



Lessons learned

Localization of inclusive humanitarian action through capacity development of national humanitarian actor

Somaliland

June 2024

LL 25-1



Background

The practice was collected as part of the 'From Guidelines to Action (FG2A)' project "supporting the operationalization and localization of **IASC Guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action**" funded by ECHO and CDP. This practice was collected from TAAKULO.¹ This organization attended the review, adapt, action and learning (RAAL Lab) session on disability inclusive humanitarian action in May 2023 with six staff. Their staff were from the programme development, management, and MEAL departments. The RAAL Lab is a capacity strengthening initiative and was used in combination with the adapted version of the **DRG Learning modules**, which were designed to operationalize the **IASC guidelines on disability inclusion**. During the RAAL Lab workshop the participant applied IASC guidelines to their project cycle management. As part of the technical follow up process Humanity & Inclusion (HI) team collected best practices to understand better how the organization was taking forward the learning from the RAAL Lab.

What challenges does this practice address

Before TAAKULO's participation in the RAAL Lab, several key challenges were identified to make their programming disability inclusive.

TAAKULO lacked information on persons with disabilities, their specific support requirements, barriers they face in accessing services, and the risks they face. This negatively influenced their planning, including not allocating the appropriate resources. The guidelines and tools used for data collection and monitoring were not inclusive of disabilities and only some tools captured very small information about disability such as asking a question on "do you have person with disability in your household" etc.

1 TAAKULO is local NGO Committed to promoting the standard of living and alleviating all deprivations of the affected communities through resilience building, lifesaving, emergency response, mobilizing resources, lobbying, and representing the voiceless at all levels through partnering with government, Donors, UN, INGOs, local, public, civil society and private sector. working in the field of WASH, Food security, livelihood, protection, health and nutrition in provinces (Baidoa, Burao, Erigavo, Borama, Hargeisa, Las Anod, Garowe) of Somaliland and Somalia.

TAAKULO's staff lacked some confidence, understanding, and skills for disability inclusive programming and monitoring for disability inclusion, aligned with the IASC Guidelines on disability inclusion.

The project design included persons with disabilities on an objective level, yet without the concrete interventions that can ensure equitable access to humanitarian response.

How the practice developed

The practice was developed to improve the organizational practices of TAAKULO on disability-inclusive data and capacity-building of their staff to deliver disability-inclusive humanitarian response. They started to work on those challenges after gaining confidence from attending the RAAL Lab. A first step was that the six RAAL Lab participants organized a meeting with their senior management team to discuss about implementing the learnings to address the challenges mentioned above. The senior management of TAAKULO agreed that mainstreaming disability will be central in all TAAKULO's actions. A decision was taken to apply the must do actions and the twin track for inclusive programming from the IASC guidelines on disability inclusion.

What were the most significant results

The practice is leading to enhance the local capacity in disability inclusive humanitarian action.

A disability focal person has been designated internally by the organization to promote disability mainstreaming across the organizational and programmatic levels. This focal person works with the different programmes and sectors to oversee implementation of disability sensitive action to address the needs of persons with disabilities. The disability inclusion focal person is also responsible to represent the inclusive humanitarian action work of TAAKULO externally.

The monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) team played a critical role in adapting and reviewing the assessment tools to make them disability inclusive. These tools include the beneficiaries' registration forms, post-distribution monitoring tool, baseline, and end line assessment tools. The [Washington group short set of questions \(WG-SS\)](#) was included in all the tools and field teams were trained on disability data collection using it. These tools were used for TAAKULO's food security interventions in response

to the El-Nino induced floods in 2023. As a result, 61 persons with disabilities were identified and gained access to food security assistance. Similarly, other components of this response, such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), considered the specific needs of persons with disabilities during project design and implementation.

TAAKULO established a strong collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities in Badoa District. They actively consulted them for the planning and implementation of the programme interventions. This partnership helped to identify people with disabilities in the target area. It also makes the intervention disability inclusive and to address the specific requirements of persons with disabilities.

Moreover, the focal point, who had attended the RAAL Lab, offered a sensitization session on disability, communicating with persons with different types of difficulties and identification of specific requirements of persons with disabilities for all staff. As a result, they reported that TAAKULO's staff positively changed their attitudes towards disability, increased their knowledge and skills on how to interact with persons with different types of difficulties.

TAAKULO modified their main office to make it accessible and inclusive for all. Where needed, ramps were installed to make all the departments physically accessible. Further changes are in progress, which include accessible WASH facilities, disability inclusive recruitment and ensuring reasonable accommodation is available.

