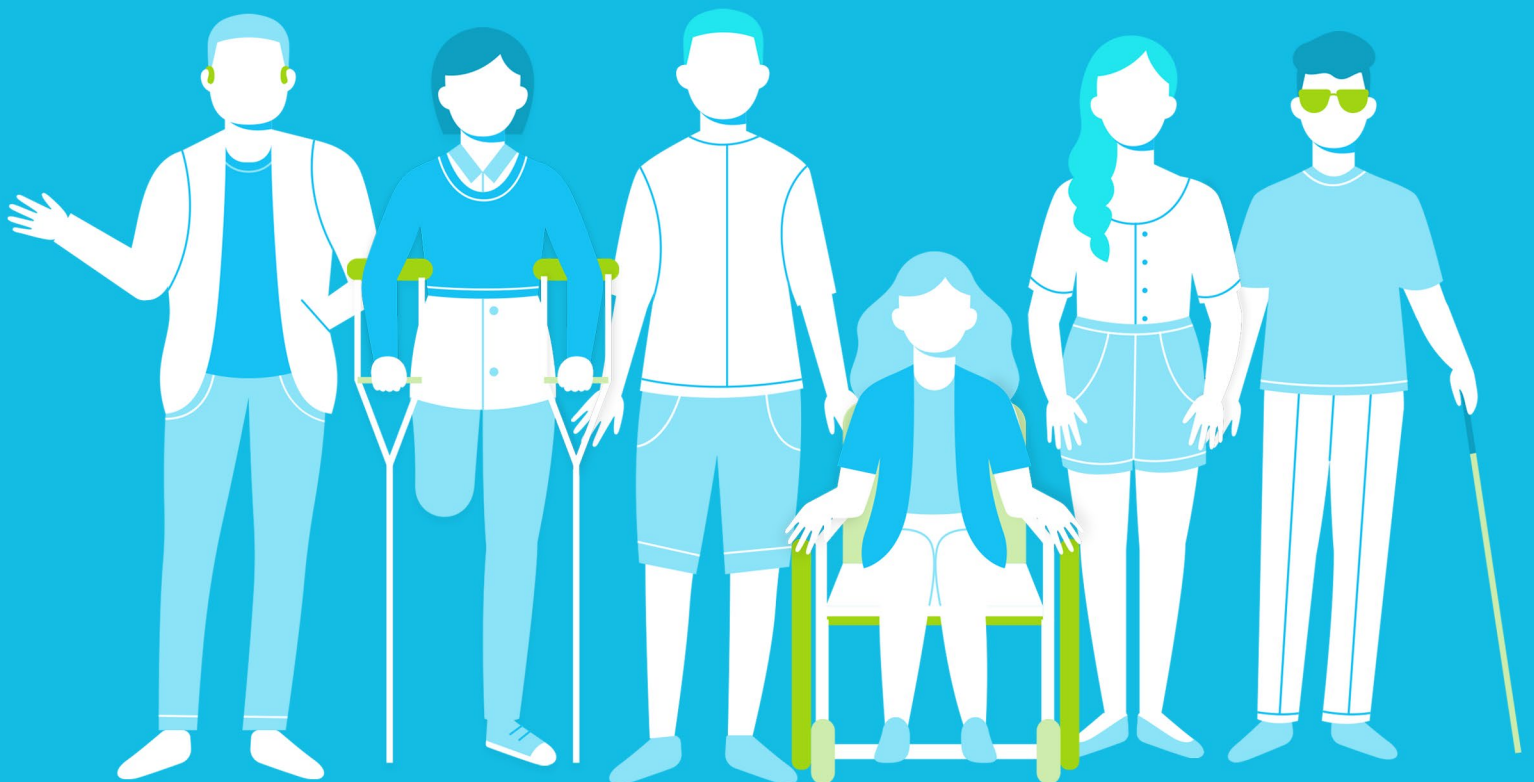


# PHILIPPINE DISABILITY SECTOR RESEARCH

An Initial Analysis of Access to Social and Public Services, Education,  
Work and Employment, and Civic Participation and Governance

OCTOBER 2021



**BEYOND  
EDUCATION**  
*Inclusive schools, inclusive societies.*

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The Australian Embassy - The Asia Foundation Partnership in the Philippines



**Philippine Disability Sector Research:  
An Initial Analysis of Access to Social and Public Services, Education,  
Work and Employment, and Civic Participation and Governance**

By Beyond Education

Kaisa Ligaya Sol Cruz, Rosalynn Estor, Irene Marie Malabanan, Alyanna Tamayo,  
Patrick Jay Veril, Dr. Peter Grimes, Dr. Marieke Stevens, Trang Vu Huyen, and  
Jan Erron Celebrado

Cover and Layout Design: Therese Gadi

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THE ASIA FOUNDATION  
Unit 2001 Greenfield Tower  
Mayflower corner Williams Street, Greenfield District  
Mandaluyong City, Philippines 1550  
Telephone: +63 (2) 8722 9999  
[www.asiafoundation.org](http://www.asiafoundation.org)

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>4Ps</b>	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
<b>AICS</b>	Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation
<b>AOM</b>	Audit Observation Memorandum
<b>APP</b>	Accessible Polling Places
<b>ASP</b>	Autism Society of the Philippines
<b>BARMM</b>	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
<b>BEST</b>	Basic Education Sector Transformation
<b>COMELEC</b>	Commission on Elections
<b>COVID-19</b>	Novel Coronavirus 2019
<b>CPU</b>	Child Protection Unit
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CREDe</b>	Child Rights in Education Desk
<b>DAP</b>	Development Academy of the Philippines
<b>DepEd</b>	Department of Education
<b>DepEd BLD-SID</b>	Bureau of Learning Delivery – Student Inclusion Division of the Department of Education
<b>DICT</b>	Department of Information and Communications Technology
<b>DOH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DOLE</b>	Department of Labor and Employment
<b>DOLE-BLE</b>	Bureau of Labor and Employment of the Department of Labor and Employment
<b>DOTr</b>	Department of Transportation
<b>DOTr-TFA</b>	Task Force on Accessibility of the Department of Transportation
<b>DPWH</b>	Department of Public Works and Highways
<b>DPWH-BMC</b>	Building Management Cluster of the Department of Public Works and Highways
<b>DRRM</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
<b>DSWD</b>	Department of Social Welfare and Development
<b>DTI</b>	Department of Trade and Industry
<b>EBEIS</b>	Enhanced Basic Education Information System

