



AU Disability Inclusion

Guideline For Youth Exchange

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Abbreviations

AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication
AGYI	African - German Youth Initiative
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA	African Union Disability Architecture
BEZEV	Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit e.V (Disability and development cooperation association)
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
GIZ	German Technical Cooperation(German Corporation for International cooperation)
ICS	International Citizenship Service
ICYE	International Cultural Youth Exchange
ISEP	International Student Exchange Program
ICT	Information Communication Technology
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
OPWDS	Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
PA	Personal Assistant
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WELT- WÄRTS	der entwicklungspolitische Freiwilligendienst (German Development Volunteer Service weltwärts)

1. Introduction

Approximately 80 million persons or almost 1 in 10 people on the African continent experience some form of disability¹. The continent has a significant youth population; constituting 70% of the total population, which is growing fast and projects to double by 2050. Considering the large youth population in Africa, it is imperative that young people with disabilities also need to be considered in youth-centered programs, including international volunteering and exchange programs.

However, systemic bottlenecks prevent a lot of young people living with disabilities to participate in existing youth exchange programs. These bottlenecks include impairments, barriers, challenging physical environments, inaccessible transport, the unavailability of assistive devices and technologies, non-adapted means of communication, and unfair prejudice and stigma in society. Additionally, the main challenge consists of a lack of information and knowhow concerning inclusion and integration of youth with disabilities in organisations making it difficult even for organisations with a keen interest in inclusion to be effectively inclusive.

To address this challenge a set of guidelines to facilitate inclusion have been put together. The guidelines aim to support hosting and sending organizations working in the field of youth exchange and youth mobility programs in their efforts to be more inclusive for youth with disabilities by putting in place necessary support measures. The guideline sets out tools, examples and suggested steps that illustrate good practice and minimum quality standards for disability-inclusive international volunteer programs on the African continent.

These guidelines are designed as a comprehensive practical, “how-to” framework of technical knowledge and good practice for youth exchange practitioners.

These guidelines are primarily intended to facilitate bilateral exchanges (south-north, south-south and north-south) for organizations active in the field of youth exchange and volunteering. The document handles issues that occur pre-exchange, during exchange and post-exchange.

¹WHO reports that there are 81,200,000 persons with disabilities in Africa, World Disability Report: https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report2011/en/, constituting about 10 percent of the total population: https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/demographic_profile_rev_april_25.pdf

2. Understanding disability

This chapter defines and details:

- Disability
- Impairments
- Forms of disabilities and impairments
- Barriers.

2.1 Definition of disability

Disability is a combination of individual factors, so called impairments, and social factors which are considered barriers.

There is a general agreement that the definitions presented in the UNCRPD provide a good orientation of the term:

“Persons with a disability 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”.²

Below are listed certain terminologies which are essential for an in-depth understanding in the context of people with disabilities in general and in the context of youth exchange programs

2.2 Impairments

Impairment is a “problem in body function or alterations in body structure – for example, paralysis or blindness.”³ An impairment may be caused by an accident, trauma, genetics or disease, which impact upon a person’s major life activities such as walking, talking, thinking, feeling, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning, caring for oneself, performing daily living tasks, and working. These difficulties can also affect a person’s ability to use words to communicate, speak clearly and be understood, or understand simple directions. Other aspects affected can be one’s ability to walk or climb, to manage emotions, to hold or handle objects, to use the toilet, dress or feed independently, or to form social relationships.

Impairment may be single or multiple, visible or invisible, lifelong or acquired at any stage in a person’s life. A non-exhaustive list of impairments is presented below:

²UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

³World Health Organization & World Bank. (2011): World report on disability. https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf, pg.5

S/N	Impairments	Notes
1	Blindness and Visual Impairments	It is difficult to generalize about people with visual disabilities because of the full range of causes and dates of onset. People with congenital visual disabilities are more likely to have learned skills in reading Braille and using tactile orientation aids such as mobility canes for navigation.
2	Intellectual and Mental Disabilities	For people with intellectual and mental disabilities, learning ability develops at a slower-than-average-pace. Reasoning, judgment, and social skills may also develop at a delayed rate.
3	Hearing Impairments	Often, people who have very little or no functional hearing refer to themselves as “Deaf.” Those with milder hearing loss may label themselves as “hard of hearing.” When these two groups are combined, they are often referred to as individuals with “hearing impairments,” with “hearing loss,” or who are “hearing impaired.” When referring to the Deaf culture, “Deaf” is capitalized. Many people who are Deaf do not consider themselves to have a disability. Instead, they base their identity on the fact that they share a visual language and a unique culture.
4	Mobility Impairments	Many types of orthopedic or neuromuscular impairments can impact mobility. These include amputation, paralysis, cerebral palsy, stroke, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, and spinal cord injury. Mobility impairments can impact individuals in several ways. Reduced agility, speed of movement, difficulty in balance, decreased endurance or a combination of these problems may contribute to impaired mobility. An exchange participant’s physical abilities may vary from day to day or change in different circumstances. It’s important to pay attention to the specific needs of a participant.
5	Psychosocial Disabilities	Psychosocial disabilities include a wide range of diagnoses from mild depression to chronic difficulties such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia or “invisible” disabilities that can present challenges in an exchange setting. In general, a psychosocial disability may affect stamina, concentration, memory, ability to socialize with others, adjustment to everyday stressors of exchange life (e.g. academic demands, interpersonal relationships, living alone or away from home, unfamiliar situations for the first time), ability to manage or prioritize tasks, and other areas.
6	Speech and Language Impairments	Speech and language impairments may include stuttering, low voice volume, difficulty constructing sentences orally, and slurred or muffled speech. The severity and cause of speech impairments vary widely.

Inclusion Spotlight

1. A person, who is using an interpreter, is lip reading or who is reading real-time captioning cannot simultaneously take notes or look down at written materials. Therefore, you should describe written or projected text and provide handouts that can be read before or after a verbal engagement.

2. For people who have hearing impairments, alternative formats are required to access purely audio information. It is possible to reproduce graphs, maps, photos, and diagrams in Braille, and to describe complex charts verbally.

2.3. Barriers

Barriers to participation in youth exchange include the inaccessibility of transport away from home for people with physical disabilities, lack of a universal sign language for Deaf people, and lack of plain language for people with intellectual and mental disabilities in contracts.

Checklist for the central questions to ask about barriers, and to which you should get answers:

- Can a participant function within the environment (get into the car, get into the building, get to his/her workplace, use bathroom, or get around in the cafeteria, if one is available)?
- Can they learn in the classroom, or work in the same place in the same manner as others?
- If not, what are the barriers?
- Can the barriers be removed or be overcome? If so, how?

Inclusion Spotlight

Impairment + barrier = disability

- Barriers can be overcome by learning about the different types of disabilities, visible, less obvious and hidden. Learning about various disabilities will help ensure you are not dismissing a qualified candidate during the interview process.
- Removing barriers mean that people with disabilities can access products and services and can participate and contribute to their full potential based on equality with others. It's the barrier, not the impairment, which holds them back.
- The UNCRPD moves beyond the question of access to the physical environment to broader issues of equality and equity, and the elimination of legal and social barriers to participation, social opportunities, health, education, employment, and personal development of persons with disabilities.

3. Creating inclusive cultures in the field of youth exchange programs

This chapter focuses on how to develop and nurture a culture that values disability inclusion within exchange programs and pre-exchange processes. Specifically, it details:

- The principles of Accessibility, Universal Design and Inclusion
- Rights and frameworks
- Challenges to disability inclusion
- Benefits of disability inclusion in youth exchange programs
- Actions towards disability-inclusive youth exchange organizations

Inclusion spotlight

- In order to reflect the diversity of the hosting organization it is important to create a clear definition of inclusive youth exchange programs that looks at how all youth, including those in rural areas, with limited access to education, youth with disabilities etc.. can be included in those programs in a safe environment.
- Definitions of key terms such as inclusive, safety, accessibility should be clearly defined in the program guidelines and safeguards.
- All services and processes within the program should use more terms such as inclusive, safe, accessible, adequate in all phases of assessment and procurement of volunteers.
- Include non-discrimination policies based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status. Ensure mechanisms are in place to combat these discriminations through adequate service provisions for diversity and reporting, monitoring and evaluation assessment during the whole process of the exchange (from the start of the application process till the end of the exchange).
- Ensure mechanisms are in place so that youth can regularly and actively contribute, advise and give feedback to the structure of the program and it's developments.
- Foster inclusive and accessible methods of communication that help to facilitate dialogue between diverse groups of youth- as well as intergenerational dialogue. The value of exchange programs is not only in youth development but also-if inclusive- in changing perceptions of vulnerable groups and removing barriers.
- Take into account those without regular access to internet or a computer. Provide an easy-read version of the guide that does not need to be downloaded in case of low resource environment.

3.1. Accessibility, universal design and inclusion

According to the UNCRPD, universal design (UD) means “the design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” It does not exclude the need for assistive devices, adaptation or specialized adjustments based on the needs of an individual. Consistent use of universal design will reduce the need for these types of adaptations in many cases.

