February 2025

Introduction to Disability Inclusion and the Investment Case

DSS: **Online Training Course – Module 1**

Agenda

Global Disability Innovation Hub

1 **Introduction**
GDI Hub, team, housekeeping

2 **What is disability and disability inclusion?**

3 **Key enablers of disability inclusion**

4 **The case for action**

5 **Summary and next steps**
Feedback, triage clinics

1 Introduction

Global Disability Innovation (GDI) Hub accelerates ideas into impact for a more just world—for disabled people, and all people.

41+ countries | 37 million people | 100+ partners

Growing new technologies & ecosystems I Supporting & scaling innovations I Strengthening systems I Pioneering research I Sharing knowledge I Building partnerships I Taking risks

Bringing together world leading academic research and practice-led delivery to address global challenges

Training module 1: Delivery team

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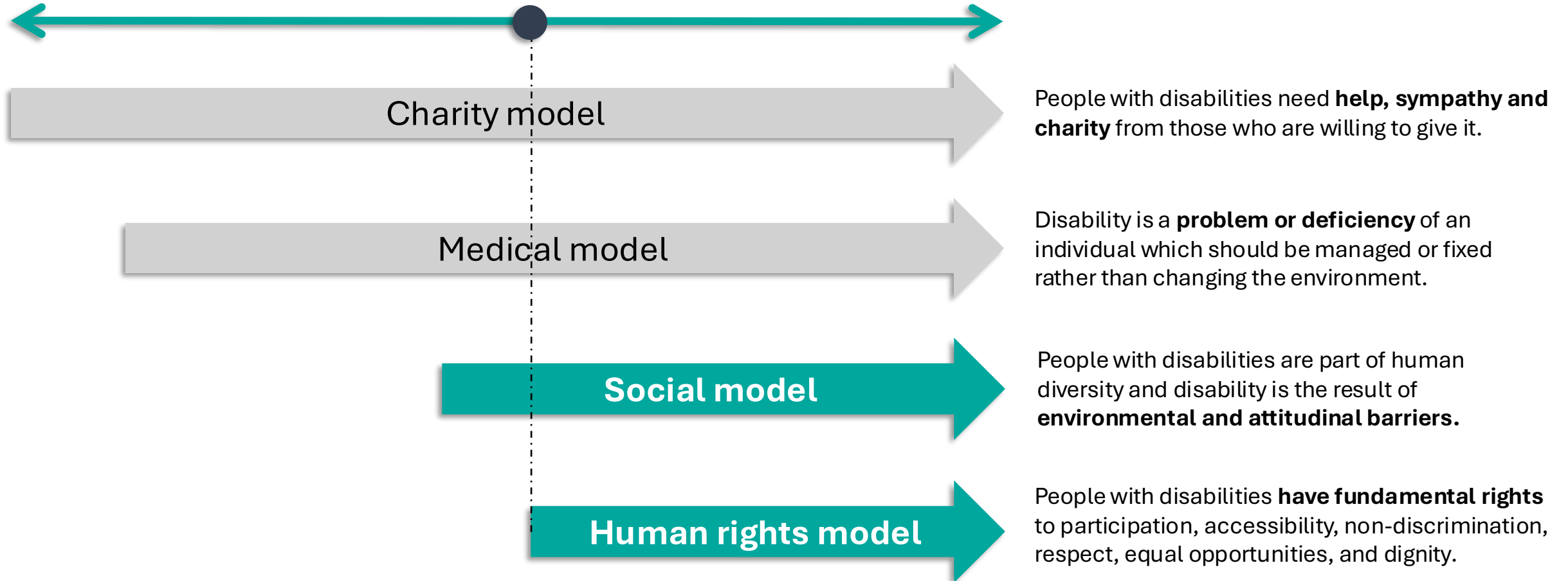Inclusive Climate Researcher
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2

What is disability and disability inclusion?

Ways of understanding disability

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2006 UNCRPD*

Charity model

People with disabilities need **help, sympathy and charity** from those who are willing to give it.

Medical model

Disability is a **problem or deficiency** of an individual which should be managed or fixed rather than changing the environment.

Social model

People with disabilities are part of human diversity and disability is the result of **environmental and attitudinal barriers.**

Human rights model

People with disabilities **have fundamental rights** to participation, accessibility, non-discrimination, respect, equal opportunities, and dignity.

