



New Term, New Opportunities

Strengthening Inclusion in EU International Cooperation

A Toolkit for MEPs

Welcome to the **International Disability & Development Consortium (IDDC)** Toolkit. This resource kit is addressed to Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and EP staff. It will help you to make your work more inclusive of persons with disabilities.

This kit will provide you with more information on our organisation, on the upcoming Post-2015 Development Framework, and on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)'s Articles 11 and 32. It also includes a more detailed description of what actions you can take to support disability-inclusive development cooperation.

This toolkit is also supported by the European Disability Forum (EDF).

Why the EP?

As representatives directly elected by the European people, you have a mandate that allows you to weigh in on all important decisions made by the EU that will have consequences not only at European level, but also globally. Some Committees, of course, will have more influence, but support of MEPs in all domains is important for the rights of persons with disabilities, within Europe and beyond.

With the recent elections and the beginning of a brand new term, there are now opportunities to set the agenda for the coming years, and to work towards a European development aid policy that is more accessible, more inclusive, and ultimately more in line with the EU's founding values.

Why now?

This is a pivotal time for the rights of persons with disabilities in the developing world, and for the European Union as one of the leading drivers of human rights in the world. In the coming months, the Post-2015 Development Framework will be finalized by the United Nations and the EU needs to be a leader in this process in order to make sure that the rights of persons with disabilities are adequately represented in the new Development Framework.

The International Disability and Development Consortium

The [International Disability and Development Consortium \(IDDC\)](#), was established in Oslo in 1994 —at the time as the International Disability Consortium — by 10 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with the aim of sharing expertise and of working together for more effectiveness and efficiency.

Today, IDDC has grown to be a global consortium of 25 disability NGOs, mainstream development NGOs and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) supporting disability and development work in more than 100 countries around the world.

In the field of Disability and Development, IDDC is not working alone, and has ties to the [International Disability Alliance \(IDA\)](#) and to the [European Disability Forum \(EDF\)](#) often working side by side.

The **aim** of IDDC is to promote inclusive development internationally, with a special focus on promoting the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by all persons with disabilities living in economically poor communities in lower and middle-income countries.

IDDC's **main objectives** are:

- To promote the **inclusion of the disability dimension**, as well as appropriate disability-specific approaches, in all development policy and practice.
- To improve the practice of the member organisations by collaborating and **sharing experience** about policy and practice.
- To support the **exchange of information and knowledge** about inclusive development, especially between people and organisations in economically poorer countries, by the wide distribution of information.

The work towards these objectives follows IDDC's **Values and Principles**, which uphold inclusive ways of working, both internally and in all its development activities, and which seek the participation of all members and both encourage and respect diversity. These are:

- **Human rights for all.** We believe in the full range of human rights and recognise that the rights of disabled people are frequently violated. We are committed to working for the implementation of the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) and working to ensure our activities are implemented within a human rights framework.
- **Inclusion and diversity.** We believe in the social model of disability and that inclusion is both a process and a goal.
- **Sustainable development and social justice.** We believe that development must strive to promote equity, justice and respect for diverse cultures and peoples, and that poverty alleviation and inclusions are necessary to promote sustainable development.



- **Partnership and collaboration.** We believe in working in partnership with persons with disabilities, Disabled People's Organisations, networks and with families and communities. We believe in supporting the full participation of disabled people in our own organisations and wider society.

Structure and Task Groups

The power of IDDC is that its work is not developed and carried out by one central and autonomous Secretariat. While the secretariat is instrumental in its coordination work, all IDDC members are encouraged to participate as actively as possible in all activities, working towards the aim of truly inclusive development.

In that context, the bulk of IDDC's work is taken on by **thematic Task Groups**. The IDDC Task Groups are composed of IDDC members who volunteer to work together on tasks related to a particular theme or project, prioritized within IDDC's overall strategy. The Task Groups evolve through time; have dynamic life cycles, following the priorities and level of involvement of members. This allows IDDC to function organically, and to follow closely and seamlessly the evolution of priorities and interests in the arena of disability and development. Currently, 10 Task Groups (TG) are active within IDDC.