<b>ECCD</b>	Early Childhood Care and Development
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FSL</b>	Filipino Sign Language
<b>GC4</b>	General Comment No. 4 to Article 24 of the UNCRPD
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IDEA</b>	International Deaf Education Association
<b>IEC</b>	Information, Education, and Communication Activities
<b>INSET</b>	In-Service Training
<b>IRR</b>	Implementing Rules and Regulations
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KWF</b>	Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino
<b>LAC</b>	Learning Action Cell
<b>LGU</b>	Local Government Unit
<b>LIS</b>	Learner Information System
<b>MFAT</b>	Multi-factored Assessment Tool
<b>MSSD</b>	Ministry of Social Services and Development
<b>NCDA</b>	National Council on Disability Affairs
<b>NDPS</b>	National Disability Prevalence Survey
<b>NGO</b>	Non-government organization
<b>NHTO</b>	National Household Targeting Office
<b>NHTS-PR</b>	National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction
<b>NSCR</b>	North-South Commuter Railway Extension
<b>OPD</b>	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
<b>PDAO</b>	Persons with Disability Affairs Office
<b>PESO</b>	Public Employment Service Offices
<b>PIMS</b>	Persons with Disability Information Management System
<b>PIN</b>	Project Inclusion Network
<b>PPSSH</b>	Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads
<b>PPSS</b>	Philippine Professional Standards for Supervisors
<b>PPST</b>	Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers
<b>PSA</b>	Philippine Statistics Authority
<b>RA</b>	Republic Act
<b>RHU</b>	Rural Health Unit
<b>SERG</b>	Sustaining Education Reform Gains
<b>SPED</b>	Special Education
<b>TESDA</b>	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
<b>TIP</b>	Teacher Induction Program
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>UNCRPD</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UN OHCHR</b>	United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner
<b>W-DARE</b>	Women with Disability taking Action on Reproductive and Sexual Health

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Philippines ratified the UNCRPD in 2008, formally joining the international community in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. In line with this, the Philippine Constitution supports the establishment of social safeguards to address the needs of persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). In addition, Republic Act No. 7277 or the ‘Magna Carta for Disabled Persons’ provides a comprehensive policy backing for “the improvement of the total well-being of persons with disabilities and their integration into the mainstream of society” (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). Many other policies for persons with disabilities intended to ensure equitable access to social and public services, education, work and employment, and civic participation and governance have been developed through the efforts of the government, non-government organizations (NGO), and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD).

Despite an encouraging policy environment, many persons with disabilities still experience barriers in accessing public and social services, quality educa-

tion, equitable work and employment, and full participation in political and public life. Evidence-based policy development and implementation is key to reducing these barriers and advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. The Coalitions for Change program of The Asia Foundation and the Australian Embassy, aims to support policy development, adoption, introduction, and implementation for a disability-inclusive Philippine society. As part of the program, this research aims to contribute to the establishment of a more robust knowledge-based disability sector in the Philippines.

The current study sought to give an overview of the disability sector, and to inform future programs and policy development work by providing an initial analysis of (1) the extent to which the rights of persons with disabilities are being met, (2) the existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from access and inclusion, (3) the roles of duty-bearers from government agencies, NGOs, and OPDs in addressing these barriers, and (4) the challenges encountered in the process.

Specifically, the study focused on four key areas critical for individuals to thrive across their life cycles, namely, social and public services, education, work and employment, and civic participation and governance by exploring three main research questions:

- 1 To what extent are the rights of persons with disabilities being met in each key area?**
- 2 What are the existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights?**
- 3 How do key duty-bearers address existing barriers and promote disability-inclusive development?**



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was used to develop a conceptual framework for the study. Indicators were developed based on articles that correspond to the key areas.

KEY AREA	UNCRPD ARTICLE
SOCIAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES	Article 09: Accessibility Article 25: Health Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation
EDUCATION	Article 24: Education, General Comment No. 4
WORK AND EMPLOYMENT	Article 27: Work and employment
CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE	Article 29: Participation in political and public life

The research focused on documenting and exploring three particular components affecting the fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities according to the UNCRPD, these are (1) the policies, (2) the implementation of programs promoting inclusion, and (3) the role of stakeholders and duty-bearers in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities.

The research made use of high-level interviews and focus group discussions from key government agencies, NGOs and OPDs who contribute to policy design and implementation. A total of 58 unique participants were interviewed, of these, 33 were government agencies, 15 were NGOs and 10 were OPDs. For each key area, 21 organizations were interviewed for social and public services, 16 for education, 17 for work and employment, and 12 for civic participation and governance. Data from the interviews were shared and integrated into the discussion of the results across all key areas.

### To what extent are the rights of persons with disabilities met in each key area?

The initial analysis showed that significant progress has been made in the efforts in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities through policy development and implementation. The existing national policies encourage a disability-inclusive Philippine community. The country, through its primary disability policy the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons – operationalized through its Implementing Rules and Regulations

(IRR) and further reinforced by its amendment in 2007 – provides a comprehensive policy framework in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities and enabling their full and equal participation in the society (Republic of the Philippines, 1987; Republic of the Philippines, 1992; Republic of the Philippines, 2007). Many other local policies have been developed to further the rights and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, however, these laws are not yet in full alignment with the UNCRPD. In addition, policy implementation still needs to be strengthened. The key areas and the supplementing policies and programs are discussed in more detail in the succeeding sections.

### Social and Public Services

#### Accessibility

The UNCRPD recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to access, on an equal basis with others, the physical environment, transportation, and information and communication, including information, communications technologies and systems, and access to other facilities and services open or provided to the public (United Nations, 2006). Article 9 of the UNCRPD states that governments should implement necessary measures to ensure accessibility to enable persons with disability to be independent and to participate in the society (United Nations, 2006).

In accordance with the UNCRPD, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons mandates the barrier-free access

of persons with disabilities to buildings, transportation, and transport facilities to promote the mobility of persons with disabilities. Batas Pambansa Bilang 344 or the Accessibility Law reinforces the rights of persons with disabilities by requiring buildings, institutions, establishments, and public utilities to install access facilities and features (Republic of the Philippines, 1982). The IRR of the Accessibility Law further provides guidelines for the minimum requirements for the physical accessibility of public spaces, such as airports, government buildings, education institutes, recreational spaces, and workplaces. In relation to equitable access to communication and information, Republic Act No. 11106 or ‘The Filipino Sign Language (FSL) Act’ provides guidelines to equitable access to information and freedom of expression for the Deaf (Republic of the Philippines, 2018). However, the IRR of the FSL Act is still being developed by the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino. Additionally, the Accessibility Law needs to be reviewed and amended by concerned agencies to include provisions on accessible information, education and communication materials.

Government agencies have issued orders and memorandums to support the implementation of existing policies. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has provided clear and comprehensive guidelines to ensure accessibility of all public spaces and buildings (Department of Public Works and Highways, 2009). The Department of Transportation (DoTr) established a Task Force on Accessibility and released a policy with guidelines on transport accessibility (Department of Transportation [DoTr], n.d; DoTr, 2014). The Department of Information and Communications (DICT) has also issued a memorandum circular on the accessibility of web content, which mandates government agencies to ensure that their websites are accessible to persons with disabilities (Department of Information and Communications Technology, 2017).

