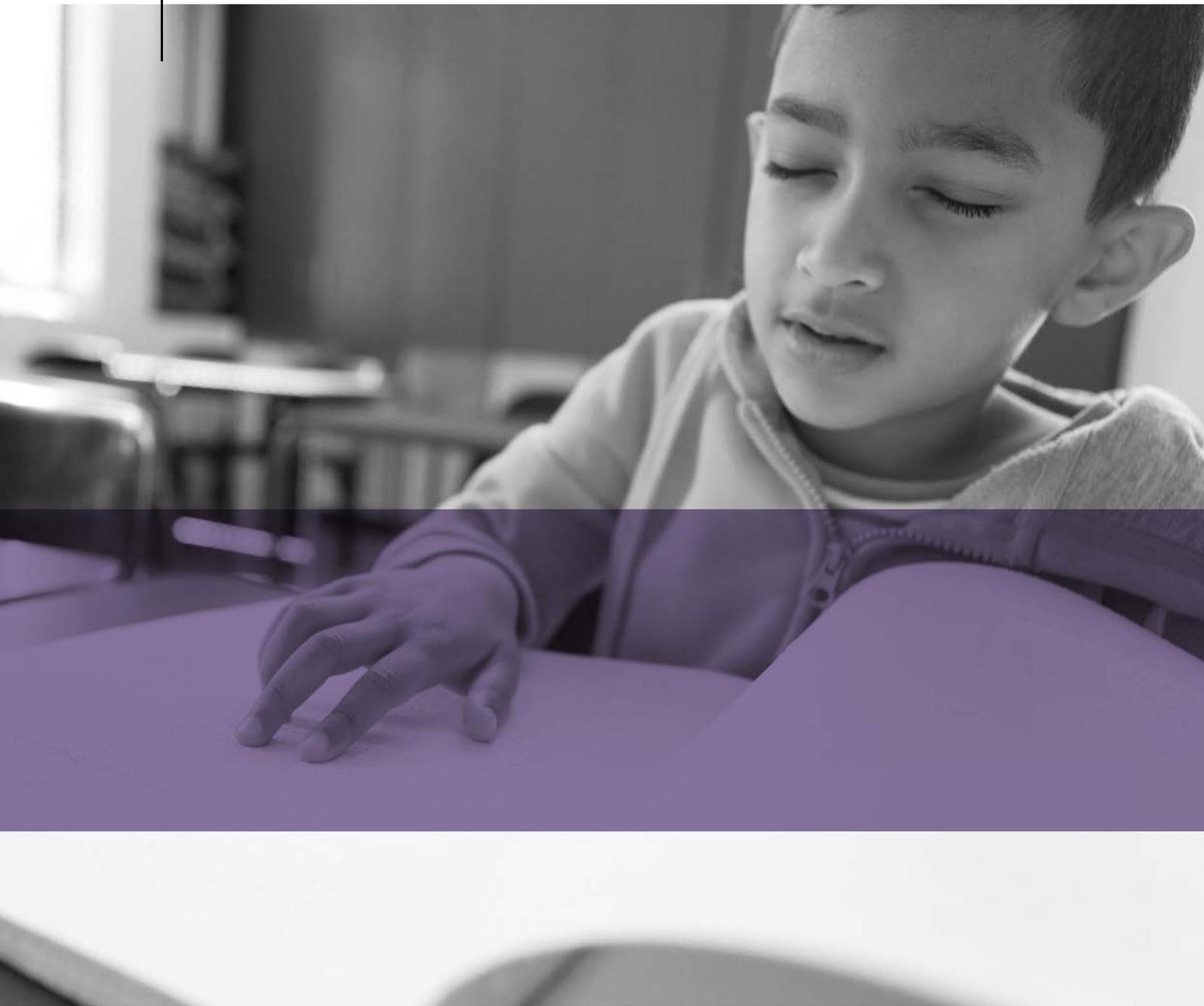


Norwegian Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs

Strategy

# Equality for all

Norway's strategy for disability-inclusive development (2022–2025)





*“The purpose of the present Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”*

*UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article 1*

Photo: Inclusion International

“ This is effort to promote equality and the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities.

## Summary

This strategy provides a foundation for future efforts to promote inclusion of the rights of persons with disabilities in Norwegian development cooperation. Norway has two primary objectives for its activities in this area: i) to promote compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and ii) to work proactively to support the core principle of the 2030 Agenda to *'leave no one behind'*. This is part of the broader effort to promote gender equality and reduce disparities.

Under Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Roughly 15 percent of the world's population, or 1.2 billion people, are persons with a disability. In low- and middle-income countries, persons with disabilities and their families are ranked at the bottom of nearly all indicators of economic development. The pandemic has exacerbated this situation.