- Community-Based Rehabilitation TG
- Conflict and Emergency TG
- Disabled People Organisations Partnership TG
- European Union TG
- Health TG
- HIV TG
- Inclusive Education TG (covers Inclusive Education)
- Social Protection TG
- United Nations TG
- Facilitators Forum TG (focuses mostly on capacity building and training)

For more information on IDDC, you can visit our website <http://www.iddcconsortium.net>, or contact the IDDC Secretariat (info@iddcconsortium.net).

For more details on IDDC's work at EU level, don't hesitate to contact the co-chair of the IDDC EU Task Group, François Carbonez (f.carbonez@licht-fuer-die-welt.at)

Disability and Development

Disability and poverty: a vicious cycle

Disability is a major factor when we are looking at international cooperation. The [World Report on Disability](#), published by the World Health Organisation and the World Bank in 2011, clearly shows that 15% of the world population are persons with disabilities, and over 80% living in developing countries. Furthermore, there is a strong, complex link between disability and poverty, and unfortunately it is a circular one¹. Disability may increase the risk of poverty, because, for example, of lack of inclusive education and accessible employment opportunities, lower wages, or simply the increased cost of having a disability. Conversely, poverty may increase the risk of disability, for example, through malnutrition, unsafe working conditions, lack of healthcare or access to safe drinking water. The World Report on Disability confirms this vicious cycle. Results from the report also indicate higher disability prevalence in lower income countries and people with a low income, who are out of work or have low educational qualifications are at an increased risk of disability.²

Beyond that, a country's environment, social or physical, can create, maintain, or fail to resolve barriers to a full participation of persons with disabilities to society, which further exacerbates their susceptibility to poverty. These barriers include inaccessible infrastructure (built environment, transport, communication systems), inadequate funding for disability-related services (such as adequate health care, rehabilitation and support and assistance) or simply the lack and low quality of statistical data relied upon for policy-making. Another significant barrier persons with disabilities face is the negative attitudes of society towards disability. Negative attitudes of teachers, students and even family members pose barriers to the inclusion of children with disabilities in education even if the school itself is accessible.

The consequence these barriers (structural and attitudinal) are not only detrimental to persons with disabilities and their families, but also for the economy of their countries. For example, economic losses due to the non-participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market are estimated between 3 and 7% of Gross Domestic Product.³ In the words of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, "A world that recognizes the rights of the disabled, ensures that people with disabilities can be productive members of their communities and nations, and provides an inclusive and accessible environment, is a world that will benefit all of us, with or without disabilities".

¹ [Disability and poverty in developing countries: a snapshot from the World Health Survey, Sophie Mitra, Aleksandra Posarac, Brandon Vick, Social Protection Discussion Paper No 1109, World Bank, 2011](#)

² [World Health Organization, "World report on disability", Geneva, 2011](#)

³ [Employment Sector Working Paper No. 43, "The price of exclusion: The economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work", Sebastian Buckup. ILO, Geneva, 2009](#)

International efforts towards an inclusive international cooperation

Global awareness of the importance of inclusive, accessible development aid programs has increased over the past decade. In 2008, the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD)⁴ entered into force, and it includes a specific article on international cooperation, which obligates State parties to include persons with disabilities in their international development and cooperation efforts.. The EU ratified the CRPD in 2011, thereby committing itself to the inclusion of disability in its international policy.

Although there is much more has to be done progress has been made. For example, the EU included international cooperation in its [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#)⁵ and disability also features as a crosscutting issue in the 2014-2020 Development Cooperation Instrument.

The last 15 years has seen significant progress in global development, particularly the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However unless persons with disabilities are included, the MDGs will not be fully achieved before the 2015 deadline. Over the coming year, negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda will present opportunities to create a truly inclusive and accessible development framework. The importance of including disability in new framework cannot be understated and it is recognised by the UN that persons with disabilities can no longer be left behind.

The International Disability and Development Consortium will work to ensure that the future of development cooperation, especially EU-driven development cooperation is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. With the support of the Members of the European Parliament, we can reach that objective.