Programs have been implemented by the government in support of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and the Accessibility Law. Accessibility audits

with the participation of OPDs have been organized by the DPWH to assess the accessibility of public spaces and to provide recommendations to improve their accessibility. In promoting accessible transportation, the DoTr launched an initiative modernizing the Point-to-Point accessible buses for persons with disabilities. FSL insets have been inserted into media, national government announcements, legislative government deliberations and committee hearings, and various online campaigns. The DPWH, DoTr, and the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) have been providing training to government staff and officials to support the implementation of disability inclusive programs.

Despite a policy framework that encourages the accessibility of persons with disabilities in social and public services in the Philippines, the interviews indicated that persons with disabilities continue to experience barriers in accessing public spaces and infrastructure, transportation, and information and communication services. Respondents from OPDs and NGOs emphasized that equitable access to transportation and mobility is central to gaining access to essential services in all key areas such as hospitals and rehabilitation centers, schools and education institutions, workplaces, and polling places. Civil society organizations (CSO) play a key role in supporting the government in their duty in ensuring that roads, transportation, infrastructure, and information and communication technologies are accessible to persons with disabilities, including augmenting the support persons with disabilities need for mobility.

### Health and Rehabilitation

The UNCRPD recognizes that persons with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability. States Parties are required to take all appropriate measures to ensure access for persons with disabilities to health services that are gender-sensitive, including health-related rehabilitation (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). The Philippine Constitution articulates that the

government is committed to providing an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development and other social services for everyone (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). Section 12 of the Constitution further stipulates the establishment of an agency for the rehabilitation services of persons with disabilities. In line with this, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons mandates the Department of Health (DOH) to provide a comprehensive and integrated national health program in coordination with the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, now NCDA, for (1) the prevention of disability, (2) the recognition and early diagnosis of disability, and (3) the early rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992).

The Philippine government has made significant efforts to enact laws and policies that promote the access of persons with disabilities to quality health and rehabilitation services. Republic Act No. 11228, 'An Act Providing for the Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage for All Persons with Disability' was enacted in 2018 to amend the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. The amendments mandate PhilHealth, in coordination with relevant national agencies such as the DOH, Department of Social Welfare (DSWD), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the NCDA, and the local government units (LGU) developed health packages and programs for persons with disabilities to address their health and rehabilitation needs (Republic Act of the Philippines, 2019).

Key government agencies have also established and implemented programs to address the need for adequate healthcare and rehabilitation. The DSWD provides rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities through community-based facilities, residential care facilities, and non-residential care facilities. Capacity building programs and training for key individuals have also been organized by the DSWD, the DOH, and the NCDA for government staff and other stakeholders.

Despite the policies and programs of various departments and the programs of CSOs, the access of persons

with disabilities to appropriate health and rehabilitation remains to be improved. Respondents indicated that persons with disabilities still experience challenges in gaining equitable access to health care and health services. Aside from the costs of these services, barriers such as the inaccessibility of infrastructure, lack of inclusive attitudes from health professionals, processes that require numerous documents, and expenses they must incur for transportation to health and rehabilitation services still need to be addressed. Furthermore, health policies and rehabilitative programs implemented in both urban locations, and rural hospitals and clinics remain under-budgeted and incapable of implementing and expanding services to adequately meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Additionally, the health and rehabilitation sector are challenged by a lack of complete, accurate, and relevant data on persons with disabilities. OPD members and NGOs continue to push advocacies and policy reforms to ensure a more holistic social protection for persons with disabilities.

## Education

The Philippine Constitution articulates the government's commitment to protect and promote the rights of all individuals to quality education and to provide appropriate measures to make education accessible for all (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). Specific to ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities to quality education, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons mandates equal access to education for all by declaring it unlawful for any educational institution to refuse a person's admission to the institution because of disability (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). It articulates the establishment of special education classes, and braille and record libraries in provinces, cities, and municipalities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). On the other hand, Republic Act No. 10533 or 'The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013' aims towards inclusion for all children in the basic education, including children with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 2013c). Recent policy issuances and programs of the Department of Education (DepEd) are now anchored on the said act.

The Philippines have implemented various initiatives to provide children with disabilities with access to quality education. At the policy level, the Congress is in the process of developing the Inclusive Education Bill. DepEd has issued department orders to promote inclusive education, such as DepEd Order No. 72, series 2009 or the Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children, and Inclusive Education Policy Framework for Basic Education as part of DepEd Order No. 21, series 2019. Capacity building activities on inclusive education for general education teachers and education leaders on inclusive education are also being implemented. Across different levels of governance, DepEd has been implementing in-service training programs for teachers on inclusive education. For pre-service teacher education, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has issued CHED Memorandum Orders No. 74 to 82, series of 2017 that require all teacher education students to take a three-unit course on “Foundation of Special and Inclusive Education” as part of the Professional Education Courses. However, initial findings indicated that the capacity of in-service teachers to teach diverse learners still needs to be strengthened. General education teachers should be capacitated on the principles of inclusive education to effectively implement inclusion in their respective classrooms. This includes ensuring all teachers are equipped with inclusive classroom pedagogy and strategies, such as conducting training on universal design for learning, differentiated instruction, and inclusive assessment.

There are still gaps that need to be addressed to ensure full implementation of inclusive education. The rights-based concept of inclusive education, as intended in the UNCRPD and General Comment No. 4 to Article 24 of the UNCRPD (GC4), is yet to be fully understood or realized in the Philippines in both policy development and program implementation levels. Segregated and integrated classes as options for education of children with disabilities continue to exist with the majority of children with disabilities enrolled in special education units in schools, even though disability-inclusion is being promoted as the main approach for teaching

children with disabilities (Development Academy of the Philippines, 2018). In addition, special curricula for children with disabilities still exist which tends to lower the quality of education for children with disabilities.

Access to physical infrastructures and buildings should be improved as well, according to some respondents, majority of schools are still not compliant with the Accessibility Law. Accessibility features should also not be limited to provision of ramps and handrails. Based on the data gathered, children with disabilities have difficulty accessing schools due to inaccessible physical environment. Aside from the physical environment, safe classroom environment is important to keep children with disabilities in school. Bullying and discrimination are still some of the reasons why children with disabilities drop out of school. Clear guidelines to protect children with disabilities should be established and implemented.

## Work and Employment

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the right of everyone to work and to free choice of employment, with equal pay for equal work under just and favorable conditions (United Nations, 1948). Aligned to this, the UNCRPD affirms the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, in an environment that is open, inclusive, and accessible (United Nations, 2006).