A clear, human rights-based approach to development cooperation provides a framework for enabling rights holders to claim their rights and for ensuring that those who have an obligation to fulfill these rights do so. This is the mechanism of change for progressively realising the rights of persons with disabilities. In practice this means identifying and addressing structural imbalances and discriminatory policies, legislation and practices that lead to social exclusion of whole groups of people. In order to succeed, efforts must be focused on achieving both systemic change and change at the local level.

The development cooperation is to have a twin-track approach in which mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities is combined with targeted measures. Integrating the rights of persons with disabilities as a cross-cutting element of development cooperation policy design, plans and programmes is crucial for ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to take part in social development on an equal footing with the rest of society. This is in line with the principles underpinning Norwegian development cooperation, which include human rights as one of four cross-cutting issues.



*A child with a disability participates in pedagogical training. Foto: UNICEF/ Frank De Jong*

There are three strategic action areas for driving change towards disability-inclusive development: changing attitudes, increasing accountability and promoting meaningful engagement.

Changing people's attitudes towards disability is essential to counteract stigmatisation and combat the ignorance that leads to exclusion. Accountability entails making challenges and needs visible, identifying necessary actions, and monitoring what is being done by whom. Efforts relating to the compilation of data and statistics as well as reporting and tracking are crucial in this regard. The involvement and participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations is vital to ensure sound, relevant policy design and inclusive initiatives that address the challenges that the target groups confront in their daily lives.

Civil society organisations often have in-depth knowledge of the local context, the capacity to drive processes forward and access to national dialogue platforms. Moreover, organisations of persons

with disabilities have unique access to the target group. These organisations are key partners in the efforts to promote inclusive development cooperation at the local, national and global levels. Multilateral actors, and the UN system in particular, are also important partners for Norway in this work.

This strategy sets out the Government's thematic priority areas and action points for incorporating inclusion into these. The areas have been chosen based on their significance for the target group and are in line with priorities relating to the Government's overall efforts and cooperation. The thematic priority areas are: political participation, climate change and adaptation, social protection and food security, inclusive employment, education, and health. The strategy presents actions for enhancing mainstreaming and identifies specific targeted initiatives. It also focuses on gender perspectives and innovation as key cross-cutting issues in all efforts to promote disability inclusion.

**THE GOVERNMENT WILL:**

- work to change attitudes and seek to highlight the issue of multiple discrimination, including discrimination against women and girls with disabilities;
- help to achieve target 17.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals by working to ensure that development cooperation data and statistics include markers for disability and gender;
- work with partners and the OECD/DAC to encourage more actors to report on the policy marker for inclusion of persons with disabilities, and to increase reporting on and tracking of efforts to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- work with partners to increase the participation and involvement of persons with disabilities and their organisations in relevant development cooperation efforts;
- continue to support the organisations of persons with disabilities so that they can act as advocates and channels representing persons with disabilities and enabling them to exercise and claim their rights;
- support the efforts of Norwegian civil society organisations to incorporate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their work, and encourage them to promote universal design in their activities;
- continue to support cooperation between organisations of persons with disabilities and civil society organisations to promote mutual exchange of experience and learning;
- continue to play a key role in supporting the rights of persons with disabilities in the normative and strategic work in the UN system, including by providing support for the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and by strengthening dialogue with UN organisations such as UNICEF, OHCHR, UN Women and UNDP;

- strengthen its dialogue with the World Bank on inclusion and help to implement the Bank's inclusion frameworks, for example through board membership and programme cooperation, as well as follow-up of the Bank's implementation of its IDA19 and IDA20 commitments on inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- work to include the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts, with meaningful engagement of their organisations;
- work to ensure initiatives relating to social safety nets are based on an inclusive approach;
- work to ensure that Norwegian support for school meals and measures to promote food security and healthy nutrition are based on an inclusive approach;
- work to increase labour market participation for persons with disabilities and ensure that efforts to promote decent work also address persons with disabilities;
- promote inclusive education in cooperation with civil society partners and through board membership, donor dialogues and programme cooperation with multilateral partners such as UNICEF and UNESCO;
- provide support for inclusive education in situations of crisis and conflict through the *Education Cannot Wait* fund and other actors;
- promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in vocational education and higher education programmes;
- promote development of accessible instructional materials, including digital solutions;
- work to promote equal access for persons with disabilities to health care, and welfare services, including sexual and reproductive health services;

## *Equality for all*

- cooperate with WHO and other international organisations to help strengthen systemic and normative efforts related to the rights of persons with disabilities in the health sector, including follow-up of WHO resolution 'The highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities';
- work to enhance the ability of health personnel to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and to combat discrimination and attitudinal barriers;
- support measures to increase access for women and girls with disabilities to sexual and reproductive health services and sexuality education.



*Two twin sisters at a prosthesis center.* Foto: UNICEF/Alaa Noman

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