Source: OHCHR Training manual on CRPD

*United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- **191** countries have ratified the CRPD

- An international treaty that **promotes and protects** the human rights of people with disabilities.

- Ensuring **participation, accessibility, non-discrimination, respect, equal opportunities and dignity for** people with disabilities in, for example, education, employment, health, and public life.
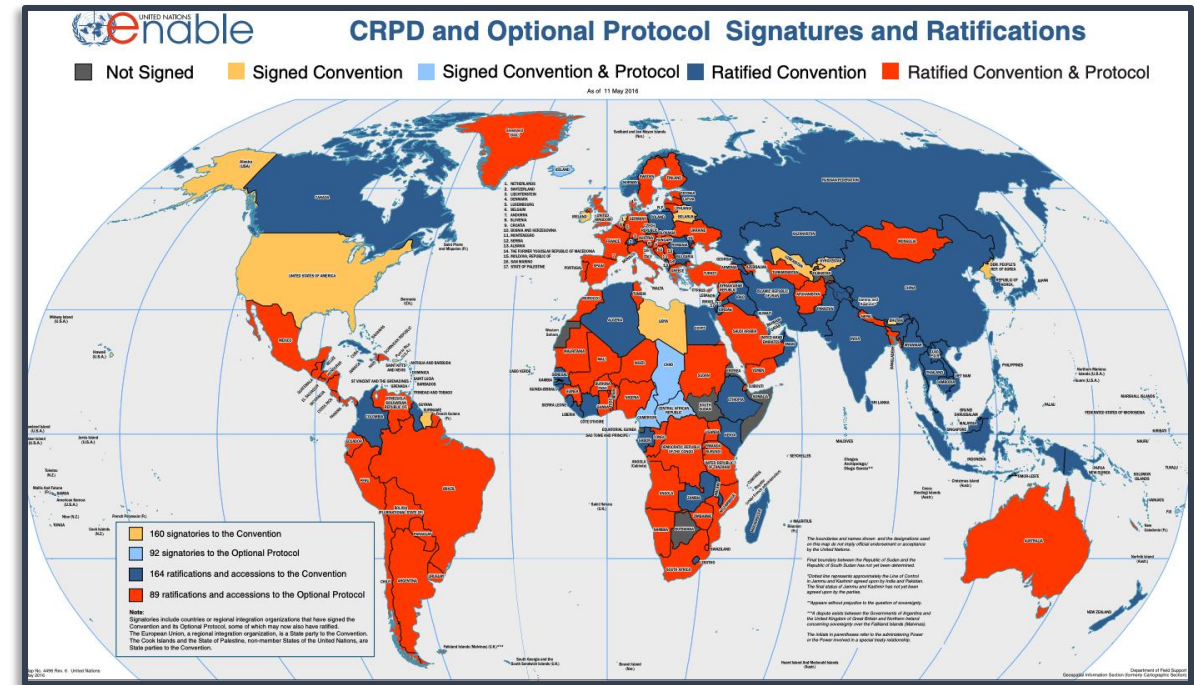
Source: UNenable

Discrimination: "Any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." (CRPD, 2006)

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Disability is an outcome of barriers

Disability = Impairment + Barriers

• Increases with age • Visible and invisible • Intersectional • Diverse • Part of being human	• Injury, illness, or condition • Physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory	• Physical • Policy • Programmatic • Social • Communication • Attitudinal • Transportation

Diversity of disability

1 in 6 people (16%) globally have a disability, 80% live in low- and middle-income countries.

"Disability is part of human condition. **Almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired** at some point in life."

World Health Organization, World Bank, 2011

Vision

Hearing

Mobility

Cognition e.g., memory, focus

Self-care e.g., payments, dressing

Communication e.g., being understood or understanding

Affect e.g., having anxious or depressed feelings and mood

**Upper body** e.g., moving objects with arms, hands, fingers

Pain

Fatigue

Intersectionality

- Multiple forms of oppression are **interconnected.**

- Different aspects of a person's identity, such as ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and sexual orientation, can overlap and create **complex systems of discrimination.**