The UD principles listed below can help exchange program designers ensure that programs are accessible to not only participants with disabilities but people with a variety of characteristics:

- Equitable Use
- Flexibility in Use
- Simple and Intuitive
- Perceptible Information
- Tolerance for Error
- Low Physical Effort
- Size and Space for Approach and Use

Full accessibility means considering the many different types of disabilities and how changes within an organization or specific program can be made to make it more inclusive and accommodating for everyone, including:

- Changing attitudes within the organization;
- Changing how people communicate with participants with disabilities;
- Changing physical objects, such as the structure of the spaces used and the formats in which information is presented.

3.2. Rights and frameworks promoting disability inclusion

The universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity, also known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs)⁴ clearly states that disability cannot be a reason or criteria for lack of access to development programming and the realization of human rights. The African Union Disability Architecture (AUDA) has been established to ensure that disability is mainstreamed with the legal, programmatic and institutional frameworks of AU Member States. The project has sustained the development and adoption of both the Protocol to the African Charter on human and persons' right on the rights of persons with disabilities (also known as the Africa Disability Protocol) as well as the AU Disability Strategic Framework.

3.3. Challenges to disability inclusion

While some special projects or programs, such as the German development volunteer service *weltwärts*, and even the United States Department's Professional Fellows Program on Inclusive Disability Employment, engage youth with disabilities in volunteering, a more broad-based representation of those individuals in youth exchange and volunteering programs is lacking.

⁴United Nations, New York 2015: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

Analysis of reports of volunteer exchange programs, including AU, VSO, JICA or Bezev reveals there are very few data about the participation of persons with disabilities in international volunteer exchange services. The commitment of persons with disabilities is merely statistically recorded; and the discrepancy in the proportion between the average of persons with disabilities in the whole society and their participation in the volunteer exchange programs shows, that their access to this international opportunity is unequal.

Inclusion Spotlight	
Disability-inclusive exchange IS	Disability-inclusive exchange is NOT
<p>...accepting and recognizing an individual participant beyond the disability.</p> <p>...participants with and without disabilities participating in an activity together and interact on an equal basis.</p> <p>...participants with and without disabilities being in the same room or at the same event, and experiencing the same thing at the same time, and sharing in that experience.</p> <p>... a constantly evolving process of change and improvement within exchange programs to make international volunteering and exchange more welcoming, user-friendly, and beneficial for participants with disabilities.</p> <p>.... about restructuring international volunteering and exchange cultures, policies and practices so that they can respond to a diverse range of participants with disabilities.</p> <p>.... an ongoing effort to identify and remove barriers that exclude participants with disabilities within each unique situation.</p> <p>.... about identifying and removing barriers to presence of people with disabilities in (access to) volunteering and exchange, academic, economic and social achievement.</p> <p>... focused on solving attitude, practice, policy, environmental and resource barriers.</p>	<p>... just assembling participants with disabilities into one program, classroom, or workplace.</p> <p>...giving “special privileges” to participants with disabilities.</p> <p>... feeling sorry for participants with disabilities.</p> <p>... viewing individuals with disabilities as “passive recipients of” rather than “active participants” in volunteer service and exchange programs.</p> <p>... labeling people by disability rather than treating the person as an individual first.</p> <p>... determining what a person with a disability needs to be included without asking them first.</p> <p>... a once-off project that can be delivered and completed within a short timeframe.</p> <p>... about trying to change the participant with a disability so that he/she can fit more conveniently into an unchanged exchange program or system.</p> <p>... just about overcoming financial and physical accessibility challenges.</p> <p>... a project that can be implemented solely by external disability experts.</p>

Inclusion Spotlight	
Disability-inclusive exchange IS	Disability-inclusive exchange is NOT
... a process in which all stakeholders should participate (Program managers, exchange advisors, participants with disabilities, OP-WDS, government policy-makers, local leaders, NGOs, etc.).	

3.4. Benefits of disability-inclusive youth exchange programs

Organizations can benefit a lot by implementing exchange programs. Volunteer exchange organizations that provide an inclusive volunteer program will expand and enhance their programs and services.

The benefits for organizations of developing a disability-inclusive youth mobility program include:

- Access to a larger, more diverse group of youth volunteers with a broader range of skills, expertise, and motivation;
- A volunteer program with a better reflection of the wider human diversity;
- Enhanced opportunities to develop partnerships, and
- An improved understanding of disability and inclusive practice amongst staff.

3.5. Actions towards a disability-inclusive organizational culture

Making a youth exchange program disability-inclusive is likely to be successful and sustainable when it begins with an analysis and internal changes within the organization. Organizations must undergo the transition to become disability-inclusive themselves so that this can, in turn, inspire inclusive programs.

Organizations wishing to promote the inclusion of youth with disabilities in their exchange programs should begin with an internal reflection to what extent their structures are accessible for all. The process for organizations towards a more disability-inclusive operation may further entail some of the following steps:

1. Putting the commitment to inclusion into writing

Inclusive exchange programs and services can be more sustainable if they are embedded in inclusive organizations and inclusive policy settings which exist in a written format. An example of a good practice of a written organizational commitment by the World Health Organization on employment of persons with disabilities is referenced in the link below



2. Management Commitment

It's not enough to just write a policy but organizations need to have their management commit to implementing the said policies, there must be a deliberate efforts to ensure this. This may include appointing a senior-level staff member tasked with ensuring that exchange participants with disabilities get the opportunities and resources, or creating a disability inclusion resource group (committee) from all levels with visible leadership presence and support.



3. Effective Communication

Managers of exchange programs should identify persons to inform and educate around disability related issues. This must include both regularly reinforced, consistent internal messaging from the top about disability inclusion, using naturally occurring internal organizational communication methods and external communication in product and service marketing in materials, websites, and advertisements that positively highlight people with disabilities



4. Self-disclosure/identification

Critical to building a disability inclusive exchange program is creating a culture where participants are comfortable being able to self-identify as a person with a disability. This can be as simple as asking about accommodations needed as a part of the application process.



5. Staff Training

In order to create an environment which is accommodating to the needs of exchange applicants with disabilities, it is vital to provide training to staff members on disability related matters. The training can be delivered through e-learning, by an experienced trainer or through a blended methodology

3.5.1. Information management

Alternative formats present printed or electronic documents in different forms to ensure everyone has equal access to the information. Persons with disabilities often use adaptive/assistive technology that requires an alternate/accessible format, so the technology can access the information in a specific manner for the user. When a print or on-screen document or multi-media presentation is produced in an accessible, alternative format, it will better meet the needs of people with sensory, physical, learning and other disabilities.

All useful and necessary information provided to exchange applicants and participants should be made available in easy-to-read format. This information includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- All contact information for the organization in the form of business cards or flyers.
- Description of the types of programs/and or services provided by the organization in the form of brochures, pamphlets and application materials.
- Any legal document associated with the program and or services provided by the organization.

- All forms that exchange participants must sign to be eligible to participate in the exchange program or receive services from the organization.
- Organizational policies, procedures, and orientation processes relevant to the exchange participants and services.
- All auditory narration on video production websites

3.5.2. *Alternative formats*

It is impossible to make anything 100% accessible to everyone, as making alterations in one way may make materials accessible for one person with a disability but inaccessible for another. Also, the requirements of people with disabilities, including those with similar disabilities, may be significantly different.

The document tagline will take account of those with highly specific needs that are not met by general accessibility good practice. As it is the responsibility of the person who produces a document to provide alternative formats upon request, each document must include this statement:

'If you require this document in an alternative format, such as easy-to-read, large print or colored background, please contact [insert: name and contact details].'

The contact details provided should be the name of the individual responsible for the creation and maintenance of that document. Two methods of contacting that individual should be given, such as phone and email or postal address and email.

3.5.3. *Assistive technologies*

Assistive technologies describe any device that facilitates equal access to computers, software, and information. This chapter focuses primarily on the alternative formats required by people who are blind or have low vision but also provides information on alternative formats required with individuals who:

- Have an intellectual or other cognitive disability;
- Cannot hold publications or turn pages because of a physical disability;
- Have difficulties accessing information on the internet, or;
- Have problems watching or hearing video presentations.

The individual's preferences for alternative formats determine the best course of action.

Assistive technologies include:

- **Braille:** A tactile system of cells and dots that allows persons to read text using Braille without having to print out the document physically.
- **Closed Captioning:** Captioning translates the audio portion of a video presentation by way of subtitles, or captions, which usually appear on the bottom of the screen.
- **Described Video:** With described video (also known as descriptive audio) all relevant action scenes and on-screen text (such as credits) in video, TV programming, Web-based multi-media or movies is described and read by a narrator.
- **Digital Audio:** Can be in MP3 format, with a human voice, or Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY). DAISY is a means of creating digital talking books for people who wish to hear—and navigate—written material presented in an audible format.⁵
- **ePUB⁶** : The term is short for electronic publication. An electronic book format that has become the industry standard, allowing eBooks that use this format to be read on a wide variety of e-Readers. ePUB is supported by many e-readers, and compatible software is available for most smartphones, tablets, and computers.
- **Large Print:** Print enlargement on paper, minimum 18-point font size.
- **Text-to-Speech:** Software that allows scanning texts into the computer, which converts the text into a digital format and uses a speech synthesizer to read it aloud. (e.g., Kurzweil 3000 Read&Write).
- **Voice-to-Text:** Software that allows users to speak into a microphone while the computer transcribes their voice into a digital format. (e.g., Dragon Naturally Speaking).
- **Screen Readers:** Software that reads the computer screen aloud, replacing the graphical user interface with an auditory interface. (e.g., JAWS for PC, voice over for Apple phones/pc and talkback for android phones etc.).
- **Mind-Mapping:** Software that assists in the brainstorming process and thought organization which facilitates the writing process. (e.g., Inspiration).
- **Screen Magnifiers:** Software that allows to magnify the size of documents and other software applications that appears on the screen. (e.g., ZoomText, VisoVoice).
- **CCTV:** Closed-captioned television systems enlarge print texts using a camera and standard computer monitor. (e.g., OPTELEC Clearview).