Likewise, the Philippine Constitution affords full protection to labor and promotes full employment and equal employment opportunities for all, including entitlement of workers to security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage, as well as participation in policy and decision-making of the Philippines, 1987). This imperative is affirmed in the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons which upholds the rights of persons with disabilities to access opportunities for suitable employment, subject to the same terms and conditions of employment and the same compensation, privileges, benefits, fringe benefits,

incentives, or allowances as other workers (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). Additionally, as amended in Republic Act No. 10524, ‘An Act Expanding the Positions Reserved for Persons with Disability’, at least one per cent of all positions in all government agencies, offices, or corporations shall be reserved for persons with disabilities; while private corporations with more than 100 employees are encouraged to reserve at least one per cent of all positions for persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 2013b).

Significant efforts were made at the policy and program levels to safeguard the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. Access to decent work in an open labor market is championed by multiple stakeholders, with policies in place to regulate relations between workers and employers in both private and public sectors. The Labor Code of the Philippines affords protection to labor and avoids unfair treatment as well as exploitation in the private sector, while the Civil Service Commission regulates the employment and working conditions in the public sector. Government agencies and CSOs have also initiated programs to increase access to decent work through sheltered employment, supported employment, and livelihood programs.

However, literature review and data collection indicated that inclusive employment is not yet fully understood and implemented, as segregated employment and discrimination towards employees with disabilities continue to exist. Barriers to accessing work opportunities in an open labor market must be addressed, including low participation in basic and technical education and lack of accessible infrastructure and communication services. Advocacy and awareness-raising must also be strengthened to address negative attitudes and perceptions in the workplace and in the wider community.

## Civic Participation and Governance

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the right of everyone to take part in the government

of one’s country directly, with equal access to public service, or through freely chosen representatives as expressed in periodic and genuine elections by universal and equal suffrage. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association is likewise articulated, with emphasis that no one may be compelled to belong to any association (United Nations, 1948). In alignment with these rights, the UNCRPD affirms the right of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right to vote and be elected, and to participate fully in the conduct of public affairs by forming, joining, and participating in organizations and associations (United Nations, 2006).

Similarly, the Philippine Constitution safeguards the right of its citizens to vote, emphasizing that no literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage – and guarantees equal access to opportunities for public service. It also recognizes the role of independent people’s organizations in enabling citizens to pursue and protect their interests and aspirations and to participate at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making. (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). In turn, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons protects the rights of persons with disabilities to vote, allowing them to be assisted by a person of their choice in national and local elections. It also recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities to assemble and participate in concerned action held in public, as well as to form organizations or associations that promote their welfare and advance their interests (Republic of the Philippines, 1992).

Substantial efforts were made at the policy and program levels to protect and promote the right of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others. Laws guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to participate in electoral processes, and provisions are made to ensure voting procedures, facilities, and materials are appropriate and accessible. Freedom of association is exercised within a generally positive and enabling

legal, regulatory, and policy environment. Formation and sustainability of organizations of persons with disabilities is supported through allocation of financial resources and provision of technical assistance. Consultation mechanisms are also established to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in public affairs and in discussions about their rights and welfare.

However, literature review and data gathered indicated that political and public life remains inaccessible. Data showed that only a small number of persons with disabilities register as voters and exercise the right to vote on election day. Despite provisions in the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities and related laws, persons with disabilities are excluded from participating in the electoral process due to lack of accessible infrastructure and communication tools, such as sign language interpreters and assistive devices. Although it is recognized that an increasing number of persons with disabilities are able to exercise their freedom of association and become active proponents of positive change, many are still left behind and unable to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

### **What are the existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights?**

This section provides an initial analysis of the existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights. The findings illustrate how barriers can limit persons with disabilities from accessing a need or an opportunity, which can adversely impact various aspects of life, resulting in further disadvantages and inequities over time. Based on the barriers identified by the respondents, the discussions focus on five barrier categories, namely, (1) inaccessible infrastructure and communication, (2) lack of social protection, (3) limited capacity of frontline workers, (4) lack of understanding of awareness and rights, and (5) lack of inclusive attitude and perception.

Data gathered confirmed that persons with disabilities continue to experience substantial barriers in accessing their rights, despite the efforts of key duty-bearers to put in place policies and programs for disability inclusion. Inaccessible infrastructure and communication remain an enormous obstacle, affecting physical as well as socioeconomic mobility. Lack of access to public transportation, information and communication system, and physical structures (i.e., hospitals and clinics, schools and learning centers, voter registration and polling places, and the general work environment) prevent persons with disabilities from accessing services and opportunities and, in general, living more independently and with greater agency.

Social protection, if used well, can provide a basic level of income security that reduce poverty and vulnerability for persons with disabilities, including their families and future generations. This can come in the form of conditional cash transfer, discounts in basic goods and services, health and social insurance programs, and social support services. At present, there remains significant coverage gaps due to inadequate resources, ineffective targeting of recipients, and uneven access in rural and urban areas. These coverage gaps perpetuate disparities in socioeconomic conditions, among others, and prevent persons with disabilities from accessing opportunities for growth and development.

The lack of capacity building for frontline workers continue to exacerbate the issues encountered by persons with disabilities in accessing essential services. Though provisions were made in laws and policies, direct implementers are still not equipped with adequate technical knowledge and skills to carry out their designated roles and responsibilities. Some respondents in this study shared that there is lack of capacity in providing early identification and intervention services, employing inclusive classroom pedagogy and strategies, integrating fair and inclusive practices in human resource management, and implementing inclusive election policies in the field, among others.

Respondents in this study also highlighted the importance of educating key duty-bearers and the general public on the rights of persons with disabilities. The lack of awareness and understanding of these rights resulted in inadequate provision of services and opportunities and, when provided, are sometimes charity-driven rather than rights-based. Furthermore, the lack of inclusive attitudes and perceptions results in exclusion of persons with disabilities from society. According to some respondents, persons with disabilities were kept by their families from going outside their house because of shame and/or fear of judgement from people. Some respondents shared that there are schools that do not accept student with disabilities, while employers perceive a higher risk in hiring workers with disabilities. Lastly, some respondents pointed out that, as women with disabilities, they experience discrimination from their male counterparts, highlighting the need for the intersectionality of gender and disability to be acknowledged by policy makers and program implementers in the sector.

### How do the key duty-bearers address existing barriers and promote disability inclusive development?

This section of the study presents an initial analysis of how key duty-bearers address existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights. In particular, it examines the alignment of current interventions and practices vis-à-vis principles and standards of disability inclusive development. Notable practices as well as roadblocks are discussed in each component of disability inclusive development, namely, (1) leadership and strategic direction, (2) data collection, consolidation, and management, (3) policy formulation and review, (4) budget deliberation and allocation, (5) program design and implementation, and (6) program monitoring and evaluation.