- **Multi-faceted barriers** prevent people from accessing and participating in material, financial, and social opportunities or outcomes.
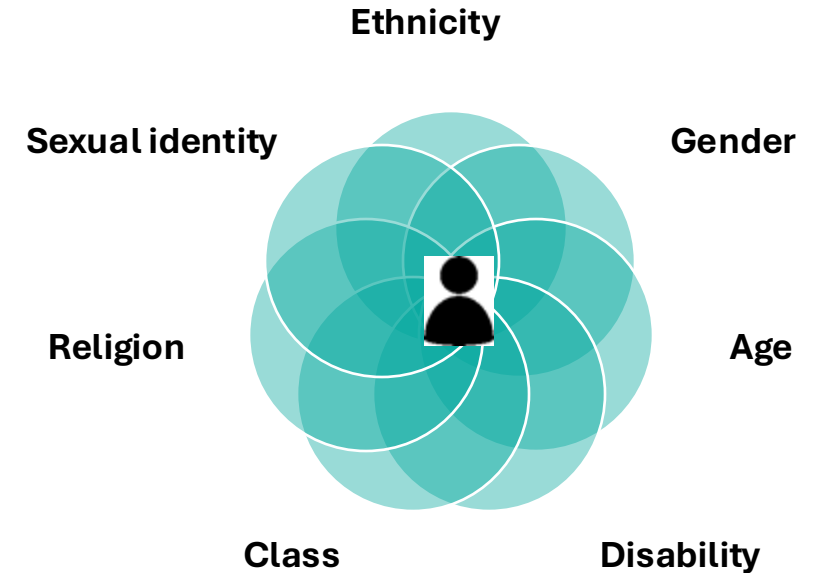
Gender, equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) approach to understand and remove multi-faceted barriers in design and delivery

Ethnicity

Sexual identity

Gender

Religion

Age

Class

Disability

"Women and girls with disabilities experience "**gender inequality, sexism, and stereotyping alongside ableism, disability exclusion, and expectations to conform to specific social and cultural norms.**"
Asian Development Bank, 2024

Why disability-inclusive energy access?

"A lot of the time **we tend to naturally default to silos,** so we don't think of the intersection of disability and climate or the intersection of disability, climate, and gender because we're traditionally thinking of them as separate groupings or separate thematic areas".

Mary Keogh, Advocacy Director, CBM Global

Energy access interventions commonly look into clean, reliable, and affordable electricity **for households, public services, and economic activities.**

What about **access to sufficient energy for individuals with unique needs (people with disabilities)** due to various structural barriers?

Source: Pascal Maître

Disability insights: energy access

Energy poverty: Due to unemployment and poverty, as consumers, **people with disabilities often depend on polluting energies** and have limited financial resources to transition to cleaner ones[1].

Powering AT: People with disabilities often require more energy to stay warm and power assistive technology (AT) but are more **likely to have limited financial resources**[3].

Gender and disability: Women with disabilities experience disproportionate levels of poverty, and poor access to employment, products, and services[4].

Powering AT: >44% WHO-listed priority assistive products need **a battery (usual is 'use-and-throw') or electric charging**[2].

Accessible and inclusive design: Smart energy innovations could be **inaccessible** due to cost, physical and digital barriers[5].

1. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2018). Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities.
2. World Health Organization. (2016). Priority Assistive Products List.
3. Disability Hub Europe. (2023). Involving People with Disabilities in Addressing Energy Poverty: A Just Transition.
4. Asian Development Bank. (2024). Gender Equality and Disability Inclusion: Guidelines to Address the Specific Needs of Women and Girls with Disabilities.
5. Christopherson, R. (2023). How to make smart energy technology more inclusive. AbilityNet.