⁴ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

⁵ [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:EN:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:EN:PDF)

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁶: Implications for EU International Policies

What is it?

The [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=15&pid=150) (hereinafter the CRPD or the Convention) and its Optional Protocol (OP) were adopted on 13 December 2006 and opened for signature on 30 March 2007. The CRPD is the first international human rights treaty of the 21st century and it received the highest number of signatories in history in its opening day. It is also the first international treaty to be ratified by regional integration organisation, such as the European Union.

The CRPD does not set forth new rights, but instead it qualifies how all categories of rights, ranging from civil and political to economic, social and cultural rights, apply to persons with disabilities and clarifies the areas where adaptations are necessary to allow persons with disabilities to fully exercise their rights and freedoms.

What's new?

- The Convention establishes a paradigm shift in that persons with disabilities are no longer perceived as 'objects' of charity and social protection, but rather as 'subjects' with rights capable of fully exercising them and taking decisions on a free and informed basis.
- The CRPD is the first international human rights treaty to include specific provisions pertaining to international cooperation (art. 32) and situations of emergency and humanitarian aid (art. 11). It strikes the balance between the obligations for State parties to fulfill the rights of their citizens and the use of international cooperation as a tool to further realize the rights of persons with disabilities.
- The Convention recognises the multiple forms of discrimination that persons with disabilities can experience. For example, for women and girls with disabilities it calls on all State parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure the equal and full enjoyment of all rights and freedoms, as well as their full development and empowerment.

What does it mean for the EU?

In January 2011 the EU concluded the Convention to which it is legally bound. The resulting Code of Conduct sets out the areas where the EU has either exclusive or shared competencies with EU Member States for its implementation, such as international cooperation and humanitarian assistance. This means that the EU development and humanitarian policies and programmes should be designed and implemented following the guiding principles of the Convention and to respect the inherent dignity of persons with disabilities, who are often amongst the most marginalised. This includes inter alia:

- The adoption of the twin-track approach: besides the implementation of disability-specific projects, all EU development programmes and policies should be designed to be inclusive of persons with disabilities.
- The involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations at all stages of programming and policy-making is vital to ensure development programmes are truly inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities.

⁶ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=15&pid=150>

- The capacity building of relevant stakeholders: training is an essential component to understand and implement inclusive development programmes. To this end, investing in the capacity of EU staff, EU partner governments, and local Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) will enhance the creation of inclusive communities.
- Besides, the EU has also the obligation to report on the implementation of the Convention to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities two years after its ratification. This includes reporting also on the work carried out in the field of international cooperation and humanitarian aid.

Example - [Ensuring inclusiveness when rebuilding in Pakistan: an example of CRPD-compliant inclusive-development project](#)⁷

Following the summer monsoon in 2010, CBM and its partner Chef International launched a project to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the reconstruction of the badly damaged health care systems. The overall objective of the project was to ensure that persons with disabilities had access to a functioning health care system and were prepared for future disasters. Some of the following activity areas emerged as key steps towards accessible and inclusive health care: capacity building of health workers on disability issues, including mental health; building accessible basic health care services either through renovating (ramps, accessible toilets, etc.) or re-thinking the way services are delivered for those who cannot travel to the clinics; training and empowering persons with disabilities on better health care in key areas such as hygiene and nutrition; adopting a gender sensitive approach either through hiring lady workers or organizing flexible outreach sessions on health care at times that did not interfere with family activities; and finally, sensitizing local and national authority to the need of inclusive health care policies and ensuring the sustainability of inclusive health care services in other districts and provinces. Key to the success of this project was the empowerment and participation of persons with disabilities. Physical accessibility is not enough to ensure inclusion; education and training of health workers and authorities are in fact key to guarantee flexible services for all and the change towards inclusion in the whole health care system.

What you can do

- Support the implementation of the Concluding Observation issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) after the examination of the EU.
- Organise regular debates (e.g. exchange of views and hearings) to assess the further implementation of the Convention in the field of international cooperation and humanitarian aid, as well as to share good practices of inclusive development policies and action plans.
- Exchange regularly with members of national parliaments (e.g. COSAC) to raise awareness about disability-inclusive development and hold Member States accountable for the implementation of the Convention, especially where competencies are shared with the EU.
- Exchange with local and grassroots Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) during missions with third countries, as well as electoral observation missions.