Data gathered in this research study indicate that key duty-bearers have a clear understanding of their roles and functions in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. Collaboration and complementation have allowed government agencies, OPDs, and NGOs

to pool their expertise and resources together and implement disability inclusive programs and services. However, as acknowledged by the respondents, these efforts and initiatives are not enough to address existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights and participating in society on an equal basis with others. As it stands, current laws and policies are promising but are not fully implemented. Some laws and policies require updating, amendment, or further clarification. Program design and implementation follows the twin-track approach to development but lean heavily toward disability-specific measures rather than mainstreaming.

According to the respondents, leadership needs to be more compelling, strategic, and dynamic, as the sector calls for strategic direction, coordinated action, and system-wide transformation. An operational framework to promote disability inclusive development is a good start, but a clear and comprehensive roadmap must be developed to establish goals and targets that key duty-bearers can commit to, work toward, and be accountable for. With a roadmap guiding the sector, principles and approaches to disability inclusion can be better defined and understood by stakeholders and integrated accordingly in policy formulation and review, budget deliberation and allocation, and program design and implementation.

Moreover, a centralized data management system must be established to capture accurate and reliable data that government agencies can use at the local, regional, and national levels and share with other stakeholders, as may be appropriate. Over time, data can be collected and used in a more intentional and systematic manner, allowing key stakeholders to monitor progress vis-à-vis national goals and targets, and evaluate impact of programs and services on the lives of persons with disabilities. Based on concrete data and evidence, particularly the experiences and situations of persons with disabilities, key duty-bearers can address existing barriers in a more effective manner and adopt practices that truly promote disability inclusive development.

## Recommendations

The initial analysis recommends a more in-depth exploration of the critical themes and issues surfaced by the research. To address the main barriers identified in the research, this study has the following main recommendations:

- The development of a roadmap with clear targets and indicators of success for the disability sector to measure its progress towards upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. The roadmap can serve as a guide for stakeholders from various government agencies, NGOs and OPDs to align their programs and plans, and support the further articulation and implementation of the operational framework on disability inclusive development of the NCDA.
- Government agencies duty-bearers of the disability-inclusive agenda conduct a self-evaluation of their mandates and the implementation of their mandates in alignment with national laws and policies to see how they can further strengthen their role as duty-bearers of disability-inclusion.
- Conduct a Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices (KAP) Study on disability-inclusion particularly for leaders and front liners of key government agencies in the key focus areas of the study.
- Conduct a review of capacity building needs of frontline workers in the key areas of the study to identify how these can be further strengthened.
- Conduct a review of capacity building and organizational needs of OPDs and PDAOs to gain an understanding of how they can be strengthened in supporting and advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Conduct research on best practices for data collection, storage, and management for

disability inclusion to support the establishment of a centralized data system that would have synergized and integrated methods for collecting, storing, and updating information on persons with disabilities based on the Washington Group of questions. Support and synergize the current efforts to streamline data collection, storage and management being initiated by OPDs and various government agencies.

- Conduct a policy review of disability laws across the key areas using the UNCRPD and the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons as a framework to identify gaps and bottlenecks in policy implementation and to provide recommendations on how policy implementation can be strengthened.
- Conduct a study on the practices for inter-sectoral collaboration in the country and identify promising practices that can inform how stakeholders from various sectors can work together to better advance the needs of persons with disabilities in the country.



# INTRODUCTION

Countries have been working towards an inclusive society where all individuals, including those with disabilities, can participate and thrive. International legal frameworks and agreements strengthen these advancements efforts. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pledges to “leave no one behind” and provides a plan of action for the international community towards a peaceful and prosperous world, wherein the dignity of each individual person and equality for all are the fundamental principles (United Nations, 2015). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides guidelines to ensure that persons with disabilities have the freedom to exercise their rights, to be subjected to equitable treatment, to have access to their basic needs, to be protected from violence and exploitation, and to be able to fully participate within their communities (United Nations, 2006).

The Philippines ratified the UNCRPD in 2008, formally joining the international community in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. The Philippine Constitution supports the establishment of social safeguards to address the needs of persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). In addition, Republic Act No. 7277 or the ‘Magna Carta for Disabled Persons’ provides a comprehensive policy supporting for “the improvement of the total well-being of persons with disabilities and their integration into the mainstream of society” (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). Many other policies for persons with disabilities aim to ensure equitable access to social and public services, education, work and employment, and civic participation and governance have been developed through the efforts of the government, non-government organizations (NGO), and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD).

Despite an encouraging policy environment, many persons with disabilities still experience barriers in accessing public and social services and quality education, enjoying equitable work and employment, and fully participating in political and public life. Evidence-based policy development and implementation is key to reducing these barriers and advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. The Coalitions for Change (CfC) program of The Asia Foundation and the Australian Embassy, aims to support policy development, adoption, introduction, and implementation for a disability-inclusive Philippine society. As part of the CfC program, this research aims to contribute to the establishment of a more robust and knowledge-based disability sector of the Philippines, particularly in the key areas of social and public services, education, work and employment, and civic participation and governance.

This initial analysis hopes to contribute to the disability sector by providing an overview of how the sector is responding to the need to advance the rights of and reduce barriers for persons with disabilities. It aims to inform future programs and policy development work of The Asia Foundation and other stakeholders, by providing an initial analysis of the extent to which rights of persons with disabilities in the Philippines are being met, how existing barriers hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights, and how duty-bearers from government agencies, NGOs and OPDs address these barriers and contribute to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities and to building a more inclusive Philippine society. Bottlenecks and challenges in the inclusion process are also discussed to highlight areas that need to be examined and prioritized. At the end of the report, recommendations are given to further the results of the initial analysis and help strengthen the work of stakeholders in the sector.

# METHODOLOGY

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## 3.1 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The study attempted to provide a broad overview of the experiences of persons with disabilities across key areas, specifically, the rights of persons with disabilities, the barriers that individuals encounter, and the response of duty-bearers to these barriers. It aimed to ensure that persons with disabilities are fully represented and heard in the data collection, analysis, and final report. The principle of nothing for us, without us<sup>1</sup> is enshrined in all aspects of the methodology guaranteeing that representative voices of persons with disabilities are reflected in design, analysis, and reporting.

The goal was to collect evidence relevant to the key focus areas of the study and to provide a baseline for further analysis through supplementary research, stakeholder discussions and collaboration, and program review and evaluation. The study did not attempt to make conclusive statements about the status of the disability sector in the Philippines, as that would require a different research design, and a more

in-depth research focus and analysis than what this research had resources for.

The research explored the research questions through high level interviews and focus group discussions with participants who contribute to policy design and implementation. Representatives from key government agencies, NGOs, and OPDs were engaged as participants. It is important to note that the study is based on the perspectives of different stakeholders and, although this provides valuable insight, the study is not meant to be an objective evaluation of sector stakeholders, policies, and programs.

Limited resources and constraints brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic limited the research activities to online interviews and focus group discussions. It also meant the scope of the research had to be restricted to participants from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao who have access to information communication technology (ICT) equipment and internet.