⁵https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZAS3sMSH_8

⁶<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve8PecVNTbs>

- **Writing Tools:** Software that assists with word prediction, grammar, and spelling errors in documents. (e.g., Ginger).
- **Digital Recorders and Smart pens:** Tools to help with note-taking in lectures (e.g., Livescribe Smartpen).
- **Tactile Image Enhancer:** This assists people who are blind or with low vision. Images are printed on special paper and run through a thermal enhancer.
- **Refreshable Braille Displays:** These are electronic devices used to read text tactually that is typically displayed visually on a computer monitor.
- **Easy-to-Read (ETR) or Easy-Read (ER)⁷ :** This is a method of presenting written information to make it clearer and easier to understand for people with difficulty reading, such as people with intellectual disabilities. Typically, Easy Read uses written information in sentences that should be no more than ten to fifteen words, supported by pictures and each sentence should have just one idea and one verb.

Inclusion Spotlight

- Documents don't need to be produced in alternative formats until a request has been received.
- However, all documents must carry tagline informing readers of how they can request another format.
- You will save time when producing alternate formats if you create documents with accessibility in mind.

⁷To achieve Easy-Read product, the writer/publisher must take into consideration content, language, illustrations, as well as graphic layout. Providing Easy-Read materials is a matter of democracy and accessibility. The Easy-Read format makes it possible for people with intellectual and mental disability to access information in a format that takes into account their low literacy levels. By using simple, short sentences with pictures, the person with intellectual and mental disability is able to access the information in an appropriate form that takes into account their challenges.

4. Inclusion of youths with disabilities before exchange programs

Planning is the most important stage of implementing a disability-inclusive exchange program. An effective planning process, not only sets you up to implement disability inclusion, it is an actionable process – obtaining buy-in, realistically evaluating programs, and building specific timelines for rollout are all integral for success.

The most effective way to include people with disabilities is to ensure they are included in the design of the project from the beginning and participate as staff, stakeholders, and advisors as well as volunteers.

Checklist for a winning planning process:

- Have you secured the top management buy-in? The top leadership buy-in can often get the process moving more quickly and signals the importance of the project to all staff. And without approval from the top leadership, most aspects of disability inclusion will fail.
- Have you assessed your program's readiness? Remember, this process is to review your program's readiness for implementation, and it is unlikely the program will be ready instantly. What's important is establishing the baseline for your disability inclusive-exchange program, and incrementally building your program to be disability-inclusive as possible. These steps can help:
 - a) Evaluate your goals and needs
 - b) Evaluate available jobs and current openings based on the following factors:
 - i. Job/academic title and description — technical and personal skills and qualifications required; core responsibilities; secondary responsibilities
 - ii. Application and interview process
 - iii. Immediate supervision
 - iv. Organization of classroom or workplace, including student or employee non-work areas
 - v. Health and Safety
 - vi. Quality
 - c) Determine whether current partners (sending organizations) need help understanding their role in hiring people with disabilities:
 - i. Do they partner with local sources for talent with disabilities?
 - ii. Do they have resources and policies for reasonable accommodations?
 - iii. Do their staff members need training on recruiting and managing participants with disabilities?
 - d) Evaluate the inclusiveness, accessibility and ICT realities of your program's readiness.

- e) Environmental and work/study analysis to help define how to build disability inclusion processes directly into your program's goals and policies.

Questions to ask yourself:

i. Diversity and Human Resource Goals

- How many volunteers or students do you hire or admit each year, and what types of people or students do you look for?
- What are your disability inclusion goals in terms of hiring numbers and training?
- How do you recruit, and who are your recruiting partners?
- Where do you see a disability-inclusive exchange program having the biggest impact in terms of your overall diversity and human resource goals?

ii. Employee Retention and Support History

- What are your key strategies for student/employee retention?
- How do you support employees or students who may be struggling?
- Have you made reasonable adjustments in the past? If so, what were the supports and related performance concerns?

iii. Incentive Planning

- Do you tap into national/federal/state/local economic, educational and workforce development incentives?
- What types of grants do you pursue?
- How would the potential incentives you secure through your disability-inclusive exchange program be most impactful?

- f) Building your internal implementing team structure. Typically, there are three distinct groups to think through when it comes to your internal team structure:

i. Project Sponsor: Ideally a high-level executive, such as the Country Director

ii. Program Champion: Ideally a senior program/operations manager

iii. Working team: Pulled from relevant functions across the project(s) where the program is being implemented, including HR, Operations, Training, Diversity and Inclusion, Marketing, Communications, Safety and Wellness, Workers Compensation, Return-to-Work, and Information Technology (IT).

- g) Finding potential external partners for your disability inclusion program

i. Local nonprofit service providers

ii. National and International NGOs

iii. Disability Inclusive Education and Employment Consultants.

- h) Disability inclusion implementation timelines

From assessment to launch, an action-oriented, mid-size organization might be able to implement a disability initiative in 90 days, but on average, most take 6 to 12 months or more.

4.1 Recruitment

“We encourage people with disabilities to apply” or “We provide reasonable accommodation as needed for people with disabilities.”

Thorough work should go into ensuring that the right candidates are selected on merit. The onus is on organizations to ensure that they employ proper channels to implement the best possible recruitment model as far as people living with disability are concerned.

Checklist for ensuring the active participation of youth with disabilities in exchange programs:

- Have you included promotional messages that encourage youth with disabilities to consider applying for exchange programs when creating advertisements for placements?
- Have you highlighted disability as a means of diversity and specialized skills, for example, the need for an exchange participant who is able to use sign language?
- Are there success stories of former exchange participants with disabilities which can be shared?
- Have you offered to connect applicants and current or former participants with disabilities to learn and share?
- Have you sensitized all staff and volunteers in the organization on disability-inclusive policies?
- Have you ensured the selection committee is well represented in terms of gender, race, disability etc?
- Have you reached out to Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPWDs) to further spread information on exchange opportunities for youths with disabilities?
- Do you have a focal point on accessibility in your team?

4.2 Application procedure

The structure, language and demands of the application, when designed in a way to be disability-inclusive, can encourage youth with disabilities to apply for the exchange program.

Checklist to make the application procedure more inclusive for applicants with disabilities:

- Is the website's recruitment page disability-accessible and does it feature information on how people can apply?
- Have you included text labels in images and non-text items so that people with visual impairments may use screen-reading digital software?
- Are contact details included of the person who is tasked with providing more information about the alternative methods of application?
- Have you offered alternative means and ensured a short and concise format and offered alternative ways of submission e.g. voice recordings if using written documents such as application forms?
- Are there established procedures for handling situations in which applicants voluntarily disclose disability-related information?
- Is there Easy-Read with short words and pictures for people with intellectual (learning) disabilities?

4.3 Screening of applicants with disabilities

Just as not all applicants without disabilities qualify for exchange and volunteering programs, not all applicants with disabilities will meet program requirements. However, disability should never be the reason to exclude people from participation.

Checklist to make the screening process more inclusive and provide people with disabilities with fair and equal opportunities to demonstrate their qualifications:

- Have you assessed what kind of assistance a candidate with a disability will require during the selection procedure?
- Have you tailored the screening approach to the individual candidate, for example, pre-screening via email or with an interpreter via the telephone/ video relay service for a Deaf applicant?

- Does the checklist you use to grade candidates during the screening focus on the individual's skills and experience, and less on social skills, such as eye contact and firm handshakes, if these skills are not essential functions of a job?
- Have you considered providing the screening questions ahead of time for candidates who have difficulties dealing with stressful situations to prepare their responses?
- Have you considered avoiding large group discussions given that these can potentially put applicants with a disability at a disadvantage?
- Are you ready to administer assessment center tests in an accommodating alternative format, such as Easy-Read, in Braille, on audiotape, by a screen reader, or on a computer?
- Are you providing sufficient time to provide answers?

Inclusion Spotlight

- Excuse Deaf applicants from showing verbal fluency in screening processes that include proof of foreign language mastery. Applicants with intellectual or other disabilities may also require adaptations. Be open to exploring different ways of demonstrating language skills depending on the individual's ability.
- Excuse applicants from age-limit restrictions, especially people with intellectual, psychosocial and mental disabilities. For some young people with disabilities, their experience of transition and education times can be qualitatively quite different from that experienced by other people. For example, people with intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience additional transitions in their lifetime such as the diagnosis of co-existing medical conditions. For example, epilepsy is eight times more common in individuals with mild intellectual disabilities than it is in the general population.

