Global Disability Fund

Global Situational Analyses: Synthesis Brief and Strategic Implications

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1. PURPOSE: SYNTHESIS BRIEFING ON LESSONS FROM 51 COUNTRIES

This briefing synthesizes findings from the UN Global Disability Fund's (UN GDF) meta-analysis of 51 national situational analyses on disability rights implementation. It presents key patterns, priority gaps, and strategic recommendations for stakeholders working to accelerate implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) before the convention's 20th anniversary in 2026.

UN GDF prioritizes evidence-based programming by supporting national situational analyses conducted jointly with governments, UN entities, and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). These analyses assess CRPD implementation and identify priority areas for action. The resulting reports form the core evidence base for designing disability-inclusive programmes.

To strengthen this evidence base, UN GDF conducted a meta-analysis of 51 situational analyses: the largest known cross-country review of disability rights implementation to date. The full report, “Unrealized Rights: Situational Analyses and Lessons from 51 Countries on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, identifies systemic gaps in CRPD implementation, persistent barriers, and emerging opportunities. It outlines priority actions for governments, UN Country Teams (UNCTs), OPDs, and development partners.

This briefing highlights the key findings and strategic implications. The complete report, including detailed methodology, country-specific findings, and comprehensive references, is available at: https://globaldisabilityfund.org/global-situational-analyses-lessons-countries-rights-persons-disabilities.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

UN GDF’s approach to disability-inclusive development, climate and humanitarian action is grounded in evidence-based, results-oriented programme design. Situational analyses are central to this approach. They provide a structured, collaborative mechanism for analyzing national contexts, identifying barriers to CRPD implementation, and defining priority areas for action.

Each situational analysis is developed through a multi-stakeholder process, drawing on expertise from UN agencies, relevant ministries, OPDs, national statistical offices, civil society actors and other relevant national partners. This process ensures that the findings reflect the lived experiences of persons with disabilities and the realities faced by governments and service providers. The resulting analyses form a shared diagnosis of the

factors affecting the rights of persons with disabilities, and what needs to be done to ensure they are realized.

UN GDF uses situational analyses to shape catalytic joint programmes that:

- address structural bottlenecks
- strengthen national systems
- promote the meaningful participation of OPDs
- ensure alignment with CRPD principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The global meta-analysis therefore provides a unique, aggregated picture of disability inclusion across regions and helps generate insights that can inform global advocacy, donor coordination, and strategic investment to ensure the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities around the world.

3. KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The meta-analysis[1] highlights that, despite increased global awareness of disability rights, implementation of the CRPD remains uneven and significantly behind in several foundational components of an inclusive system including: the institutional and policy framework, coordination and accountability mechanisms, cultural and social norms, services and assessment systems and data.

Across 51 country situational analyses, persistent systemic barriers continue to limit the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, including weak coordination and accountability mechanisms, widespread stigma and discrimination, inaccessible services, medical-model assessment systems, and significant data gaps. At the same time, promising practices are emerging: governments are beginning to reform legal and policy frameworks, strengthen OPD participation, pilot community-based services, improve accessibility standards, and adopt more inclusive data systems and budgeting approaches. Together, these findings highlight both the scale of remaining challenges and the momentum for CRPD-aligned reforms that can accelerate disability inclusion across sectors.

3.1. Widespread Structural Gaps in Policies and Laws

Many countries continue to operate under outdated or partially aligned disability laws that fall short of CRPD standards. Legal frameworks often retain medical-model language, do not

[1] For complete methodology, country-specific findings, and full references, see the full report Unrealized Rights: https://globaldisabilityfund.org/global-situational-analyses-lessons-countries-rights-persons-disabilities/

recognize full legal capacity, or fail to establish enforceable accessibility requirements. As a result, persons with disabilities consistently encounter discriminatory barriers that remain embedded in laws, policies, and administrative systems.

How UN GDF supports change: Legislative reform to implement the CRPD in Mozambique

UN GDF's programme in **Mozambique** supported the government and parliament to pass the Law on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Law 10/2024), marking a major step toward advancing equality and non-discrimination. This important milestone was achieved through sustained advocacy and technical input from the Forum of Mozambican Associations of Persons with Disabilities (FAMOD). Programme partners worked closely with FAMOD and the National Human Rights Committee to align the draft law with the CRPD before its submission for Presidential approval.