1 IDA. (2020). What an inclusive equitable quality education means to us. [https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida\\_ie\\_flagship\\_report\\_english\\_29.06.2020.pdf](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida_ie_flagship_report_english_29.06.2020.pdf)

### 3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

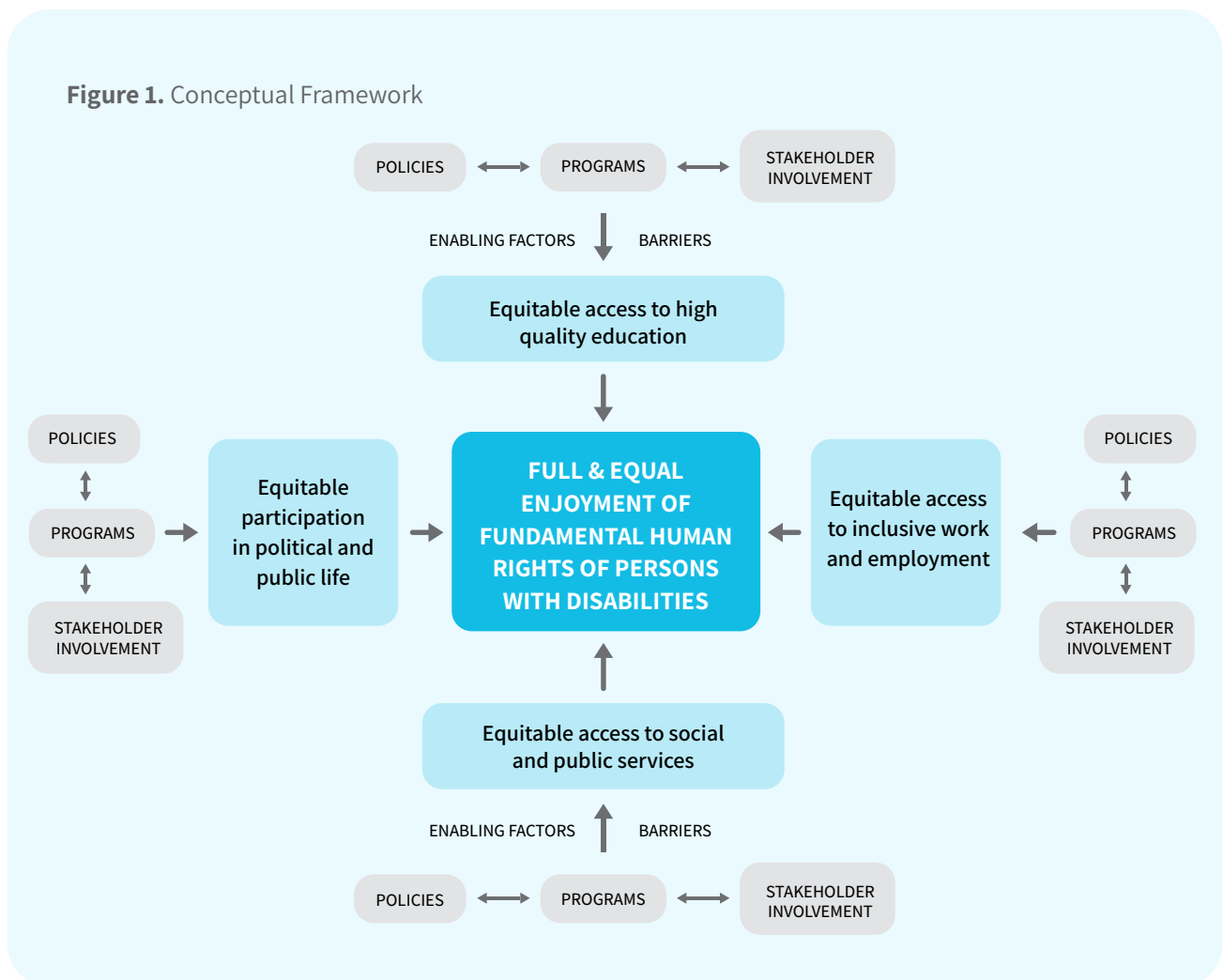
This initial analysis aimed to explore the following questions:

- 1 To what extent are the rights of persons with disabilities being met in each key areas, namely, social and public services, education, work and employment, and civic participation and governance?
- 2 What are the existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights?
- 3 How do the key duty-bearers address existing barriers and promote disability-inclusive development?

### 3.3 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

A rights-based approach was used to investigate the research questions and to analyze and discuss the data.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



The UNCRPD defines persons with disabilities as individuals “who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” (United Nations, 2006, p.4) The social model of disability recognizes that when the rights of persons with disabilities are not met, barriers to participation in the environment need to be removed. Components within the system can create an enabling environment for the removal of these barriers and support the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities. Alternatively, they can also perpetuate barriers that keep persons with disabilities from participating in society. The research focused on documenting and exploring three components in the system, (1) policies, (2) the implementation of programs promoting inclusion, and (3) the role of stakeholders and duty-bearers in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. The conceptual framework posits that policies, programs, and stakeholder participation impact the equitable access of persons with disabilities within each key area. The research explored how these affect the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities by examining the policies and programs within the key areas against the UNCRPD and documenting how duty-bearers and stakeholders safeguard and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities.

The conceptual framework reflects a whole systems approach, which recognizes the complexity of the interaction and interrelatedness of different issues at different levels within a society. A whole systems approach puts forward that removing barriers to participation requires simultaneous interventions

across levels and participation by various duty-bearers and stakeholders. The components in this framework may lead to the enjoyment of equitable access and participation of persons with disabilities in key areas by working towards minimizing barriers and developing enabling mechanisms for inclusion. Access to these rights is, however, also affected by barriers within the context. Thus, aside from documenting how policies, programs, and stakeholders uphold the rights of persons with disabilities, the research also aims to surface these barriers. Aside from affecting the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities, the different components in focus also influence each other and affect how they fulfil their role in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, policies facilitating inclusion provide an imperative for stakeholders to develop and implement inclusive programs and stakeholder participation in lobbying for inclusive policies lead to the development of a more equitable access to the key areas. These interactions were taken into consideration and documented in the research as well.

The research framework shows the relationship between policies, programs and stakeholder involvement and the fulfilment of the goals of UNCRPD. However, it is important to note that these are not the only factors that will lead to full and equal enjoyment of fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities, instead the framework serves to illustrate the different components being investigated in the research and their relationship with one another.

The following UNCRPD articles formed the foundation for the conceptual framework. Annex 1 shows the indicators for each of the articles of the UNCRPD.