Checklist for the screening:

- Do you request medical information or a medical examination only after, and not before, an applicant has received an unconditional offer?
- Do you use medical and eye exams only to determine the applicant's ability to perform the essential functions of the exchange?
- Have you provided a suitable location or opportunity for applicants to demonstrate how job functions are performed using adaptive methods or technology? Could the interviewee just do a project instead of answering questions, so they can show they have the skills to do the work?
- Are you using alternative means, such as interviews, licenses or certifications, education credentials, or trial placement periods to determine an applicant's job qualifications if it is not possible to test him or her in an alternative format?
- Are you rephrasing or clarifying if the person doesn't understand the question?
- Are you keeping your items straightforward and concrete?

Inclusion Spotlight

1. Organizations should base selection decisions on accurate assessments of applicants' qualifications, and not on impressions or assumptions made by the interviewer. For example, an applicant with speech impairment may speak in a manner different from what the screener is familiar with. A person with visual or mobility impairment may not constantly keep eye contact.

2. It is neither appropriate nor acceptable to discuss what accommodations the individual might need to participate in the program until he or she has been accepted. Before an offer is made, do not ask a candidate questions regarding:

- The existence of a disability
- The nature of a disability
- The severity of a disability
- The condition causing the disability
- Any prognosis or expectation regarding the status or disability
- Whether the individual will need special leave because of the disability.

3. However, you should ask applicants if they need any "adjustments" or "access requirements", for any part of the recruitment process. Exchange organizations should take care not to confuse this as being the same as asking a candidate whether they have a disability (addressed in no. 2 above).

4. Applicants with disabilities whose competencies do not shine through during the screening process may nevertheless have the potential to be successful in an exchange program.

4.4 Interviewing applicants with disabilities

In the context of international youth exchange, the selection interview plays a critical role to explore about participants' underlying motivation and find a good fit between the candidate and an assignment. Addressing disability etiquette training and misconceptions about disability with your team will help ensure you are not missing an opportunity to hire the best person for the job.

The following table gives practical advice for the interview situation depending on the type of disability concerned.

Table 1: Support Measures in Interviews for Different Types of Disabilities

Type Of Disability	Checklist for Possible Support Measures
Mobility Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable people who use crutches, canes, or wheelchairs/scooters to keep them within reach. Be aware that some wheelchair users may choose to transfer themselves out of their wheelchair and into an office chair for the interview.• Extend a handshake or physical contact to an individual with short or weak arms or a prosthesis. A left-hand shake is acceptable.
Visual Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain eye contact with an individual who has a visual impairment or who uses an interpreter, even when the interpreter is speaking. Give the applicant your undivided attention, even when he or she cannot see you.• When greeting a person who is blind, identify yourself and introduce anyone else who is present.• When offering a seat, place the applicant's hand on the back or arm of the chair and provide a verbal cue.• Face the applicant so that while they may not be able to see you (this depends on the type of visual impairment), they may be perceptive to the direction of the sound.

Type Of Disability	Checklist for Possible Support Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate to the applicant if you pause to take some notes: they may not always hear you writing. • Indicate in advance when you will be moving from one place to another, and let the applicant know when the conversation is coming to an end. • Upon request, allow a person with a visual impairment to take your arm (in general, just above the elbow). This will enable you to guide rather than propel or lead the person. • Use specifics such as “left a hundred feet” or “right two yards” when directing a person with a visual impairment. • If you are providing written materials, find out before the interview if an accommodation will be required. Accommodations will vary according to the candidate’s degree of visual impairment, from providing information in large print to giving a reader. • Explain the ‘concept’ as opposed to the ‘representation’ if there are diagrams that need to be discussed. For example, at an interview, you may like to discuss an organizational hierarchy by talking about the people that they will be working to in a hierarchy, and how they relate to each other, rather than trying to describe the boxes on the paper chart.
Speech Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow time for the person to speak and resist the temptation to speak for the person or complete his/her sentences. • Speak as you usually would. Avoid speaking slowly or too simply unless you know that their vocabulary is limited. • Ask short questions that require quick answers or a nod of the head. • Listen attentively and keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting. • If you cannot understand what the candidate is trying to say, ask him/her to repeat it or, if appropriate, write the information and allow the applicant to respond in writing.

Type Of Disability	Checklist for Possible Support Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an applicant's speech is difficult to understand, let the applicant know that you didn't understand them. If you still cannot understand, ask them to repeat or rephrase what they are saying.
Hearing Impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan well in advance, beginning when the candidate's interview visit is confirmed, for an interpreter or real-time capturer. • If the person lip-reads, maintain eye contact. Speak clearly, and at a reasonable pace. Do not shout, unless otherwise requested. • To get the attention of a person with a hearing impairment, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. • If the candidate is lip reading, keep your mouth clear of obstructions and place yourself where there is ample lighting. Keep in mind that an accomplished lip reader will be able to clearly understand 30 to 35 percent of what you are saying. • Keep in mind that a candidate may also rely somewhat on facial expressions or other body language to help in understanding. • If you do not understand what the candidate is telling you, do not pretend you do. Ask the candidate to repeat the sentence(s). • Consider using written notes if you are having difficulty communicating • If a Sign Language Interpreter is present: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The interpreter should be seated beside the person conducting the interview, and across from the person being interviewed. b) Speak to the candidate, not to the interpreter, and always maintain eye contact with the interviewed candidate, not the interpreter. Remember an interpreter's job is to translate, not to get involved in the interview in any other way. Therefore, always speak directly to the candidate. c) The interpreter will be a few words behind the speaker, so allow for the extra time it will take for the candidate to respond.

Type Of Disability	Checklist for Possible Support Measures
Intellectual and Mental Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the applicant’s right to have a support person present at the meeting but talk directly with the applicant and not to the person accompanying them. • Putting questions in writing and allowing the person to answer in writing. • Providing them with the questions shortly before the interview to allow the person extra time to prepare. • Providing written material in Easy-Read, a larger font or double space. • Putting written questions orally. • Provide scratch paper to allow taking of notes and ideas. • Always endeavor to use plain English in speaking and writing. Avoid jargon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain the use of commonly used acronyms or abbreviations. b) Use examples to explain complex ideas. • Extending the time of the interview to allow the interviewee to collect their thoughts. • Ask questions which require simple answers. • Speak the applicant’s language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Try to develop an understanding of their level of communication and work hard to communicate at that level. b) Check that the applicant has understood what you are saying. c) Be prepared to rephrase what you are saying. d) Be patient and wait for the person to finish what they are saying. • Be prepared to discuss other things like sport, weather, or business as you might with any other applicant. • Some selection procedures, such as aptitude testing, can disadvantage people with an intellectual disability. Therefore, it is crucial to be sure that any testing is consistent with the inherent requirements of a position.

Type Of Disability	Checklist for Possible Support Measures
	<p>As far as possible, it may be advisable to assess the applicant by observing demonstrated competencies rather than through written or oral assessments.</p>
<p>Psychosocial Disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate a relaxed manner and setting. • If using formal assessments, set a time suitable for the candidate: some people with psychosocial disabilities perform better in the morning or at times related to their taking of medication. Let the candidate know in advance that 'time out' is available or that, if necessary, the assessment can be suspended until another time. • Provide ongoing feedback to minimize stress during the assessment. • Ask if there is anything you can do to settle nerves or assist them to feel calm. • Provide prompts if the applicant seems unable to answer the question

4.5 Needs assessment for selected candidates

People with disabilities must plan with the host organisation for any number of obstacles and contingencies, especially when going to another country.

Checklist for needs assessment of selected candidates

- What is the nature of their disability or condition, to include: impact on volunteering, severity, and hospital admissions?
- What services, strategies or equipment do they currently use in daily life,?
- Are they on any treatment (are they taking any medication, outpatients' appointments, or physiotherapy)?
- What previous support have they had (what arrangements, if any)? What options do they have when equipment breaks?
 - What are their current difficulties? Do they have an interest to learn a foreign vocabulary that can help them describe their situation and needs?
- What difficulties does the applicant anticipate they may have with their placement?
- Which equipment will be portable overseas? Do they have access to equipment and IT facilities?
- Has the participant (whether he or she has disclosed a disability) completed an accommodation request form (sample template provided here: <https://askjan.org/Forms/upload/Reed-Group-accommodation-request-June-2014.pdf>)?

Inclusion Spotlight

- Before accommodation needs can be addressed, organizations must ensure that their programs are welcoming to potential participants with disabilities.
- During the application process, applicants must be considered solely based on their qualifications, regardless of disability, provided the advertising is disability-inclusive and accessible. Once an applicant has been shortlisted, the process of facilitating appropriate support measures can begin.
- Repairs for power wheelchairs are more expensive than manual wheelchairs, and their parts may be challenging to acquire in rural areas or developing countries, so participants should be advised to plan to bring spare parts. Identify the nearest wheelchair or a bicycle repair shop in case of a flat tire or bent frame. Provide for the provision of recharging power wheelchairs every one or two days, or even more frequently, depending on use, and to have back-up battery available.
- Having a backup plan, including for their accommodations, so that, for example, in case their reserved accessible room isn't available, they could bring along items such as a foldable, portable ramp, a shower chair and a reacher to grab things that may be beyond arm's length.
- Looking for disability organizations or resources in the host country that can provide the exchange participant and the host organization with area-specific information as well as local contacts.
- Arrange for an orientation to the area for the participant on where they will be living and working and discuss any accommodations that may need to be made.
- Exchange organizations' staff should enter into these conversations with the curiosity of how this could work, believing that it is possible. After all, people with disabilities live in every community and country worldwide.

