

# Guidance on disability inclusion in UNFPA evaluations

**Integrating disability inclusion dimensions in  
UNFPA evaluation methodology and  
Evaluation Quality Assurance and Assessment (EQAA)**

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This is an independent guidance by the UNFPA Evaluation Office.

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## 1. Introduction

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The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in June 2019. The strategy consists of a system-wide policy and an accountability framework and covers programmes and operations in development and humanitarian contexts.

The policy establishes the highest levels of commitment and a vision for the United Nations system on disability inclusion for the next decade and is aimed at creating an institutional framework for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>1</sup>. The accountability framework encompasses 15 common-system indicators, focused on four core areas: **leadership, strategic planning and management; inclusiveness; programming; and organizational culture.** **Evaluation** is one of the four indicators under the Programming core area.

As outlined in the strategy, the term ‘*disability inclusion*’ refers to “the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion and mainstreaming of their rights into the work of the Organization, the development of disability-specific programmes and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)”.

The UNDIS evaluation indicator assesses the extent to which ‘*an entity considers disability inclusion in all phases of the evaluation process and in every type of evaluation that it does*’.

## 2. What prompted the development of this guidance?

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Guided by the UNDIS, UNFPA is making an organization-wide commitment to promote meaningful, transformative, and sustainable inclusion of persons with disabilities across all its programmes and operations, and from Headquarters to the field. The UNFPA Disability Inclusion Strategy (2021-2023), which is currently under finalization, is at the center of this corporate commitment to systematically drive and embed the rights of persons with disabilities into UNFPA’s work, both externally, through programming, and internally, through organizational structure and practices.

Paired with this commitment, there is growing acknowledgement of the need for disability-inclusive evaluations. In consideration of this, the evaluation function is taking progressive steps towards further incorporating dimensions of disability-inclusion within the evaluation practice. These concerted efforts, in combination with human rights-based, equity-focused and gender responsive evaluation approaches, will promote strengthened accountability and learning towards UNFPA’s commitments to leave no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.

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<sup>1</sup> [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy](#)

### 3. What does this guidance offer?

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This guidance is developed as a starting point to operationalize UNDIS's evaluation performance indicator requirement. The guidance note is aligned with and drawn from the Technical Note for the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy Entity Accountability Framework<sup>2</sup>, with adaptation to UNFPA's specific context and needs.

Prepared specifically for evaluation managers and evaluators, the guidance offers a quick and easy reference for mainstreaming disability inclusion in evaluation subject and evaluation process. More importantly, it is intended to encourage evaluators to give more explicit attention to generate disability-related evaluative evidence and lessons across the three transformative and people-centered results of UNFPA Strategic Plan (2018-2021)<sup>3</sup>.

**This guidance should be read and used in conjunction with the [UNFPA Evaluation Handbook](#) on how to design and conduct a country programme evaluation at UNFPA, and the 2020 edition of the [UNFPA Evaluation Quality Assessment \(EQA\) grid](#) that also includes disability inclusion dimensions.**

### 4. What are the key dimensions to consider?

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Disability inclusion dimensions should be considered as a crosscutting concern across all phases of the evaluation (preparatory, design, field, reporting and facilitation of use and dissemination phases). The table below outlines the elements for consideration by evaluation managers and evaluators. They should also be communicated to the evaluators at the outset of the evaluation process.

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<sup>2</sup> [Technical Notes UN Disability Inclusion Strategy Entity Accountability Framework](#)

<sup>3</sup> a) end preventable maternal deaths; b) end the unmet need for family planning; and c) end gender-based violence and all harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

**Table 1: Examples of how to mainstream disability-inclusion into evaluation processes and products**

Phase of evaluation	Elements to address	Explanation	Other considerations	Reference to UNFPA Evaluation Handbook and Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQA) grid
<a href="#">Preparatory phase</a>	The terms of reference (ToR) of evaluations pay adequate attention to disability inclusion	Disability inclusion should be considered in the ToR of each evaluation. This enables the requirements to flow from the ToR, to design, to the field and analysis to the reporting	The evaluation scoping exercise is an opportunity to assess how an evaluation can best cover disability inclusion	<a href="#">Page 35, 2.1: Drafting the Terms of Reference</a> and <a href="#">page 245, Template 1</a> : The Terms of Reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure mainstreaming of disability inclusion into the context, evaluation questions, criteria, methods, data collection and analysis and reporting.</li> </ul>
	Evaluation teams have knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion, where relevant	Consider carefully all of the expertise that may be required to conduct the evaluation based on the nature and focus of the programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) For programmes with or without targeted interventions on disability inclusion, the evaluation team should collectively demonstrate knowledge and experience on disability inclusion. It is also advisable to include at least one organization(s) representing persons with disability as part of the evaluation reference group</li> <li>b) For programmes with a specific focus on disability inclusion, such as <a href="#">the UNFPA We Decide: Empowering persons with disabilities</a>, it is required to have at least one evaluation team member and one or more reference group member(s) with experience and expertise in disability inclusion.</li> </ul>	Such knowledge will assist the evaluation team to frame appropriate questions on disability inclusion and prepare sound analysis and findings	<a href="#">Page 36, section 2.2</a> : Selecting and recruiting the evaluation team  <a href="#">Page 27, section 2.3</a> : Establishing reference group for CPEs: setting up the reference group, the evaluation manager must <b>include (an) organization(s) representing persons with disability</b> .