Why is disability inclusion commonly avoided?
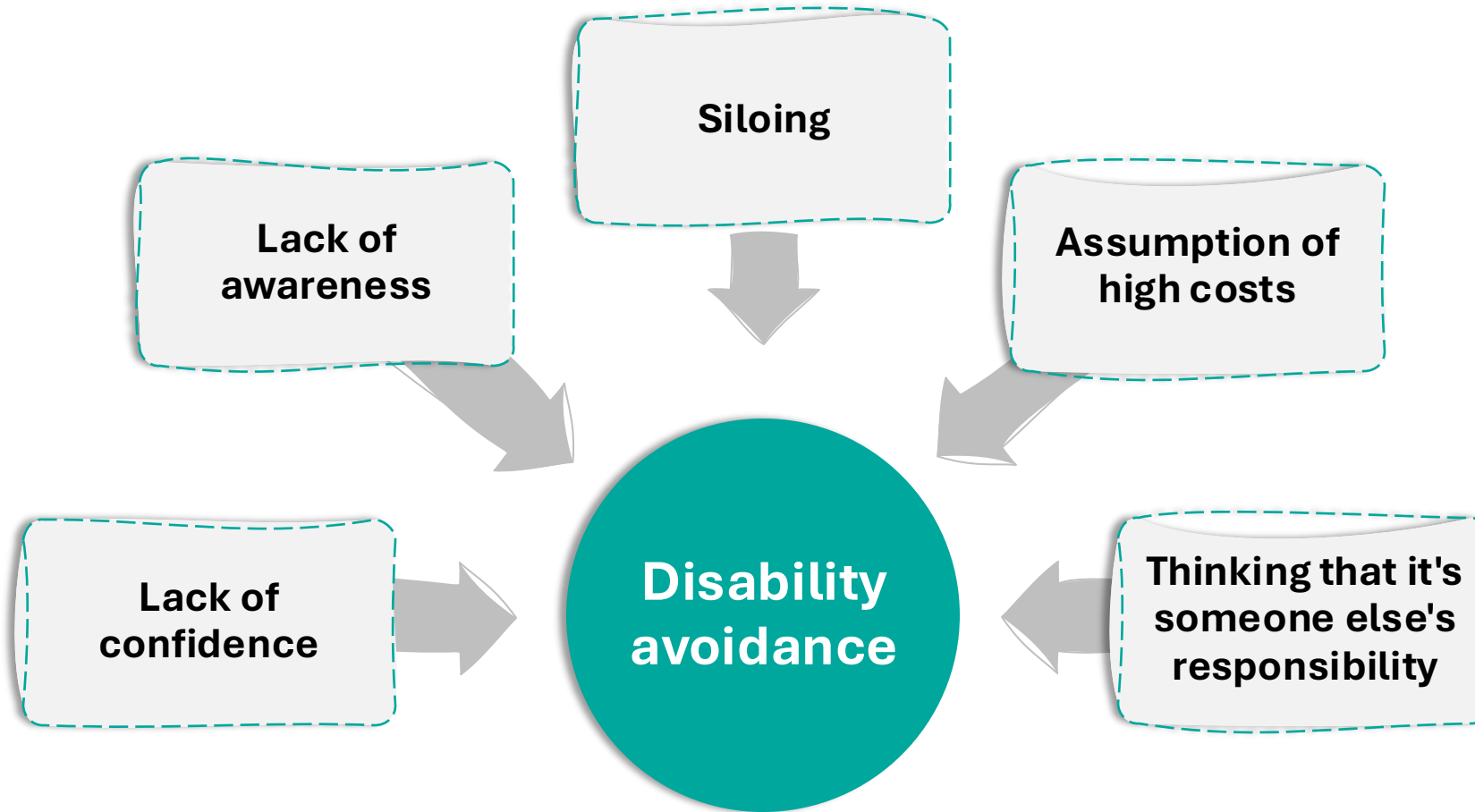
This six-module course aims to **break these challenges and build disability confidence** among TEA partners.

3

Key enablers for disability inclusion

Accessibility and inclusion for all

Source: World Economic Forum

Enablers for disability inclusion

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Integrating disability inclusion into our daily operations is **an individual and collective responsibility.**

1. **Disability confidence**

2. **Engaging people with disabilities**

3. **Accessibility**

4. **Reasonable accommodations**

5. **Disaggregated data**

1. Disability confidence

Barriers to disability confidence

- **Cultural stigma** around disability
- **Not wanting to talk** about someone else's experience
- **Fear of getting things wrong** and being disrespectful

Impacts of a lack of disability confidence

- **Reinforcing stigma** by not addressing it
- **Not creating space** for the voices of people with disabilities to be heard
- **Avoiding important discussions** and actions for disability inclusion
- **Excluding and discriminating** against people with disabilities

Example: Disability-inclusive behaviour and language

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General reminders:

o Disability does **not** mean lack of ability.

o **Avoid** reinforcing prejudice and associations of pity.

o Position yourself at **eye level.**

o Talk to people **directly,** not to their support person.

o Do **not touch** someone's assistive technology (e.g., wheelchair) unless directed by the individual.

o **Ask** people if they wish to be guided before doing so.

o **Identify yourself** and others to people with visual impairments – let the person know if you enter or exit.

o **Give people time** to both communicate and understand.

o It's okay to get things wrong and **learn from it. If in doubt, ask** the person or group how they wish to identify, communicate or navigate.