4.6. Onboarding

Providing a comfortable and supportive introduction is key to ensuring successful onboarding for all exchange participants, including those with disabilities. Once this is in place, program staff can take some general steps to welcome exchange participants with disabilities.

Checklist for successful onboarding:

- Have you provided on-program disability-related resources to all newly admitted participants shortly after they have been accepted into the program?
- Have you shared with them your desire to facilitate a smooth transition and explain that you can implement adequate accommodations if necessary?
- Have you made it known to them that they can and should ask for any accommodations if they know or think they may need one?
- Are you prepared to describe the office location and the type of equipment that will be provided?
- Have you shared information on available public facilities, e.g. hospital/clinic, pharmacy, shopping center/market, police station, hotels/restaurants and recreational facilities etc., and indicated if they are accessible for all categories of disability or not?
- Have you included information on accessibility, including accessible housing and transportation?
- Have you trained peer mentors about disability awareness, disability etiquette and communication?

4.6.1 Cultural sensitivity

When recruiting people with disabilities in exchange programs, international organizations may encounter culturally based attitudes and negative stereotypes which may be deeply entrenched and internalized by people with disabilities themselves as well as society as a whole.

Checklist for exchange program administrators to help participants with disabilities plan for and adjust to the differences:

- Have you familiarized yourself with the conditions participants with disabilities will face in the host country so you can offer accurate service and support?
- Have you helped participants with disabilities prepare for the attitudes and experiences they may encounter elsewhere, as part of pre-trip preparations?
- Have you made participants aware of the services and assistance available in the countries they will be going to and informed them of the process to access these services?
- Have you engaged participants in discussions that remind them that not all disability-related cultural experiences are harmful and that the point of engaging in an international program is to delve into and experience another culture – to value its strengths, delight in its uniqueness and respect its complexity?
- Have you sensitized participants on how to adapt personal choices and behavior to be respectful of the host country culture and ensured them of your availability for ongoing support?
- Have you provided participants with locally informed perspectives on gender roles, sexual orientation and volunteers of color, volunteer couples, and other topics that may be of relevance?

Inclusion Checklist

- Perceptions about people with disabilities vary widely from country to country. Even within each country, vast differences of opinion exist based on such factors as socio-economic level, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, race and type of disability.
- Each culture brings different roles and expectations for people with disabilities. Whereas in some countries, people with disabilities are accustomed to being active in their communities, in many places, however, people with disabilities may not be seen as full members of society. They may be protected from the outside world by their families, segregated in institutions or restricted from participation in society by lack of resources, including assistive technologies and devices, accessible transportation and others.

4.6.2 Personal preparation

It is expected that disability accommodations will be arranged on an individualized basis because each person's needs are unique, and there's no one size fits all.

Checklist best practices for assuring a successful exchange experience:

- Know the individual's unique goals, choices, will and preferences. Many people with disabilities require no accommodations at all. This should happen at an earlier stage, during screening.
- It is ineffective and unlawful, to make decisions or draw conclusions about what accommodations a particular participant will need based on your (or others) assumptions about an individual's disability.
- Plan in advance as some types of accommodations might take months to arrange.
- Allow shorter lengths of assignments if needed. Depending on the type of disability, assignment for 12 months can sometimes be too long.
- Work closely with the sending organization to establish what accommodations the participant is receiving in the sending country to determine what similar or alternative accommodations would be necessary for the host country.

- Encourage the participant to make a detailed list of daily activities and note how many tasks that are affected by their disability are accomplished. For example, if the participants employ a personal assistant at home, what duties does the person perform, and how will those tasks transfer to a new, unfamiliar assistant during the exchange program.
- Access in an African country will not be the same as in Europe for example, but with planning, programs can meet participant needs overseas.

Inclusion Spotlight

1. Learning about a particular type of disability does not replace learning about the individual with a disability.
2. A program cannot create requirements that by nature exclude applications based on disability.
3. Questions about whether and what type of disability an individual experience are legal and appropriate only after, not before, an individual has been accepted in the program, not during the application process.
4. Schedule any necessary medical examinations for applicants with disabilities only if these examinations are required for all potential recruits.
5. Organizations need to give careful consideration to the requirements (wants versus needs) of their programs. A participant can ask that conditions or policies be modified to accommodate a disability.

4.7 Organizational preparations

4.7.1 Financial framework

One of the most common questions, exchange organizations might ask is “What do I legally need to do to achieve disability inclusion in our programs?” Usually, costs are the underlying anxiety.

Many exchange advisors worry that accommodating people with disabilities in their programs might be prohibitively expensive. Many accommodations are cost-free or quite inexpensive. Most cost little to nothing, and some more costly accommodations, such as wheelchair ramps, may only need to be done once or can be portable if needed in more than one location.

Inclusion Spotlight

- Many global exchange providers still go beyond regulation to ensure that a participant has appropriate services in place, recognizing that the participant with a disability may encounter environmental barriers or other obstacles on the program that he or she would not meet at home. However, funding support measures for international exchange participants is not required (or only limited to program activities) by some national disability-specific legislation. Also sending/hosting organizations are not the only ones to raise the money for reasonable accommodation unless where volunteer services are regulated, such as in the weltwärts program.
- While most people who use personal assistants have access to funding for these services at home, they rarely carry over when traveling internationally.

4.7.1.1 Creative budgeting strategies

Most disability accommodations can be made quickly and inexpensively. Incorporating a 'disability accommodation' line item into every program and administrative budget is the most reliable way to ensure that funds are available to include participants with disabilities. Specific arrangements will vary depending on the number of people with disabilities and types of disability.

Tips for creative budgeting:

- Budget for the cost of disability-related accommodations in all funding requests and organizational budgets.
- Use a percentage formula to predict disability accommodation expenses in budget requests. Allocate 5-10% of the program budget to disability accommodation for most disability-related accommodation needs.
- Incorporate a "Disability-Related Accommodations" line item of 1-5% of overall administrative costs in the organization's administrative departmental budget to provide accommodations to staff and interns with disabilities when hired and incorporate expenses into the total request.
- Estimate 3-5% of the total program costs for mainstreaming programs i.e. a program that is geared to the general population, which includes persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities.

4.7.1.2 Creative financing strategies

Financing for the inclusion of participants with disabilities should be an integral part of all expenditures.

Costs associated with making programs accessible for participants with disabilities need to be as just as proactively incorporated into budgets, ensuring that participants with disabilities will be able to contribute to the goals of the program entirely.

4.7.1.3 Remuneration and benefits for PAs

For exchange participants with disabilities who will require the services of a PA during their international exchange experience, the idea of doubling or even tripling these expenses can make it seem like international travel is out of reach.

Checklist for creative financing to close funding gaps for adaptations and accommodations:

- Could you waive the costs of housing, food, transportation and admission fees for the personal assistants or offer to cover their airfare costs?
- Could you offer no or low-cost loans for the participant to cover payment gaps or work with financial aid offices, wherever these exist, to increase approved funding levels for participants with disabilities?
- Could you locate a volunteer through work-study, internship or scholarship options to assist with program access due to physical barriers or other obstacles that participants with disabilities would not encounter at home?
- Have you created a supplemental fund, dedicated to specific expenses such as personal assistants or for general costs related to disability accommodations?
- Are you sharing costs of disability accommodations among offices, organizations and institutions (this may involve accessing services and equipment already pooled at overseas institutions or community organizations)?
- Have you allocated at least one award specifically for participants with disabilities, when procuring funds for scholarships? A targeted scholarship allows potential participants with disabilities to see that education programs abroad welcome them and that it is not just for their peers without disabilities.
- Have you applied for government schemes, where these are available, such as Access to Work in the UK, to help with inclusion costs and also include specific budget lines in departmental budgets for this?

4.7.2 Travel and health insurance

It's important to check on travel and insurance requirements for applicants. Is there a need to provide medical cover and insurance for them?

Checklist for items to consider regarding travel and health insurance of participants with disabilities:

- Do you have in-country peer support network?
- Do you have a security training officer in the country of assignment?
- Verify that all participants have adequate cover while abroad.
- As pre-existing condition exclusion clause is an essential consideration in insurance coverage for people with (and without) disabilities, have you ensured that travel health insurance covers treatment for unexpected changes in a condition?
- Are you able to have access to an individual's medical record (with appropriate permission and confidentiality assurances) and a personal physician in an emergency as this may be crucial for participants with health-related concerns such as psychosocial disability?
- Have you advised participants that it's best practice to disclose their disability to their insurer because, as rule of thumb, if one needs medical coverage for an unforeseen accident or illness on their exchange (that could be loosely related to their disability)?
- Have you negotiated with travel and health insurance policies to have the option to:
 - a) Remove exclusions for pre-existing conditions?
 - b) Reduce the time period defining pre-existing conditions?
 - c) Offer limited coverage for a certain maximum fee for pre-existing conditions or medications?
 - d) Specify coverage in the case of an emergency to stabilize a pre-existing condition?
 - e) Exclude from the definition of a pre-existing condition, any condition, in which one takes a prescribed drug or medicine that remains controlled without any change prior to effective coverage?