**TABLE 1.** Key Areas and UNCRPD Articles

KEY AREA	UNCRPD ARTICLE
SOCIAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES	Article 09: Accessibility Article 25: Health Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation
EDUCATION	Article 24: Education, General Comment No. 4
WORK AND EMPLOYMENT	Article 27: Work and employment
CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE	Article 29: Participation in political and public life

## 3.4 METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

### 3.4.1 Overall Approach

#### Participative Approach to Research

A participative approach guided the conduct of the research, wherein a reference group composed of experts from the disability sector and persons with disabilities provided inputs on the design, selection of research participants, and the review of draft reports.

#### Qualitative Methods

The research primarily used qualitative methods for data gathering. Qualitative research methods were deemed appropriate for the context of the study as little is known about the experiences of persons with disabilities in the country. Thus, the research benefited from exploring the experiences of persons with disabilities using open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. The interview guide for each stakeholder group in the key areas are included in Annex 2: Guide Questions - Social and Public Services, Annex 3: Guide Questions – Education, Annex 4: Guide Questions – Work and Employment, and Annex 5: Guide Questions – Civic Participation and Governance.

The following research approaches were used to respond to the research questions:

**Desk Review** – Secondary data were gathered from policy and program documents, strategy papers, studies, and reports on disability inclusion.

**Focus Group Discussions** – Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with non-government organizations active in the sector and the regional office of key government agencies.

**Key Informant Interviews** – Key Informant Interviews (KII) with identified disability duty-bearers for each of the key area were conducted through online and virtual calls.

Although the approach was mostly qualitative, quantitative data coming from a range of sources of information, such as relevant statistics and program reports, were also incorporated into the study to allow for triangulation and cross-checking of findings.

### Disability Inclusive Research Processes

The research team employed disability inclusive research processes in the collection and analysis of the data. Training on data collection processes strengthened the capacity of the research team for disability-inclusive research. Accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, were provided to the participants of the research.

### Ethics

The design and process of the study was guided by inclusion principles and the ethical considerations of conducting research. The participants of the interviews and focus group discussions were assured confidentiality. Rights of persons with disabilities were also safeguarded and all processes undertaken considered the participation of persons with disabilities throughout the research process.

## 3.4.2 Sampling and Coverage

Convenience and purposive sampling were employed to identify research participants from government agencies mandated to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities, NGOs working in the disability sector, and OPDs representing various disability groups.

A total of 58 unique participants were interviewed for the study. Of these, 33 were government agencies, 15 were NGOs, and 10 were OPDs. Among the 58 participants, 21 organizations were interviewed for social and public services, 16 for education, 17 for work and employment, and 12 for civic participation and governance. Although, organizations and agencies were invited and interviewed for a specific key area, information from interviews and FGDs were shared and integrated into the discussion of the results across key areas. The number of agencies and organizations who were interviewed or have participated in the FGDs per key area are indicated in Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2.** Number of participants in the interviews and FGDs

KEY AREA	Government	NGOs	OPDs	Total no. of participants
SOCIAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES	15	2	4	21
EDUCATION	7	6	3	16
WORK AND EMPLOYMENT	6	6	5	17
CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE	6	3	3	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>TOTAL NO. OF UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>58</b>

The team invited participants from the national level and participants focused on a particular island group to ensure a comprehensive representation. The table below shows the geographic scope of the participating organizations and agencies.

**TABLE 3.** Geographic scope of the participating organizations/agencies

KEY AREA	National	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
SOCIAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES	10	7	1	3
EDUCATION	11	3	1	1
WORK AND EMPLOYMENT	12	3	1	1
CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE	10	2	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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## 4.1 PROGRESS IN UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BEING MET IN EACH KEY AREA?

### 4.1.1 Overview

An overview of the progress in policy development and program implementation for disability-inclusion in the following key areas, (1) social and public services, (2) education, (3) work and employment, and (4) civic participation and governance is discussed in the succeeding sections. The data obtained from the KIIs, FGDs, and the desk review were analyzed based on the rights of persons with disabilities articulated in the UNCRPD.

The section on social and public services (5.1.2), divided into two main parts, discusses the laws and policies developed to ensure, (1) persons with disabilities' access to physical environment, transportation, and information and communication (5.1.2.1), and (2) health and rehabilitation services (5.1.2.2). This includes program initiatives and mechanisms implemented by key duty-bearers that promote accessibility and access to health and rehabilitation services.



The section on education (5.1.3) provides the current progress in supporting the access and participation of children with disabilities to high-quality education. Specifically, it examines how (1) the policy development and programs of the government related to access and participation to inclusive education, (2) safe and inclusive learning environment, (3) inclusive leadership, principles, and cultures, (4) training for all teachers and personnel on inclusive education, and (5) curriculum and assessment methods are aligned with the provisions of UNCRPD and General Comment No. 4 to Article 24 of the UNCRPD (GC4).

The section on work and employment (5.1.4) discusses the access of persons with disabilities to decent work in the open labor market, both in the private and public sectors, and presents how key duty-bearers promote increased work opportunities through sheltered employment, supported employment, and livelihood programs. It also looks at the extent to which policies are being implemented to promote fair and

non-discriminatory employment practices, as well as safe and healthy working environment for all workers.

The section on civic participation and governance (5.1.5) discusses the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life. It presents various initiatives of key duty-bearers to make the elections more accessible, particularly through reasonable accommodations in voter registration, election campaigns, and election protocols, and shares an account of the experiences of persons with disabilities in previous elections. It also discusses how key duty-bearers promote freedom of association and participation in public affairs by supporting the formation of organizations of persons with disabilities and facilitating their engagement in policy formulation, implementation, and review.

The following laws are the primary policy framework for disability-inclusion across key areas at the time of writing.

**TABLE 4.** R.A. 7277 – “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons”

<b>REPUBLIC ACT (R.A.) 7277 - An Act Providing For The Rehabilitation, Self-Development And Self-Reliance Of Disabled Person And Their Integration Into The Mainstream Of Society And For Other Purpose</b>
<p>The ‘Magna Carta for Disabled Persons’ was enacted in July 1991. The Act provides the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities such as employment, education, health, auxiliary social services, telecommunications, accessibility, and political and civil rights. The Act emphasized that every citizen promotes and supports the fulfillment of rights of persons with disabilities without discrimination from the community.</p> <p>Specific to the focus areas of the initial analysis, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons articulates the duty of the State to: (1) ensure the attainment of a barrier-free environment that will enable persons with disabilities to access public and private buildings as mentioned in the Batas Pambansa Bilang 344 or Accessibility Law and through access features and devices that promote the mobility of persons with disabilities, (2) provide auxiliary devices and services to restore the functioning and participation of persons with disabilities to the community, (3) provide access to quality education and opportunities to develop the skills of persons of disabilities and take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all persons with disabilities, (4) promote and protect the right of persons with disabilities to access health services at an affordable cost; ensure that the national health program provides services for prevention, early identification and intervention; and establish rehabilitation centers in the government hospitals, (5) ensure that persons with disabilities are not denied access to employment opportunities because of their impairment, persons with disabilities have equal access to employment opportunities, remuneration and benefits and promotions; and that persons with disabilities be given proper accommodations in the workplace, and (6) recognize and promote the rights of persons with disabilities to exercise their political and civil rights by being able to vote, and assemble and organize to advance their welfare and interest. The Magna Carta for Disabled Person also states the provision for the appropriation of program implementations of respective government agencies and the penalties for the violation of the act (Republic of the Philippines, 1992).</p>