Join **module 4** to learn more about **inclusive communication!**

Source: IDA

At the heart of the **disability rights movement**
and intrinsic to **the CRPD.**

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Inclusive Design can help all human beings experience the world around them in a fair and equal way.

Iain McKinnon, GDI Hub, 2017

Inclusive Design principles:

- Place **people at the heart** of the process
- Deliver **results** 'with' and not 'for'
- Are about **collaboration & co-design**
- Anticipate **differing needs** and wants
- Are **responsive**

Join **module 3** to learn more about **inclusive design!**

Source: AT2030

3. Accessibility

The European Disability Forum (2023) calls governments to ensure that:

"Accessibility is integrated from the beginning into all aspects of green and resilient infrastructure investments, programmes, and initiatives to ensure the elimination of obstacles and barriers in the built environment, and information, communications and other services."

Accessibility when integrated from the beginning:

- o Contributes to **independence** and dignity for persons with disabilities.

- o Provides **choice on an equal basis with others** and enables full participation of people with disabilities.

- o Delivers **good design for everybody.**

ACCESSIBILITY
- Wheel Chair
- Braille
- Large Print
- Assistive Listening
- Closed Caption
- Sign Language

Source: Sunrise School Division

Examples: An accessible ecosystem

Documents

Colour and Contrast

Hard-to-read text contrast — 25

Media and Illustrations

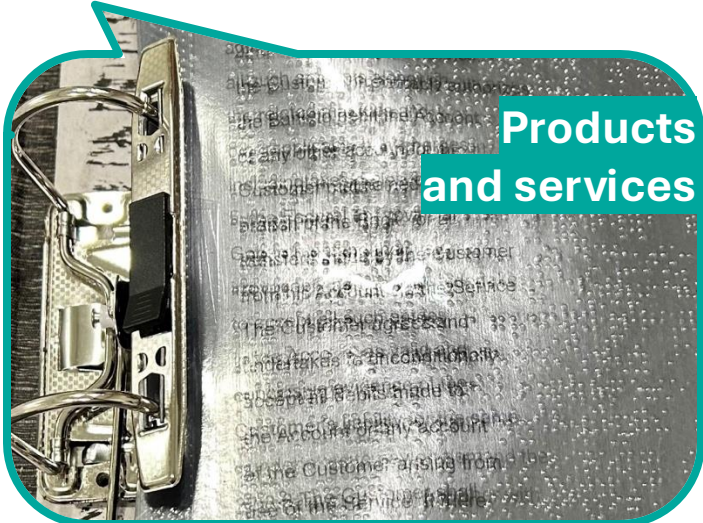Missing alt text — 39

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Transport

Source: Mobility Network

Communication

Source: GDI Hub

Products and services

Source: GDI Hub

Assistive technology

SOLAR EAR

Source: Solar Ear

Built environment
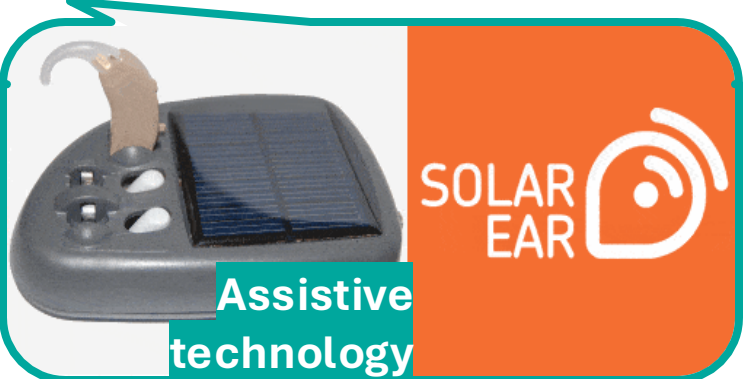
Source: GDI Hub

4. Reasonable accommodations

"Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments

not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed

in a particular case, to ensure to people with disabilities **the**

enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all

human rights and fundamental freedoms."