4.7.3 Travel arrangements

Checklist for sending organizations to ease air travel for participants with a disability in preparation of flights:

- Have you provided and ensured travelers carry written copies of the specific airline policy to support their requests in their interactions with the airline? These could be obtained from the Customer Service or “Special Services” departments of each airline.
- Have you checked if there is a medical certificate needed for the airlines as some require such for all independent air travel by people with disabilities? Other airlines require that a person with a disability travel with a personal assistant.
- Have you informed the travel agent and airline representatives of the following:
 - a) Type of disability and equipment aids such as canes, crutches, manual wheelchair or power wheelchair, wheelchair cushions, hearing aid equipment;
 - b) Special dietary requirements or need for assistance at meals (airline personnel are not required to help with eating, but should assist with opening packages);
 - c) Whether another person will accompany the traveler with a disability?
- Have you confirmed that all disability-related needs will be met? Do you always ask for the name and position of each airline employee you speak with and record this information with the time, date and content of the call.
- Have you made prior arrangements with taxi companies on accessible transportation to and from airport in advance?
- Have you booked a ticket with a transit time of at least 90 minutes between connecting flights (or more if required to pass through immigration and customs during transit) to ensure that an individual has enough time to transfer between gates and to guard against delays or other problems?
- Have you considered shorter connecting flights for people who find long trips uncomfortable, especially for those who cannot use inaccessible plane toilets (especially on single aisle aircraft); otherwise, book direct flights to avoid repeated transfers?
- Have you sensitized travelers with non-apparent disabilities that they may need to be particularly assertive and articulate to get prompt, appropriate assistance from airline personnel? For example, with an impairment that limits hearing of audible airport announcements, do they know they can ask to be personally informed when their plane is boarding and any other relevant information?

- Have you ensured that passengers with disabilities are aware of:
 - a) List of airlines with relevant information, telephone numbers, etc.?
 - b) Airport Security procedures, including screening processes?
 - c) Assistance available at airports?
 - d) Airline arrangements and provisions for wheelchairs between flights and at the final destination?
 - e) The fact that single-aisle airplanes do not have accessible toilets, and limiting fluids immediately before a flight is advisable?

5. Inclusion of youth with disabilities during exchange programs

5.1 Mobility and Transport

Checklist for possible arrangements and adaptations regarding mobility and transportation:

- Have you contacted the public transportation company to find out what the transportation options are available for people with disabilities in the community?
- Have you considered that assisting someone in and out of the vehicle can become part of the program when accessible transportation is not available?
- Have you oriented participants with visual disabilities to the routes they will take?
- Are you making use of portable ramps for vans or trucks without lifts?
- Could you arrange for a volunteer with a vehicle who can help with transportation if public services are not available?
- Have you done what you can to help homestay families' network with other families to share rides and simple transportation?
- Have you checked with local transportation providers, medical equipment or independent living centers for more information?

5.2 Accessibility

Taking steps to make structures and environments more accessible is an excellent way to promote an inclusive culture within your organization overall and ensure that all participants feel welcome.

5.2.1 Evaluating accessibility

Participants with disabilities have interests as varied as their peers without disabilities. Volunteer opportunities come in many forms. Programs may involve manual, physical, social, academic or other types of contributions.

With appropriate support, people with disabilities can be included in all kinds of volunteer service programs. As with all international programs, working together to identify placements suitable for people with disabilities and find creative approaches to accommodation is key to making volunteer service possible for people with disabilities.

Checklist for assessing the program and work site for accessibility:

- **Terrain:** Is the site hilly? Is the ground firm? Can you improve short distances with rough, sandy or muddy terrain using carpet strips, wood chips or other materials? Can you eliminate, lessen or block off sharp drop-offs, roots, rocks or other obstructions in pathways as they are a challenge for people with visual impairments or poor balance? Alternatively, can you devise alternative routes?
- **Environment:** Have you provided an area to provide a break from the heat or cold for people sensitive to extreme temperature?
- **Instructions:** Will project instructions and orientation be conducted orally, or will this be provided in written form? Will you provide interpreters, assistants or materials for writing for people who are deaf or those who have difficulty processing verbal information?
- **Housing:** Is housing located at or near the project site? Can it be modified to make it accessible for people with mobility disability?
- **Sleeping arrangements:** Will you provide extra padding or an extra mattress for some people with disabilities who may need a bed high enough for them to transfer in and out of from a wheelchair? Is extra bedding available for people with a low tolerance for cold? Is a fan or other method of cooling available for people with a low tolerance for heat?
- **Bathroom facilities:** Does the site have an accessible toilet? If not, can you provide a portable toilet?
- **Electricity:** Is electricity available? If participants will be using power wheelchairs, will they be able to recharge batteries? Is refrigeration available for medications or special food a participant may require, or can you arrange alternative methods for keeping these items fresh?

5.2.2 Buildings

Buildings, be it personal homes or workplaces, should be accessible in a sense that anyone is able to use them. Giving a venue an accessibility makeover can be a big job, a small job, or somewhere in between. So it can be better to take it one small step (or ramp!) at a time or create an ongoing plan to implement changes within a specified time frame.

Checklist for ensuring accessibility to built environments:

General

- Are curb cuts, elevators and disability parking spaces accessible?
- Are there ramped entrances, elevators, adequate parking in convenient areas, level sidewalks with firm surfaces and wide aisles in stores, classrooms and other public spaces for wheelchair users?
- Are toilet facilities, drinking water, telephones, doors, tables, shelves and other considerations accessible especially for wheelchair users?
- Have you provided wheelchairs for people with ambulatory impairments who do not ordinarily use them, but who may want to try them abroad as a means of increasing their range of activities?
- Have you ensured all doors have an opening that is at least 32" wide (at the narrowest point below the opening hardware) when opened to 90 degrees? If visitors must open any door, are you sure that:
 - a) Each side of the door has provision for clearance maneuvering for wheelchairs and other mobility devices?
 - b) The space on each side of the door is clear of movable objects such as chairs, trash cans, and plants?
 - c) The door opening hardware can be operated without grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist?
 - d) The doors do not close too quickly (taking no less than five seconds for the door to close)?
 - e) The interior doors require less than 5 pounds of pressure to open?
- Are fixtures for operating doors, drinking fountains and other devices lever-style with non-slip finishes?
- Have you chosen levers, handles and other accessories that are large, simple and easy to use?
- Have you ensured you have avoided potentially dangerous features like shut-off springs or quick, self-closing devices?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you try making furniture higher for those who need the adjustment by placing blocks of wood under the legs, or cutting the legs down with a hand-saw to lower furniture? • Do you know you can substitute a futon or mattress on the floor for a regular bed if the height is more appropriate? • Have you posted Braille signs in all public spaces? • Have you secured floor mat and rug edges to the floor sturdy enough that wheelchair wheels or other mobility devices will not lift the edges? • Have you provided handrails on both sides just in case someone may be stronger on one side than the other? Even people who use wheelchairs will often use bars along ramps to navigate the incline.
Ramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ensured twelve feet of ramp for every one foot of vertical height, whether inside or outside? • Have you discussed the strength, clearance and balance issues with the users just in case you need to build a short ramp because of limited space and financial resources? • Have you provided portable ramps to get in and out of vehicles or to access buildings where no permanent ramps are installed? Do you know you can use everything from homemade wooden ramps to motorcycle ramps to more expensive ramps explicitly designed for wheelchair use? • Provide a portable commode as an accessible toilet facility as it can double as a shower chair or seat. • Remove a door to widen narrow doorways for a wheelchair user. • Place a chair or stool inside the doorway for people to transfer out of a wheelchair.
Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a shower stool or chair in the bathtub or shower and handheld shower attachments to make a shower or bath accessible for some people.

Lighting

- If the venue is large enough that it has multiple bathrooms, ensure one is labeled as accessible for people with mobility disabilities – or guarantee that your existing bathrooms cater to people with all needs.
- Include a grab bar on the back wall and the side of the stall, more space to turn, and a full door that swings out instead of in.
- Have a sink that's lower to the ground to help guests in wheelchairs in particular.
- Check to see that everything is easily reachable – are the paper towels beside the sink? Attach a red cord card to your toilet alarm cord to highlight the importance of alarm cords to people with disabilities using the facility.
- Consider marking bathrooms as gender neutral in the interest of universal accessibility.
- Consider the location and level of lighting (illumination, heavy shadows and glare) as these may affect accessibility for some visually impaired individuals.
- Point out or avoid busy patterns, uneven flooring, and low obstacles when possible.
- Aim to keep your venue as bright as possible for visually impaired participants to read information or notice prominent signage. Where light levels are essential for your environment, you can always illuminate signs.

