

What does good disability inclusion look like?

Tags: Inclusion, Disability, Infrastructure, Evidence

One billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability and disability prevalence is higher in developing countries. This short paper sets out key themes to consider when designing, or pivoting infrastructure and cities programming, that will improve disability inclusion.

Key Themes for Inclusive Programming

When thinking about these principles in the context of infrastructure and cities, it is easy to think only about physical access and the built environment, but physical design solutions alone are not enough to ensure inclusivity.

Interventions need to be designed with the user and service in mind, grounded in an understanding of the country's legislative and policy environment; including its cultural, social and economic context, which can provide opportunities, or indeed present barriers for achieving inclusive cities and infrastructure.

The key themes to consider when planning effective infrastructure and cities are set out below. They are also mapped against the programme life cycle in Table 2 of ICED's [Disability Inclusive Infrastructure and Cities Briefing Note](#).

- **A partner country's policies and legislative framework** may offer entry points to support early integration of DI design. It may also help understand underlying and persistent structural barriers to disability inclusion.
- **Where the policy environment supports DI**, weak enforcement of regulations can be a reason this does not translate into practice. Understanding bottlenecks or opportunities in the regulatory environment and governance structures at national, municipal and local level is critical, as is building institutional capacity to ensure standards are enforced.
- **Universal design is good design.** An environment, or any building, product, or service in that environment, should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. This is not a special requirement for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, and convenient, everyone benefits. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet peoples' needs.
- **Information and data play a significant part** in effective infrastructure and urban services. Improving information around service provision can have huge impacts; enabling users to make informed decisions when choosing services, advocating for better service provision, managing household budgeting, and avoiding fraudulent overbilling seen routinely in vulnerable households. Collecting disaggregated baseline data is critical to determine actual challenges faced by PwDs. Awareness campaigns can also be used to build trust and partnership between programmes and beneficiaries, as well as supporting supervision, monitoring and long-term maintenance plans.
- **Cultural and behavioural factors**, which influence social norms around how PwDs are viewed and treated in society, have significant impacts on the effectiveness of infrastructure and urban service provision. Negative social and cultural attitudes towards impairments limit PwDs opportunities – this might include limited access to basic services and restricted exposure or limited engagement with social support and community networks.
- **Financial resource or investment constraints** are common bottlenecks in achieving DI in infrastructure. Adequate programme finance for initial DI analysis and assessments supporting universal design, consultation processes, data collection and monitoring exercises etc. is critical for facilitating DI at each stage of design and delivery.

For further information, case studies and technical guidance on how to 'build in' disability inclusion consult ICED's [Disability Inclusive Infrastructure and Cities Briefing Note](#), contact the ICED team or visit the ICED website www.icedfacility.org