TAAKULO has applied for membership of Inter-Agency disability Inclusion Taskforce Somaliland (SDITF) and was elected as a co-chair. The SDITF is an inter-agency and inter-cluster technical task team established to support the humanitarian and development actors in advancing disability inclusion issues in Somaliland, guided by and promoting the four must-do actions for disability-inclusive programming from the IASC Guidelines on disability inclusion.

TAAKULO also decided to co-chair the SDITF. This commitment signifies an important step towards further localizing of disability-inclusion leadership. TAAKULO's Director mentioned that



“traditionally we are looking for only those persons with disabilities who have severe or visible impairments, but we never know how to address their specific needs, how to communicate with them and how to make our response more inclusive of disability. The Review Adapt Action and Learning Laboratory methodology is highly useful to not only increase the knowledge but also skills and behavior of the staff to systematically achieve disability inclusion through applying the must do actions and twin track approach to the programming”.

What were key influencing factors or drivers for change

1. One key facilitating factor was senior management's commitment to ensure mainstreaming disability within organizational processes and strategies. The willingness for change is also critical for bringing the change across the process to turn the insights into practice and reflected in their actions.
2. Capacity building of senior management team especially program quality management department including MEAL helped to start the changes in assessment and inclusive data collection, monitoring which is most of the time difficult but interlinked with other important practices.
3. Engagement of organization of persons with disabilities enhanced the capacity of field staff. It also supported the identification and location of persons with disabilities to be included in humanitarian action.
4. Follow-up and continuous technical support from HI's technical experts after participating in the RAAL Lab workshop was essential to make the changes happen.



Recommendations to facilitate the replication of this practice

1. **Capacity building** of the staff to operationalize IASC guidelines on inclusion was critical to achieve successful disability inclusive programming.
2. **Reviewing and adapting the data collection tools** during RAAL Lab was extremely important. This step is a starting point for TAAKULO which led to identification of persons with disabilities, designed interventions required and allocate resources accordingly. Thus, they included persons with disabilities in their cash programming.
3. **Disability Inclusion focal person** played a watchdog role and ensured that organization practices reflect its commitment to disability inclusion. His role is making sure staff are receiving the right training to understand disability inclusion and how internal procedures are conducive for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This role is not only important for the organization's internal practices but also influences others through demonstrating what has changed and how this improves the organization's work.
4. **Involvement of organization's senior management in disability inclusion** training such as RAAL lab was successful to make decisions in time. TAAKULO's senior management staff attended the RAAL Lab learning sessions played a pivotal role and facilitated the organization to embrace the change. At least two participants from TAAKULO hold a middle level management position and are making decisions.

Point of view



The TAAKULO's Director said that *“The change is not targeting specific groups, but it is about improving and making how we conduct our interventions inclusive of people with different needs. For example, adaptation of tools by incorporating the WGQs, short set and forecasting the specific assistance that target beneficiaries would require based on the programme”*



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Cover Image

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The illustration takes place in a refugee camp. There is a registration booth where a woman wearing a headscarf is sitting at a desk taking information from a woman in a wheelchair also wearing a headscarf and queuing.

Behind her there is a man and a woman standing, a woman with two children talking in front of an accessible bathroom. In front of them there is an accessibility ramp and three people: A man providing information with a megaphone while a woman translates this information into sign language for a man with hearing impairment.

There is a tent where the registration booth is located and also a waiting area where two men and a woman with visual impairment are seated. A truck carrying food supplies enters the refugee camp and it can be seen that they are unloading several packages of food.

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Funded by European Union Humanitarian Aid and Center for Disaster Philanthropy.



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Humanity & Inclusion,
138 Avenue des Frères Lumière,
69371 Lyon cedex 08, France

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For more information, contact us at inclusion@hi.org



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The collection of case studies was a part of the '[From Guidelines to Action \(FG2A\)](#)' project, supporting the operationalization and localization of [IASC Guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action](#), funded by ECHO and the Center for Disaster Philanthropy.

The eight case studies come from protection and food security humanitarian organizations who are working on the Syria and Somalia responses. These organizations participated in Review, Adapt, Action and Learning (RAAL) laboratories on how to make food security or protection programming more disability inclusive. The RAAL Lab is a capacity strengthening initiative and was used in combination with the adapted version of the [DRG Learning modules](#), which are designed to operationalize [the IASC guidelines on disability inclusion](#).

The case studies demonstrate how humanitarian tools and/or operational practices were adapted to become more disability-inclusive.

We hope these case studies will contribute towards fostering inter-agency learning and enhance disability inclusive practices in humanitarian action. We would like to thank the participating organizations for their input and willingness to engage in this process. Please note that for reasons of security the names of organizations from some of the case studies have not been included.

Find out more by contacting us at inclusion@hi.org