Entrance

- Sign-in sheets must be positioned at an accessible height for persons using a wheelchair or other mobility device. If visitors sign in at a counter, then a portion of the counter surface must be at least 36" long and no higher than 36" above the floor.
- Alternatively, sign-in sheets can be placed on clipboards that wheelchair users can move and sign from their laps.

Visitor-operated controls

- Place visitor-operated controls such as hand sanitizers and water coolers no lower than 15" above the floor and no higher than 48" above the floor.

<p>Signage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a 30” wide by 48” long clear floor space in front of visitor-operated controls. • Ensure visitor-operated controls can be operated with one hand without grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist. • Try to use high contrast text and keep signs clear and free of obstruction. Be sure to inform participants when they arrive of where the toilets, ramps or lifts are located, including alternative routes. • Consider the height and location of signs as well. Wheelchair users will not be able to read signs that are positioned high up, and visually impaired people have to be able to reach tactile signs.
<p>Parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure at least one accessible parking space. • If no parking on site is available, consider noting the closest parking spaces and parking spots for people with disabilities to your venue on your website, information pack, or social media, to give participants a little bit of extra information.
<p>Furniture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to make sure that it is easy to remove chairs or other furniture if a wheelchair user requires space. • If your chairs aren’t cushioned, think about having cushions and even rugs available for those who might feel more comfortable with them. • Consider removing or re-situating a table or two to create a clear path around the room free of obstruction to ensure exchange participants with wheelchairs and walkers can access seats and have extra room to move around.
<p>Sound Levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider installing sound dampeners to better control the noise levels for people with intellectual and mental disabilities

Inclusion Spotlight

Possible adaptations for entrances and inside the house

- Usually, one or two steps can be quickly ramped. Even a more extended flight of stairs to access can be ramped temporarily or permanently.

- Consider all the entrances. Maybe a back or garage entrance is more accessible than the front.
- Sometimes installing a handrail can make the stairs more manageable.
- Sometimes doorways will be wide enough if the door is removed. A curtain can be hung for privacy if necessary.
- Carpeting and floor surfaces can be covered with plastic runners or low pile carpet strips to make an accessible path.
- For a visually impaired guest, furniture may be rearranged. A thorough orientation to the household can reduce obstacles for the participant. Note that standard ramps may not be sufficient for some types of wheelchairs or three-wheeled scooters. Some users will need ramps that are exceptionally sturdy and built of one solid piece of metal or wood

5.3 Workplace

	Checklist for ensuring workplace accessibility:
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you provided a thorough orientation and a clear job description and broken jobs down into clear steps? • Do you allow flexibility in completing tasks and communicating expectations ahead of time? If an individual is unable to perform a job in a particular way, do you allow the individual to try other methods where possible, or reorganize tasks? For instance, have you considered that written communication might be a better alternative if social interaction is challenging for an individual? • Do you provide early notification of deadlines for projects and work assignments? • Do you permit participants to take breaks when needed to manage stress, anxiety or restlessness (which may be caused by medication or other factors)? • Do you assign tasks according to ability, comfort level, and interest? • Do you give instructions both verbally and in writing?

Working space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustable height, tilt tables and place needed equipment within reach. • Are there appropriate knee and toe clearance for wheelchair users under meeting tables and desks that are designed with slide-under space for chairs?
Personal Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign note takers or record important meetings/events.
Mobility within the working space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For visually impaired persons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A sighted guide can offer descriptions of unfamiliar rooms, approximate locations of objects during tours. Use specific references such as tactile or auditory landmarks, rather than distances for giving directions in an unfamiliar area. b) Group members and facilitators can help by describing their actions during group discussions or activities demonstrations.

5.4 Living Arrangements

When volunteering or studying abroad, there are often many accommodation options, ranging from supported basic room-rental arrangements, sharing an apartment to complete host family immersion.

5.4.1 Living with a host family

The home-stay experience is a critical element in many international exchange programs. Including people with disabilities in the home-stay experience is most successful when inclusion is approached as a fundamental element of the planning process, rather than as a crisis. International advisors should work closely with their overseas partners in placing exchange participants with disabilities in home-stay families.

Checklist for inclusive homestay placements:

- Prepare homestay families in advance to be open to accepting participants with disabilities.
- Be prepared to answer questions and address doubts and concerns that may arise.
- Support host families by identifying the specific accommodations the guests will need and discuss whether and how necessary adaptations can be made.
- Prepare emergency contacts or first points of contact for volunteers.
- Encourage host families to be flexible and open to learning about the individual and his or her needs after arrival.
- Clarify any discrepancy with the information a host program receives about the participant's ability and the accommodations. There might be misunderstandings due to difficulties translating concepts such as assistance, independent living and accommodations, and cross-cultural differences in the way that people think about disability.
- Consider specifically adding families with disability-related experience to the homestay pool as this increases the overall pool of home-stay and housing options and ensures families with accessible homes or knowledge of disability-related accommodations will be available when participants with disabilities participate as well.
- When recruiting families for home stays, ask local disability organizations for referrals, even if no participants with disabilities are expected immediately.
- Prepare outbound as well as incoming participants for the possibility of being placed in a family that includes a person with a disability as part of an orientation to diversity.

Inclusion Spotlight

- Home-stay families should not be expected to provide personal care for their guest, and it is vital that both the home-stay families and the participant know that. If a participant has extensive support needs, the organization should arrange for a personal assistant to aid the participant.
- Regardless of whether participants with disabilities are involved in all programs, the inclusion of host families that include people with disabilities reflects the true diversity of the community and offers other enhancements to the exchange experience.

5.5. Personal Assistance

Inclusion Spotlight

The Role of a Personal Assistant:

- Performing daily activities such as housecleaning, cooking, laundry, and shopping, reading, or note-taking.
- Personal mobility and transportation.
- Personal care, such as transferring, skin care, positioning, bathing, range of motion exercises, dressing, grooming, and toilet assistance.
- Transportation, such as pushing a wheelchair, guiding someone, assisting with transitions and transfers.
- Access to general services, such as education, justice, and health among others.
- Communication through alternative modes, means and formats.
- Decision-making and exercising legal capacity for participants with intellectual and mental disabilities.
- Allow living independently in the community.

Checklist for successful potential PA identification and advice on and design for program access:

- Have you considered how you can create an environment that is as accessible as possible to allow a person with a disability to be more independent in navigating?
- Have you begun to plan at least several months in advance before the participant intends to go abroad?
- Can you connect the participant to independent living centers or other organizations in the host community that provide PAs or referrals?
- Have you identified the areas where the participant requires personal support and how much assistance in each of those areas he or she will need?

- Have you answered the participant's questions about the overseas experience, such as program schedule, living arrangements, and excursions planned to help the participant to make an informed decision about PAs needs?
- If the participant receives funding or benefits in his or her home country that cover personal support costs, have you researched whether those benefits will remain available to him or her when he or she travels internationally?
- Have you thought about any specialized training a personal assistant may need to learn with the participant before the program, such as dressing, bathroom assistance, transferring and medications?
- Can you offer to arrange for volunteers or additional staff to assist the participant with light domestic tasks at home or to provide support during demanding activities or trips, such as lifting or pushing a wheelchair across extreme terrain?
- Have you considered arranging for having a second PA available if the participant requires someone to be with him or her 24 hours a day to make sure the first PA has time off?
- Require that the PAs sign contracts just as any other participant.
- Have you been frequently checking in during the course of the program to assess the effectiveness of the accommodations, resolve problems and make adjustments as needed?

Inclusion Spotlight

- Program staff may find it useful to develop a system of support and accommodation abroad. To assist this, participants with psychosocial disabilities should be provided with as much information as possible about the exchange setting and available resources to enable participants to assess what assistance, if any, they will need to be successful abroad.
- Since the institutionalization of people with intellectual, mental and psychosocial disabilities is widely practiced, participants with these disabilities may have particular concerns in this area. Some participants with psychosocial disabilities may choose to prepare an advance directive to leave with a program staff or friend or family member in the event of declining health.
- An advance directive is a document which establishes who may make medical decisions for an individual in case of emergency in case or she is unable to do so. While advance directives are not always respected, they may be helpful in countries where there are few or no protections against involuntary commitment and few or no protections to assure informed consent.

- Remember that the person with a disability - not his or her PA - is in charge of and responsible for decisions and actions as to what assistance the participant needs.

5.5.1 Information / Communication

Communication with the public must be equally effective for persons with communications disabilities as it is for persons without such disabilities. Accordingly, offices must provide auxiliary aids and services to an individual with a disability when such measures are needed to ensure effective communication. The appropriate type of assistance or service will be determined on a case by case basis.