CRPD, 2006

Examples:

- o Provision of **sign-language interpretation** at a

  community focus group.

- o **Budget for a personal assistant** to attend an event /

  business meeting.

- o Provision of a **height adjustable desk** to enable a person

  to roll their wheelchair underneath.

Source: Up News

5. Disaggregated data

There is a distinct lack of both qualitative and quantitative **data on people with disabilities and energy access.**

However, data is critical to...

| **Justify action**	**Design policies and projects**	**Monitor implementation**	**Evaluate outcomes**
• Why does the scope and scale of the issue **require action?**	• How can **policies** be crafted **to address exclusion?** • **Who requires what** and where? • **How much** will it cost?	• Are policies, principles, and projects being implemented effectively to achieve the **desired outcomes?**	• **What works** and what does not work? • **Are there any co-benefits** or disbenefits?

Example: Washington Group survey questions

SIX QUESTIONS ON SHORT SET

Do you have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?

Do you have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?

Do you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?

Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?

Do you have difficulty (with self-care such as) washing all over or dressing?

Using your usual language, do you have difficulty communicating, for example understanding or being understood?

Source: Washington Group

The Short Set (most used)

The Enhanced Short Set

The Extended Set

The Child Functioning Module

Washington Group survey questions

Answers:

1. No – no difficulty

2. Yes – some difficulty

3. Yes – a lot of difficulty*

4. Cannot do at all*

*Those who respond with **'yes – a lot of difficulty'** and **'cannot do at all'** are generally those **defined as having a disability.**
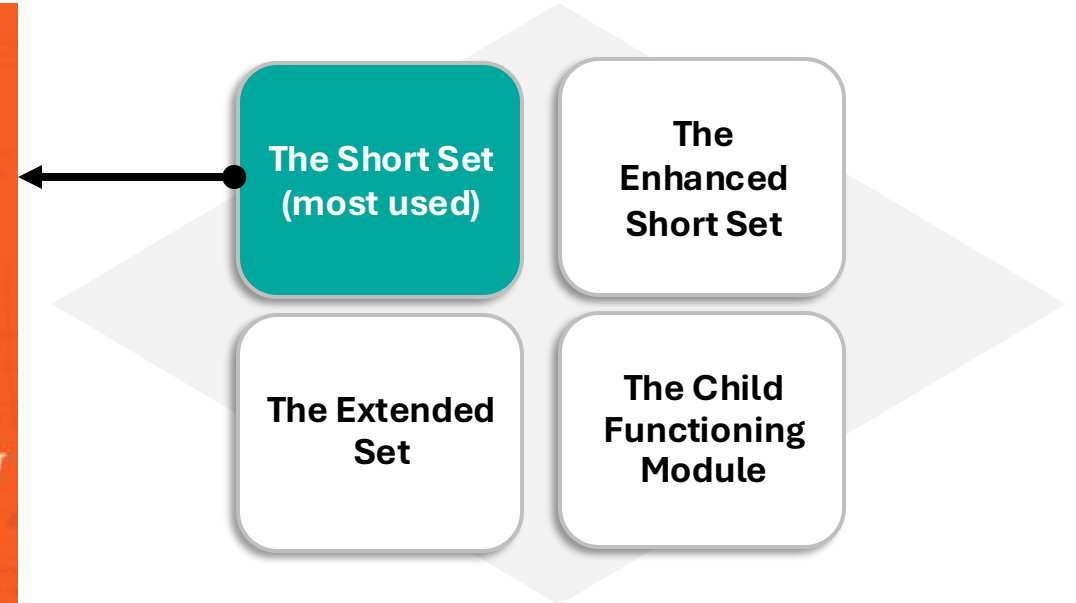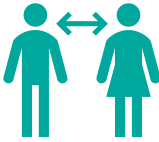
How can TEA partners strengthen these enablers?