3.1.1. Evidence of Emerging Progress to Address Structural Gaps

The global situational analysis shows evidence of countries making progress in adopting new policies aligned with the CRPD. For example, Ukraine adopted the Barrier-Free Strategy 2030, a whole-of-government framework covering physical, digital, transport, and communication accessibility.

3.1.2. UN GDF's Approach Moving Forward to Address Structural Gaps in Laws and Policies

UN GDF's 2025–2030 pathways of change strengthen policy and legal reform by aligning practice, partnerships, financing, and evidence through the Inclusion Catalyst Hub. UN GDF is committed to embedding inclusion into policies and budgets, turning political commitments into enforceable laws and sustained financing.

3.2. Weak Institutions and Fragmented Governance

Across most contexts, disability governance structures lack clear mandates, adequate resources, or effective cross-ministerial coordination. OPD participation in decision-making is growing, but it remains largely limited to initial consultations rather than sustained engagement.

3.2.1. Evidence of Emerging Progress to Strengthen Governance and Accountability

Despite these challenges, UN GDF situational analyses reveal promising reforms and innovations. Progress is most evident in countries that have established effective national

coordination bodies that go beyond advisory roles and link disability inclusion to national planning and SDG monitoring.

How UN GDF supports change: The Gambia implements CRPD Article 33 in practice

In **The Gambia** UN GDF helped establish and operationalize The Gambia's National Advisory Council as the CRPD Article 33 monitoring mechanism, securing a dedicated Secretariat, national budget, and stronger coordination for disability rights implementation. The programme also reinforced parliamentary oversight and cross-government collaboration while expanding meaningful OPD participation, building a stronger national system for monitoring and accountability.

3.2.2. UN GDF's Approach Moving forward 2025-2030 for Stronger Coordination and Accountability

To address this global structural gap, UN GDF's 2025–2030 strategy includes a dedicated pathway focused on strengthening multi-stakeholder, cross-sector collaboration to embed disability-inclusive coordination at national and local levels.

3.3. Service Delivery Gaps Across Sectors

The analysis shows persistent gaps in access to essential services. Health systems are widely inaccessible, unprepared to deliver disability-inclusive care, and severely under-resourced in areas such as assistive technology, rehabilitation, and sexual and reproductive health services. Education systems struggle with entrenched segregation, inaccessible infrastructure, and limited teacher capacity to support inclusive approaches. Social protection systems, in many countries, rely on medical eligibility assessments that contradict CRPD principles and routinely exclude persons with disabilities.

3.3.1. Evidence of Emerging Progress to Address Gaps in Services

Promising practices to address these gaps are taking place as evidenced in UN GDF's global situational analysis. Countries making progress are shifting from purely medical certification models toward functional and rights-based approaches, improving access to social protection, education support and health services. They are consulting with OPDs on service reforms in the design, monitoring and evaluation of services as well as policy drafting.

How UN GDF supports change: expanding service delivery in Uzbekistan

With UN GDF support, **Uzbekistan** has expanded inclusive, community-based social services by strengthening national capacity, improving service coordination, and introducing monthly cash transfers for caregivers of children with disabilities. These benefits now reach about 56,000 families, represent a US$16 million annual investment, and were increased again in 2024 to further strengthen support.

3.3.2. UN GDF's Approach Moving Forward to Support Equal Access to Services

UN GDF's 2025-2030 strategy places an emphasis on access to essential services as one of four thematic priorities with a target of ensuring 300 million persons with disabilities have access to essential services.

3.4. Disability Data and Monitoring Limitations

Most national statistical systems still lack reliable, disaggregated disability data, limiting effective planning, budgeting, and monitoring. Disability-disaggregated indicators are largely absent from government and development programmes, SDG reporting remains scarce, and data gaps are even more severe in conflict and humanitarian settings.

3.4.1. Evidence of Emerging Progress on Disability Data

Based on UN GDF's global situational analysis, several countries have begun integrating the Washington Group Short Set of Questions into national censuses and household surveys.

How UN GDF supports change: Adopting Washington Group Questions in National Statistics Tools in Bangladesh

With support from UN GDF the National Statistics Bureau in **Bangladesh** (BBS) integrated the Washington Group Short Set of questions into the 2022-2023 Labour Force Survey, marking the first time the country measured the labour force participation of persons with disabilities. Through the UN GDF programme, the ILO provided technical and financial support to the BBS to build their capacity collect and analyse data disaggregated by disability and sex. In addition, OPDs including women-led OPDs, worked collaboratively with the BBS as part of the Working Committee of the to support the analysis of data and to input on a national report on disability data in the labour force.