<p><a href="#">Design phase</a></p>	<p>Evaluation questions cover different aspects of disability inclusion</p>	<p>Aspects of disability inclusion should be considered as cross cutting across the relevant evaluation criteria and evaluation questions, as appropriate. This helps to highlight both the extent and the quality of disability inclusion</p>	<p>Evaluators should check, whether, inter alia, human rights, equity and gender equality, and <a href="#">disability</a> analyses (considering their heterogeneity<sup>4</sup> and intersectionality<sup>5</sup>) were conducted to inform the design and implementation of UNFPA support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?</li> <li>- To what extent UNFPA supported programme/s were appropriate and contributed to positive changes in the lives of vulnerable and marginalized populations (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, those with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind?</li> <li>- What barriers did persons with disabilities face in accessing SRHR, and GBV information and services?</li> <li>- Was a twin-track approach<sup>6</sup> adopted?</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Page 56-60, 3.2.2:</a> The evaluation questions – Table 6, List of examples of evaluation questions for CPE<sup>7</sup></p> <p><i>Relevance:</i> To what extent has UNFPA ensured that the varied needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations, including adolescents and youth, <a href="#">those with disabilities</a> and indigenous communities, have been taken into account in both the planning and implementation of all UNFPA-supported interventions under the country programme?</p> <p><i>Efficiency:</i> To what extent does the allocation of resources across the UNFPA country programme reflect the varied needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups, prioritizing those most marginalized, <a href="#">including persons with disability</a>?</p> <p><i>Effectiveness/sustainability/coverage:</i> To what extent did UNFPA support the elimination of barriers to access (e.g. social, economic, legal, location, language, cultural) to sexual and reproductive health and rights and SGBV information and services for vulnerable and marginalized populations (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, those with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind?</p> <p><i>SRHR component:</i> To what extent has UNFPA supported services appropriately targeted at the varied needs of different groups (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, <a href="#">those with disabilities</a>, indigenous communities, sexual</p>
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<sup>4</sup> People with disabilities are not a homogenous group. They experience a range and variety of impairments, including physical, psychosocial, intellectual and sensory conditions, that may or may not come with functional limitations.

<sup>5</sup> The diversity of people with disabilities also includes those with multiple and intersecting identities (social class, ethnic, religious and racial background; refugee, migrant, asylum-seeking and internally displaced persons; LGBTQI+ persons; women living with and affected by HIV; young and older women; and widowed women).

<sup>6</sup> The approach combines (1) mainstreaming programmes that are inclusive of persons with disabilities and (2) targeted interventions for persons with disabilities.

<sup>7</sup> These are examples and should not be seen as an exhaustive list. Table 6 of the CPE guidance offers a comprehensive list of examples of evaluation questions across evaluation criteria.

				<p>diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind?</p> <p><i>Population and Development component:</i> To what extent have UNFPA-supported interventions contributed to (or are likely to contribute to) a sustained increase in the use of disaggregated (by, inter alia, gender, <a href="#">disability</a>, age, location, class/caste) demographic and socio-economic information and data, in the evidence-based development and implementation of plans, programmes and policies?</p> <p><i>Sustainability:</i> To what extent have interventions supported by UNFPA contributed to (or are likely to contribute to) sustainably improved access to and use of quality services in the field of SRHR, including for vulnerable and marginalized populations (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, those with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities)?</p>
	<p>Evaluation stakeholder mapping and data collection methods involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations</p>	<p>Persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) can enrich an evaluation by providing first-hand information on their situation and experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structures and processes are created to foster meaningful stakeholder involvement particularly the most marginalized persons, including persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Stakeholder involvement explicitly refer to the representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities and principles for their effective participation</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Page 67, Box 6:</a> Capturing the voices of a range of stakeholders and ensuring the evaluation is gender, <a href="#">disability</a> and human rights-responsive</p>
	<p>The methodology involves using participatory techniques that are clearly described</p>	<p>Specify that the evaluation will integrate disability inclusion as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A mixed approach to include the perspectives and voices of marginalized/vulnerable groups</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Page 67, Box 6:</a> Strengthening the gender and human rights responsiveness of evaluation - A mixed methods approach to data collection is recommended; and the evaluation manager and team should ensure that both the methods chosen (e.g., focus groups, interviews, documentary review, etc.) and the ways in which they are applied are gender, disability-inclusive and human rights-responsive. This includes, inter alia, systematically consulting <a href="#">persons with disability</a> and their organizations</p> <p><a href="#">UNFPA EQA grid, Criteria 2 (Design and methodology), sub-criteria 2.5: Is there a comprehensive stakeholder</a></p>