Mandate training and awareness workshops on disability inclusion principles and practices
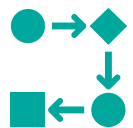
Prepare and adopt disability-inclusive behaviour and language **guidelines**

Enable **leadership and strategists to speak with confidence** and operational practicality about disability

Specific emphasis on disability inclusion and accessibility **in policies** (Human Resources policies, budgets, procurement)

Adopt standard operating procedures that include provision of accessibility and reasonable accommodations

Working with people with disabilities as experts and decision makers, and platforming their voices

Case study:
Chemonics reported that a **"disability-related accommodation"** line item in a budget during the proposal stage, should be a standard practice.

4 The case for action

Disability-inclusive development

"We can take advantage of the energy transition to also **transform harmful norms and practices** that disproportionately impact women and marginalized groups."

- UNOPS, 2024

CRPD — CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Source: United Nations

191 countries globally have ratified the CRPD and many have, to varying degrees, introduced requirements to support accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities, which must be upheld in development programme delivery.

Source: United Nations

Leaving no one behind

Disability inclusion is **critical to the delivery** of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and the Ayrton Fund's priority challenges.

Source: Ottinger, 2013

Just transition

Low-carbon energy systems are not necessarily more fair or inclusive than the energy systems that they replace. In the transition, **inequalities can persist or even worsen**[1,2].

1.   Johnson, O. W., Han, J. Y. C., Knight, A. L., et al. (2020). Intersectionality and energy transitions: A review of gender, social equity and low-carbon energy. Energy Research & Social Science, 70, 101774. doi:10.1016/j.erss.
2.   Ottinger, G. (2013). The Winds of Change: Environmental Justice in Energy Transitions. Science as Culture, 22(2), 222-229. doi:10.1080/09505431.2013.786996

Economic value

Low- and middle-income countries commonly **lose 3 to 7% of GDP, due to the exclusion** of people with disabilities from the labour market[1].

Source: ILO, 2010

Sustainability

Retrofitting is construction twice; **inclusive and accessible design is construction once.**

Source: ILO, 2010

1.   International Labour Organization. (2010). The price of exclusion: Executive Summary of the economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work. Employment Working Paper No. 43.

Disability-inclusive business

"By excluding persons with disabilities, **businesses are missing out** on untapped talent among potential and current employees, consumer markets, and **opportunities for innovation and profits.**"

UN ESCAP, 2023

Source: NCPEDE

Employment

22% of the global working age population have a disability.

Disability-inclusive workforces see increased talent access, innovation, engagement, retention, and enhanced reputation—all of which likely contribute to better business performance.

Source: McDonalds

Customer base

27% of the global consumer base (15+) have a disability. The total disposable income of people with disabilities in North America and Europe alone is **$2.6 trillion.**

1. Return on Disability Group. (2024). The Global Economics of Disability: 2024.

Source: AT2030

Cost savings

Including inclusive design from the start of a project typically only adds **about 1% to the total cost.**

Making these changes later can potentially increase costs by up to 20%. **For every dollar spent on accessibility and inclusive design, companies see an average revenue return of over nine dollars[1].**

Source: EnableMe

Mitigating legal risk

In many countries globally, ensuring **accessibility for people with disabilities is a requirement enshrined in law.**

Not delivering accessibility across all domains (infrastructure, digital products and services) could expose companies to legal challenges.

1.   Disability Inclusive and Accessible Urbank Development Network, World Enabled, Christian Blind Mission. (2016). The Inclusion Imperative: Towards Disability-inclusive and Accessible Urban Development.

5 Summary and next steps

Module 1: Key takeaways

What is disability and disability inclusion?

- **Disability is diverse** and a part of being human. It arises from barriers that should be reduced and removed.
- **1 in 6 people (16%) globally have a disability,** 80% live in LMICs.

Key enablers for disability inclusion

- Disability confidence
- Engaging persons with disabilities
- Accessibility
- Reasonable accommodations
- Disaggregated data

The case for action

- Disability inclusion is **a process, not a project.**
- Disability inclusion **makes sense in development and in business.**

Suggested actions for TEA partners:

- Conduct disability inclusion **training and awareness workshop** for all staff.
- Develop and adopt **policies** for disability inclusion and reasonable accommodations.

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Triage clinics and technical assistance:

TEA Partners can now **book one-hour appointments** with the GDI Hub team to discuss any questions or ideas on disability inclusion and innovation. 1-2-1 technical assistance support is also available from the GDI Hub team.

Scan the QR code to book your slot or email b.nagendran@ucl.ac.uk

Thank you!