⁷ <http://www.cbm.org/Ensuring-inclusivity-when-rebuilding-in-Pakistan-449257.php>

Post-2015 Framework and the role of the European Parliament

In 2000, world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, thereby committing themselves to reduce poverty by achieving 8 development goals called the [the Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs).⁸

The deadline for the implementation of MDGs is next year and negotiations on their replacement started in late 2013 and are currently on-going. It is expected that this new framework, currently called the post-2015 will be based on lessons learnt from the MDGs, as well as the changing global context. The post-2015 agenda will reflect new development challenges and is linked to the outcome of "[Rio+20](#)"⁹ conference on sustainable development.

As the negotiations continue and the time for the decisions on the final development framework comes nearer, this is the moment for the EU to guarantee the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 framework in a sustainable way.

Leave no one behind

When the international community agreed the MDGs, little attention was paid to the inclusion of minority groups, including persons with disabilities. Despite some efforts over the past years, international cooperation policies and programmes do not adequately address the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

In order to change this and make sure persons with disabilities will not be left behind, it is essential that they are part of the process in the run up to this new framework. Persons with disabilities should not only be included as recipients of support but also as active agents for change in their communities, in accordance with the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)¹⁰. The post-2015 Development Framework must address the rights and needs of all citizens, including women, the elderly, persons with disabilities and people from different ethnic backgrounds. For that reason, the [International Disability and Development Consortium](#) (IDDC) has been advocating together with the [European Disability Forum](#) (EDF) at European level and the [International Disability Alliance](#) (IDA) at international level, for a framework guided by equality and inclusiveness.

The CRPD and its overarching principles of inclusion and equity have been underpinning all our advocacy efforts. Below you can find a number of key recommendations from the IDDC regarding the post-2015 development framework.

- The **new framework should be compliant with the CRPD**, ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in every stage of the process, including negotiation, implementation and monitoring.

⁸ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

⁹ <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=15&pid=150>

- The post-2015 framework should be underpinned by a human rights-based approach and, in that sense, contain a **stand-alone goal on equality and non-discrimination**.
- The future development framework must contain **specific indicators** related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities, as well as an obligation to collect **disaggregated data** which reflects the real situation of persons with disabilities in developing and developed countries.
- The creation of a **new global partnership inclusive of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations** should be stimulated.

The position of the European Union

The EU has an important role to play in the on-going negotiations at UN level, and therefore needs to determine its official position. As the EU has ratified the CRPD in 2011, it has committed itself to an inclusive international cooperation (Article 32 CRPD), and it is expected to also support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the post-2015 development framework.

In February 2013 the European Commission (EC) published a first Communication on the post-2015 framework, leading up to the June 2014 [EC Communication “A decent life for all: from vision to collective action”](#)¹¹. It is more detailed and defines specific goals and targets. It takes into account the changing global context and recognises that a post-2015 framework should, above all, be rights-based and people-centred.

However, and despite the positive tone of the Communication, some remarks also have to be made. The communication refers, for instance, to the importance of disaggregated data, but it does not specify the factors by which data should be disaggregated. In addition, IDDC would call on the EU to include disability as a crosscutting issue throughout the framework, including throughout the targets and indicators.

What you can do

- Inform yourself about what the international disability community wants included in post-2015 framework. Read the IDDC paper: [‘Towards an inclusive post-2015 development framework: the position of the European Union’](#). This paper will present you with sufficient information and arguments to ask for an inclusive development framework
- Ask questions to Commission and Council and keep raising the idea of inclusive development in every discussion on the post-2015 development framework.
- Get in touch with IDDC whenever you need more information or to discuss possible questions or actions.

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/international_issues/pdf/2_EN_ACT_part1_v5.pdf

An inclusive European development cooperation - the role of the European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP), as the main representative of all EU citizens, should play a decisive role in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the EU's international cooperation. Members of the EP can take on this role in various ways: via their policy work in committees in the EP or the ACP - EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, by raising awareness with their colleagues and via participation in events and field visits. These different opportunities are discussed below.