				<p>map? Is the stakeholder consultation process clearly described (in particular, does it include the consultation of key stakeholders on draft recommendations)?</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> Does the evaluation stakeholder mapping and data collection methods involve vulnerable and marginalized groups, (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, those with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind?</p> <p><a href="#">UNFPA EQA grid, Criteria 2 (Design and methodology), sub-criteria 2.10:</a> Is the design and methodology appropriate for assessing the cross-cutting issues (equity and vulnerability, <a href="#">disability inclusion</a>, gender equality and human rights)?</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> Evaluation questions or indicators assess/capture the extent to which a human rights based approach to the development and implementation of the country programme was used (i.e. whether the evaluation’s data collection methods capture the voices/perspectives of a range of stakeholders including beneficiaries, vulnerable/marginalized groups (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, those with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind</p>
<a href="#">Field phase</a>	Data collection and subsequent analysis explicitly address disability	Evaluations should collect information and evidence on inclusion of persons with disabilities; disaggregate data by disability whenever possible; and identify the impact of programmes on persons with disabilities	- Intersectionality: Examine how disability interacts with other social identity markers such as age, socio-economic status, ethnic, caste, sexual orientation, rural/urban location, marital status, etc.	<p><a href="#">Page 101, 4.3.2:</a> Making use of existing, secondary data and information that are disaggregated by different criteria, such as age, geographic locations (states, provinces, counties, etc.), gender, <a href="#">disability</a>, rural vs urban, education, etc. This can allow evaluators to gather data for those segments of the population within which UNFPA target groups are to be found</p> <p><a href="#">Page 96, Table 11:</a> Process for the field phase - data collection and site visits – ensure inclusion of individuals in vulnerable situation that include persons with disability and their organizations, ensure that interviews and FDGs are culturally appropriate and be sensitive to vulnerable groups, including persons with disability.</p>

				<p><a href="#">UNFPA EQA grid, Criteria 3 (Reliability of data), sub-criteria 3.3</a>: Is there evidence that data has been collected with a sensitivity to issues of discrimination and other ethical considerations</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> Were interviews or focus groups held in a location, at a time, in a setting, using language/translation, that is appropriate and respectful; and facilitates the participation of a full range of stakeholders, including persons with disability</p>
<p><a href="#">Reporting phase</a></p>	<p>Evaluation findings should provide an adequate analysis of disability inclusion issues, based on substantiating evidence</p>	<p>The subject being evaluated paid attention to effects on groups subject to discriminations and hard-to-reach groups, (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, those with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind.</p> <p>Findings should also include analysis of evidence that explicitly and transparently triangulates the voices of different social role groups, and/or disaggregates quantitative data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess whether the concerns and experience of persons with disabilities are treated as an integral dimension of the design, implementation and monitoring of UNFPA initiatives</li> <li>- Whether sexual and reproductive health and SGBV services are accessible to and reaching those at risk of being left out, including adolescents, youth, girls and women with disabilities</li> <li>- Whether UNFPA-supported programmes bring about the desired changes in the lives of adolescents, youth, women and girls with disabilities and their rights and agency are fully realized</li> <li>- Whether programmes are driving sustainable and transformative change among vulnerable population (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, those with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Page 116: 5.2</a>: From data to findings: constructing the answers to evaluation questions: Contextualize results and ensure gender, human rights, <b>disability</b> and other cross-cutting issues are effectively and systematically analyzed and reflected in the findings</p> <p><a href="#">UNFPA EQA grid, Criteria 4 (Analysis and findings), sub-criteria 4.7</a>: Does the analysis elaborate on crosscutting issues such as equity and vulnerability, <b>disability inclusion</b>, gender equality and human rights?</p>
	<p>Issues of disability inclusion should be reflected in conclusions and recommendations, as appropriate</p>	<p>The extent to which disability inclusion should be reflected in the conclusions and/or recommendations of an evaluation should be based on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determination of whether to include disability inclusion in the conclusions and/or recommendations should logically stem from the analysis in the finding section</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">UNFPA EQA grid, Criteria 5 (Conclusions), sub-criteria 5.2</a>: Do the conclusions go beyond the findings and provide a thorough understanding of the underlying issues of the programme/initiative/system being evaluated and reflect as appropriate cross-cutting issues</p>

		the importance given to this issue in the findings section		such as equality and vulnerability, <a href="#">disability inclusion</a> , gender equality and human rights?  <a href="#">UNFPA EQA grid, Criteria 6 (Recommendation): sub-criteria 6.3</a> : Do recommendations appear balanced and impartial and address, as relevant, key cross cutting issues such as equity and vulnerability, <a href="#">disability inclusion</a> , gender equality and human rights?
<a href="#">Facilitation of use and Dissemination phase</a>	Accessibility of reports	Reports with a particular and specific relevance to persons with disability need to be produced in accessible language and formats (digital format, large print or Braille)	The management response should address all recommendations, including those on disability inclusion	<a href="#">Page 113: Box 13</a> : Comprehensive approach to communicating knowledge resulting from the evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Package evaluation results into knowledge products that are user friendly, targeted and accessible to different audiences including <a href="#">persons with disability</a></li> </ul>

**This guidance accompanies the UNFPA Evaluation Handbook on how to design and conduct a country programme evaluation at UNFPA, and the UNFPA Evaluation Quality Assessment (EQA) grid.**



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