	Checklist for key information and communication aids and services:
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer questions or fill out forms on behalf of people who are visually impaired if for reasons of privacy or confidentiality they do not want a program representative or member of the group to take notes. • Provide course materials and work notes in electronic format, if required. • Replace a requirement that a participant demonstrates such as verbal fluency with a requirement where he or she can demonstrate language comprehension and written language skills as proof of language mastery.
Computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design web pages so that they are accessible to those using Braille and speech output systems. • Provide computers with optical character readers, speech output, Braille screen displays, and embossed output. • Provide electronic adaptations (Audiotaped, Brailed or electronic-formatted notes, handouts, and texts). • Ensure there are auditory emergency warning signals. • Provide word processing software that provides for electronic spelling and grammar checkers, highlighting capabilities, and word prediction. • Provide screen- and text-enlargement software. • Provide Descriptive Video Service (DVS) that incorporate a description of the action occurring in a video, along with a regular soundtrack.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide software that highlights and reads text aloud. • Provide visual warning systems for emergencies. • Change computer settings from auditory signals to flash signals. • Provide video captioning: for video programming, as well as text transcripts of audio files. This applies to files on websites, intranets and on local computers.
Print Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make large print: Most print shops can create large print materials on copy machines. Organizations can also produce their large print documents by using 18-24 point fonts. • Provide monocular and magnifiers. Some people with low vision used closed-circuit TV or CCTV, which projects an enlarged image of an item onto a television. • Provide reading services for those who prefer them to assist with tasks requiring the use of print materials.
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic elements. • Use visual aids with few words and large images and fonts. • Provide written outlines, assignments, instructions and demonstration summaries, and distribute them before the class or presentation.
Translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider sending an interpreter who uses the exchange participants' sign language along with on the program, rather than attempting to find a compatible interpreter abroad. • Interpreters should be with compatible certification and skills for orientation sessions, meetings, seminars or academic situations. For informal situations, it may be acceptable to use more informal interpreting strategies such as members of the hearing community who use sign language and students from sign language classes. • If the participant plans to use the local sign language, seek out sign language dictionaries or videos so the participant can begin to learn before going abroad. • If possible, it may be useful for the participant to travel early and attend sign language classes before starting the formal exchange program.

Spoken Interaction

- Provide opportunities for exchange participants, particularly on long-term programs who may choose to learn sign language of the host country. Exchange program staff and the Deaf participant must decide together whether interpreting provided in the host country sign language will be a sufficient accommodation
- When speaking, make sure the participant can see your face and avoid unnecessary pacing and moving.
- When speaking, avoid obscuring your lips or face with hands, books, or other materials.
- Repeat discussion questions and statements made by others.
- Write discussion questions/answers on a whiteboard or overhead projector.
- Speak clearly and at an average rate.
- If you do not understand something that a person with speech impairment has said, it is acceptable to ask the individual to repeat or rephrase what they are trying to say. Be patient and resist the tendency to speak over or for the person.
- Communicate as naturally as possible unless asked to raise your voice. Some people with speech impairments may have hearing impairments, but most do not.
- If oral communication is not adequate, try written interface instead. If a person has difficulty writing, she or he might use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, laptops, phones with text messaging service. AAC devices may also include speech amplification devices.

5.6 Leisure activities

Most people with disabilities have full social lives, filled with friends, interests and activities. Home-stay families and exchange organizations working with local resources can offer exchange participants with disabilities the same valuable leisure experience on an equal basis with others. However, there may be accessibility barriers for participants with disabilities in participating in leisure services.

Checklist for disability- inclusive leisure-based accommodations:

- **Size:** Have you increased or decreased the size of the equipment based on the participant's needs? For example, if a sports ball is too big to grasp, a smaller one can be provided.
- **Speed:** Are you adjusting the speed of activity based on the strength of the gross motor skills. For example, can you consider inflating a ball with less air so it moves more slowly?
- **Weight:** Have you adapted a piece of equipment to what weight the participant can handle? For example, can you consider a tennis ball instead of a soft ball?
- **Stabilization:** Have you anchored the equipment to ensure it will not tip over and injure the participant if balance or stability is an issue?
- **Health and Safety:** Do all adaptations adhere to the health and safety provisions of the program? For example, could you remove unnecessary furniture, or rearrange them?
- **Personal Support:** Have you considered the necessity to provide personal assistants to aid the participant, in addition to adapting activities and equipment?

6. Inclusion of youth with disabilities post-Exchange

It's important to stay in touch with participants even beyond their tenure.

Exchange organizations can help integrate participants:

- To stay connected with the Alumni Association, or start one if there is none, and work with them to address challenges.
- By getting them involved with the exchange organization, through talks, training for exchange program staff and volunteers on inclusion, fundraising, and in the preparation of new volunteers.
- To check out the OPWDs list to learn about organizations focused on advancing disability rights in their own country. These organizations may have projects that need volunteers or interns.
- To be Ambassadors of disability rights –research opportunities to share information about their experience in blogs, newspapers, and through other forums, teaching others about the global disability rights movement and the UNCRPD.
- To meet other returned volunteers and share experiences.
- By offering a disability resettlement allowance to cover the costs of accommodation and other provisions that may have deteriorated while the volunteer was away.

6.1 Monitoring and quality assurance

Monitoring the effectiveness of your disability inclusion strategy is crucial in order to ensure it is put into practice. This can be achieved through designing and implementing data collection and continuous improvement strategies including a complaint monitoring and feedback tracking system to identify areas needing systemic changes.

Checklist for exchange organizations self-assess performance and holding senior leaders responsible for progress:

- **Commitment** – Are you demonstrating your commitment to best practice on disability inclusion internally and externally?
- **Know-how** – Have you equipped your staff so that they are confident interacting with exchange participants with disabilities, knowing what to do and how to do it?
- **Adjustments**–Do you anticipate the needs of exchange participants with disabilities and have a robust process in place for making any adjustments that might be needed by individuals?
- **Recruitment**–Do you attract and recruit exchange participants with disabilities, which gives you access to the broadest volunteer talent pool?
- **Retention** –Do you value all your staff and exchange participants, including those who have different types of disabilities or who acquire a disability, and are committed to their retention and development?
- **Products and services**–Do you value your clients with disabilities and address their needs when developing and delivering your products and services?
- **Suppliers and Partners**–Do you expect your suppliers and corporate partners to reflect and enable you to meet your commitment to disability inclusion?
- **Communication** – Are you as inclusive as possible in your discussion with exchange participants with disabilities, and do you make adjustments for individuals whenever necessary?
- **Premises** –Are your premises accessible to exchange participants with disabilities, and whenever necessary, do you make adjustments for individuals?
- **Information and communication technology (ICT)**–Is your ICT disability-inclusive and usable by exchange participants with disabilities, and do you also make adjustments for individuals?

The elements above should be monitored and frequently communicated by a dedicated project manager or representative of the Disability Inclusion Resource Group.

Inclusion Spotlight

- The main outcome of disability-inclusive programming lies in leaving no one behind, and in ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to realize their rights, achieve their potential and live in dignity, free from exclusion, stigma, and discrimination.
- The ideal way to be accessible is to have an expectation of accessibility and inclusion in everything your organization does.

6.2 Evaluating success

An evaluation provides the basis for improvement of inclusion practice. The assessment should also provide an answer to the question to which degree was the entire process inclusive of people with disabilities.

Checklist for evaluating effectiveness:

- Are you assessing the effectiveness of your program strategy on the management of disability at regular intervals and making improvements where needed?
- Do you include the Disability Inclusion Resource Group representatives at the organization in the evaluation?
- Have you invited competent authorities, such as disability inclusion specialists to assess the effectiveness of their support, if any, to these programs?
- Have you ensured anonymity and confidentiality of the information regarding the disability inclusion and management program before distribution?
- Have you rolled out lessons learned into plans for improvement, expansion and replication?

6.3 Sharing best practices

The best way to show that inclusive exchange is a real possibility and that inclusion works is by using different pictures and testimonies of exchange participants with disabilities in all your organization's materials.

The best testimony for disability inclusion in exchange program comes from volunteers with disabilities and other disability-inclusive exchange programs in the international exchange world. These stories when collected by the Disability Inclusion Resource Groups, display the power and benefits of disability inclusion in exchange programs.

Personal stories of exchange participants with disabilities help to create a shared understanding of who disability-inclusive exchange organizations are and how they run their inclusive programs. They help organizations to celebrate the successes of participants with disabilities and the organizations that engage them and document their challenges.

Checklist for creating a success story in an exchange program

- Apply a yes-we-can-do-attitude. Say yes first to inclusive international mobility requests and think how this can be realized afterward.
- Increase your knowledge about disability-inclusive development. Participate in awareness training, read articles and books to get to know more about disability inclusion, and the difficulties international exchange participants with disabilities might experience.
- Advocate for people with disabilities – offer support, participate in Employee Disability Inclusion Resource Groups (or form one at the workplace).
- Check your unconscious bias – Be aware of labels, assumptions and pre-conceived notions based on myths, experience or what you think you know about disability.
- Pause and make time to listen to the expert, the individual exchange participants with disabilities. What are their strengths and needs? What helped them in the past that can support them again to volunteer abroad?
- Hear about the stories of other disability-inclusive exchange organizations. This will motivate you.
- Beware the power of language in influencing attitudes. Use disability-sensitive language, such as “a person with a disability” versus “a handicapped person.”
- Make sure everyone knows about your inclusion initiatives. Use your website, newsletters and other channels to shout about your achievements, including your corporate sustainability report if you publish one. Show that international mobility is a real possibility using different pictures and testimonies of exchange participants with disabilities in all your communication (website, brochures, and talks).
- Stay in touch with alumni with disabilities. They are your best advocates. They can guide you on your inclusion efforts, provide unique insights about the host country that staff might not know about and of course provide inclusion success stories to report in your program materials.

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