Please note that the list with possible actions and the examples given are not exhaustive and that other opportunities may arise. In case you are interested and you want more information or you would like to cooperate with civil society towards a more inclusive international cooperation, please do not hesitate to contact François Carbonez, the co-chair of the IDDC EU Task Group (f.carbonez@light-for-the-world.org).

1. Policy work in the European Parliament

The EP acts as a co-legislator for nearly all EU legislation, which gives it the power to influence specific policies. Most of the in-depth work of the EP happens in the committees. Therefore, one of the most straightforward opportunities to influence a more inclusive international cooperation can be found at this stage. This is particularly true for EP committees linked to external affairs, international cooperation and human rights such as the AFET, the DROI and the DEVE committee.

What you can do

- If you are the **rapporteur** on an issue related to international cooperation, make sure your report contains a human rights based approach to development, with strong emphasis on equality, non-discrimination and accountability. Your report should not promote exclusion, including via the language used. Where relevant you should include specific references to persons with disabilities to ensure they are visible. For example, when your report deals with cross cutting issues in development cooperation, it should contain a specific reference to disability along with other characteristics such as gender, age and minority status.
- Address the issue of disability inclusiveness with your Committee's political group Coordinator. The role of the Coordinators as a nexus between individual MEPs, national parties, and European party groups gives them power to steer the work of Parliamentary Committees, and to advance towards a more truly inclusive European policies.
- If you are tabling **amendments**, make sure that language used is inclusive of persons with disabilities. In addition, it is worth looking at the preamble and proposing an amendment in case there is no reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The EU ratified this Convention and hereby commits itself

to ensuring EU international cooperation is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities (see Article 32, [UN CRPD](#))¹².

Example - Proposing amendments to the Parliamentary report on the post 2015 framework (2013)

In May 2013 the DEVE committee of the EP presented a report on the post 2015 framework to the plenary session. In first instance this report did not include any reference to persons with disabilities. The [International Disability and Development Consortium](#) contacted MEPs and suggested amendments. The final version of the report, as adopted by the plenary, did contain 4 relevant references to persons with disabilities¹³. Through these references the European Parliament has also send a clear message to the European Commission and the Council on its commitment to an inclusive post 2015 framework.

- Produce an **own-initiative report** on an issue linked to persons with disabilities and development or human rights. For example: a disability inclusive post-2015 framework, The European Year for Development - inclusive of persons with disabilities, ...
- During committee meetings, Commission staff can be invited to discuss policies and exchange views. During these discussions, you may **raise a question** on disability or inequality. This will also raise awareness at the level of the European Commission.
- During the **hearings of Commissioner-designates in Committee**, you can contribute by asking them questions on their attitude towards inclusion of persons with disabilities and/or accessibility. For example: "Is the candidate committed to support Civil Society actions aimed at the implementation of a truly inclusive and accessible International Cooperation?", "What are the candidate's views on DEVCO's role regarding the full realization of persons with disabilities' human rights in partner countries?"
- When relevant meetings are taking place in Parliament, e.g. Committee meetings, think of the possibility to **invite speakers with disabilities** and/or experts on the subject of disability in external affairs.
- Become a member of the **Disability Intergroup**, an informal grouping of Members of the EP interested in promoting disability policy in their work. Although the Disability Intergroup does not focus on international cooperation, it is an interesting setting to meet other colleagues committed to inclusion¹⁴.

¹² UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150

¹³ Report on the Millennium Development Goals – defining the post-2015 framework, 06/05/2013

¹⁴ <http://www.disabilityintergroup.eu>

2. The ACP - EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

The framework of the ACP - EU cooperation and the ACP - EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) pose interesting opportunities to advocate for inclusive international cooperation.