3.4.2. UN GDF's Approach Moving forward to Stronger Data and Monitoring Systems

UN GDF strengthens data on persons with disabilities by enabling UNCTs and national stakeholders to conduct situational analyses and build a stronger evidence-base on disability.

3.5. Persistent Cross-cutting Inequalities

Women and girls with disabilities face heightened discrimination and limited access to services, particularly in health, education, employment, and protection from gender-based violence. Other marginalized groups of persons with disabilities such as persons with psychosocial disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, Deafblind persons and persons with multiple disabilities are disproportionately exposed to rights violations and are often excluded from public services, decision-making processes, and legal protections. Humanitarian and climate-related emergencies further exacerbate these disparities.

3.5.1. Evidence of Emerging Progress to Address Cross-cutting Inequalities

Despite these challenges, several countries are piloting inclusive sexual and reproductive health rights and gender-based violence services, recognizing the need for disability- and gender-responsive services. Several countries are also calling for greater leadership and representation of women with disabilities within the disability movement.

How UN GDF supports change: Advancing gender-equality in policy making by and for women and girls with disabilities in Tanzania

In **Tanzania**, the UN GDF programme supported women with disabilities, through their representative organizations, to engage in the review of the National Plan of Action to end Violence Against Women and Children in Tanzania and Zanzibar. The UN GDF programme brought together 374 OPD representatives (172 women and 202 men) from 12 OPDs to provide inputs on the draft Act so that it better aligns with the CRPD and promotes disability and gender equality. The voices and inputs of women with disabilities played a vital role in informing and shaping the vision and legislative processes.

3.5.2. UN GDF's Approach Moving forward toward Equality for All

UN GDF will expand access to inclusive services, particularly sexual and reproductive health, maternal health, and GBV prevention, while embedding gender-transformative approaches across all programmes. It will also invest in women- and youth-led OPDs to strengthen advocacy and ensure their leadership shapes policy and reform.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS: KEY ACTIONS FOR ACCELERATING CRPD IMPLEMENTATION

Governments should prioritize aligning national legal frameworks with CRPD standards, institutionalizing OPD participation in decision-making, enforcing accessibility requirements, and transitioning toward rights-based disability assessment systems. Expanded investments in inclusive health, education, and social protection services as well as assistive technology and rehabilitation are essential.

Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) should be supported to lead community-level monitoring, co-produce accessible information, and participate in governance, policy design, and programme oversight. Strengthening OPD capacity is essential to ensuring that reforms reflect the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.

UN Country Teams play a critical role in strengthening national systems by integrating disability inclusion into UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, supporting evidence-based reforms, reinforcing national monitoring mechanisms, and improving cross-sector coordination. UNCTs can also help facilitate disability inclusion across agencies and support more meaningful OPD engagement.

Donors and development partners should invest in catalytic programming that addresses structural barriers, supports OPD leadership, and advances disability-inclusive health, education, social protection, and climate and disaster risk reduction policies. Flexible funding models should be prioritized to support responsive and adaptive programming.

5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The meta-analysis makes clear that, twenty years after the adoption of the CRPD, significant progress has been made in raising awareness, building coalitions, and initiating reforms but the full realization of disability rights remains far from achieved.

The areas requiring the most urgent attention include health, education, social protection, and legal capacity – they are also the most critical to enabling persons with disabilities to exercise their rights, participate fully in society, and live independently. Addressing these gaps will require sustained political commitment, multi-sectoral coordination, and increased investment from national governments and development partners.

At the same time, encouraging examples have emerged that demonstrate how systemic transformation is possible. Countries that invest in modernizing disability assessments, strengthening OPD participation, improving data systems, and embedding disability

inclusion into national planning are delivering measurable progress. These examples offer a clear pathway forward for accelerating CRPD implementation over the next decade.

The upcoming twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides a pivotal moment to renew global commitments, realize disability rights within national and international agendas, and catalyze the next generation of inclusive development efforts. Strengthening investments and partnerships, scaling effective models, and addressing systemic bottlenecks will be essential to ensuring that no one is left behind.

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