Note: these recommendations would also apply to other EP delegations, for example the delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly or the delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

What you can do

- The ACP - EU JPA and its committee meetings provide a unique opportunity to **exchange information and experiences** with colleagues from ACP countries and to stimulate north - south dialogue. Discussing matters of disability inclusion with ACP colleagues will provide MEPs with an insight in the local situation and concerns, which might feed into future policy proposals.
- Civil Society is always present at the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, via side events or information stands. A JPA organised by an ACP country provides therefore an interesting opportunity to **discuss with local civil society** and exchange views.
- One recurring element in each JPA is the **question time to the European Commission and the Council**. This provides a unique opportunity to raise issues related to inclusive international cooperation.

Example - The ACP - EU JPA resolution on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation: monitoring disability inclusion in ACP countries

During the ACP - EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Togo in November 2011 a resolution on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation was adopted¹⁵. This resolution contains obligations and recommendations for ACP states, but also puts part of the responsibilities with the EU. It encourages ACP countries for example to increase access to education and income generating activities and to mainstream disability in their national development agendas. However, the resolution also requests from the EU that it develops an exchange on disability inclusion with other institutional donors and that it includes the needs of persons with disabilities and DPOs in its development projects. It also contains an obligation (Article 24) to report, review and highlight good practices and progress on inclusion in ACP countries on a two-yearly basis. In this regard, there has been a discussion on inclusion in the social committee meeting in September 2013, but this was a rather ad hoc discussion and no real report. The International Disability and Development Consortium therefore calls on MEPs to **request the Bureau to discuss this matter and to foresee in a real evaluation mechanism**.

¹⁵ ACP-EU JPA Resolution on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in developing countries, November 2013, Lomé (Togo), http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/2011_lome/pdf/adopted_ap100.954_collated_en.pdf

3. Raising awareness with colleagues

Although persons with disabilities are amongst the most marginalised in developing countries, the need for inclusion is not yet known by all policy makers. Awareness raising is therefore still very important as it contributes to a more inclusive society.

What you can do

- **Share information** on disability and development with your colleagues, especially those working on development cooperation, external affairs or human rights.
- Several **publications** on inclusive international cooperation already exist. Most of them can also be found online. Whenever you receive such a publication, either in hard copy or as a PDF, share it with interested colleagues.
- Spread information on disability and development via **social media**, especially on special occasions such as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities which takes place every year on December 3rd.
- **Share invitations** to events on inclusive international cooperation or on the rights of persons with disabilities in developing countries with your colleagues.

Example - MEPs Say Yes to Inclusion

A 3-year-EU-project called 'End Exclusion: let's enable the MDGs' gave young Europeans the chance to experience inclusion and to speak out for the rights of children with disabilities in developing countries. One of the highlights of the project was the 'Say Yes to Inclusion' advocacy campaign. More than 15,000 people shared a photo or video of themselves saying "yes" in sign language. This resulted in an impressive video clip¹⁶ that was presented at the UN High Level Meeting on "Disability and Development" in September 2013 in New York. The 'Say Yes to Inclusion' campaign was also supported by MEPs, who said 'Yes' to inclusion and shared information on the campaign and the video on Twitter and Facebook.

4. Participation in events and field visits organised by civil society

Civil society organisations in Brussels and in partner countries are working on raising awareness on the importance of including of persons with disabilities in international cooperation. Events such as conferences, round table discussion, film screenings, are regularly organised and as an MEP you can show your commitment to disability inclusion by attending and supporting these events.

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQKt55RoCWc>

What you can do

- When an **event** is organised in the EP, you can support it by hosting the event, spreading invitations to your colleagues, attending and encouraging other colleagues to attend.
- Whenever you **visit developing countries**, plan a **visit to a local Disabled Persons' Organisation (DPO)**. This will give you a unique insight in the issues persons with disabilities are confronted with and can feed into future policy work. Whenever back in Europe, share your experiences with colleagues and followers. In case you do not have the necessary contacts in developing countries, get in touch with European CSOs, such as the International Disability and Development Consortium, to link you up with their partners.

5. Dialogue with civil society

Civil society, such as the member organisations of the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), recognise the value of dialogue and cooperation with the EP. The IDDC believes in the importance of sharing experiences; exchanging information and views and encouraging MEPs to be open to dialogue and discussion with civil society on the rights of persons with disabilities and on a more inclusive international cooperation.