In 2007, an act amending the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, otherwise known as the “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, And For Other Purposes” was passed into law. The law further reinforces the rights of persons with disabilities in the key areas of the study. Specifically, for social and public services, the amendment specified a 20% discount for health expenses such as medicine, medical and dental services, laboratory fees, professional fees of doctors for persons with disabilities. The law also provides additional provisions for accessibility, through mandating all commercial and government establishments to provide express lanes for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the amendment states that 20% discount are to be given to persons with disabilities for domestic air and sea travel and fares for public railways, skyways, and buses. In relation to the key area of education, the law reinforces the entitlement of persons with disabilities to educational assistance through the provision of scholarships, financial aid, and incentives (Republic of the Philippines, 2007).

**TABLE 5.** Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 – “Accessibility Law”

#### **BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 344 - An Act to Enhance the Mobility of Disabled Persons by Requiring Certain Buildings, Institutions, Establishments and Public Utilities to install Facilities and Other Devices**

The Accessibility Law was enacted in July 1982 to promote the access of persons with disabilities to the physical environment for them to realize their rights and to fully participate in the society. The Law provides the minimum requirements for accessibility for buildings, institutions, establishments, and public utilities for persons with disabilities through the installation of accessible features and facilities, including graphic signs. Some examples of facilities and features that must be made accessible as cited in the law are ramps, railings, floorings, and public toilets in public spaces such as airports, government buildings, education institutes, recreational spaces, and workplaces. The law also provides clear requirements for the accessibility of public transportation. Further, the law articulates the following national agencies as responsible for the administration and enforcement of the law: Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation (DoT), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in coordination with the National Council of Disability Affairs (Republic of the Philippines, 1982).

## 4.1.2 Social and Public Services

### ACCESSIBILITY

#### Introduction

The UNCRPD recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to access, on an equal basis with others, the physical environment, transportation, and information and communications, including information, communications technologies, and systems and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public (United Nations, 2006). Article 9 of the UNCRPD articulates that governments should implement necessary measures to ensure accessibility to enable persons with disability to be independent and to participate in the society (United Nations, 2006).

As mentioned previously, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons promotes the rights of persons with disabilities, including the rights to access the public domain.

This includes barrier-free access to buildings, transportation and transport facilities, and mobility (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). Prior to the enactment of the law, the government enacted the Accessibility Law in 1982 to support mobility and access of persons with disabilities to the physical environment (Republic of the Philippines, 1982). Government agencies also issued department orders and memorandums to support the implementation of the Accessibility Law.

This section provides an initial analysis of how policies and programs in the country support the realization of Article 9 of the UNCRPD and upholds the rights of persons with disabilities. It examines the following key aspects of accessibility, (1) equitable access to the physical environment, transportation, service, and information and communication, (2) participation

of persons with disabilities to access audit of public establishments and buildings, and (3) equitable access to trainings and/or campaigns for relevant professionals and for persons with disabilities.

### **Equitable Access to the Physical Environment, Transportation, Service, and Information and Communication**

Accessibility is foundational to upholding the rights of persons with disabilities throughout their life cycle. Without equitable access to the physical environment, transportation service, and information and communication, the participation and access of persons with disabilities to health and rehabilitation, education, employment, and civic participation and governance are hindered. According to the interviewed OPD members, disability-inclusive access means accessible services are implemented in the whole travel cycle, from the point of departure to the point of destination. This includes accessible roads, sidewalks, transportation, and buildings. The data from this study indicated that persons with disabilities continue to experience inaccessible physical environments, transportation, and information and communication in the country which significantly affects their capacity to participate within the society and live independently.

#### **OPD PERSPECTIVE**

Disability-inclusive access means accessible services are implemented in the whole travel cycle, from the point of departure to the point of destination.

**Access to the Physical Environment.** The DPWH provided a clear and comprehensive overview of the type of accommodations required to ensure accessibility of all public spaces and buildings. The DPWH issued Department Order No. 37, series of 2009, or Enforcement of the Accessibility Law along National Roads providing a set of minimum requirements

in building accessible infrastructures and facilities (Department of Public Works and Highways [DPWH], 2009). This includes the following:

- Ensuring international symbols for access are used in designated routes and facilities.
- Ensuring braille symbols are included in signs located in public places and safety routes.
- Provision of tactile blocks in the immediate vicinity of the crossing to guide persons who are blind.
- Installation of light-controlled crossing with pedestrian phases and audible signals.
- Ensuring audible signal used for crossings are easily recognizable from other sounds in the environment to avoid confusion among persons who are blind.
- Provision of dropped curbs at pedestrian crossings and the end of footpaths of private streets or access roads.
- Sidewalks should be provided with slip-resistant materials and should be kept as level as possible.
- Sidewalks should follow “straightforward routes with right angle turns” to guide persons who are blind.
- “Changes in level at sidewalks should be effected by slight ramps and dropped curbs.
- “Provision of planters with dwarf walls or a grass verge, which differentiate the path and the open space (DPWH, 2009).

While the policy articulates the minimum requirements of accessible infrastructures and facilities, this is not yet fully implemented. Interviewed OPD members shared that, despite the legal framework on accessible public infrastructure, they continue to experience barriers (1) narrow sidewalks which do not accommodate persons using wheelchairs, (2) non-availability of tactile provision for persons with visual disabilities, (3) inaudible, and often dysfunctional, stoplight signals, (4) public roads which prioritizes inaccessible overpass bridges, and (5) car-centric public roads which prioritizes private vehicle rather than accessible public transportation.

According to the OPD members interviewed, people with auditive disabilities experience difficulties in airport terminals because the announcement for flight on-boarding and departures are mostly communicated through audio channels. In addition, it is very challenging for people with visual disabilities to travel independently because there is little to no tactile flooring in public establishments and roads. In a 2018 study titled ‘Policy Research Improving School Accessibility through Participatory Monitoring’, 39.53% of the respondents indicated that they have encountered difficulties in going to school because of general inaccessibility of the built environment, including the lack of ramps, covered sidewalks, and unpaved or narrow roads and alleys (ANSA, 2018).

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

People with auditive disabilities experience difficulties in airport terminals because the announcement for flight on-boarding and departures are mostly communicated through audio channels.

The DPWH is currently conducting an accessibility audit. However, according to respondents from the agency, the audit has yet to reach its second phase, which will assess and provide recommendations for

the accessibility of public spaces. The Department is still completing its internal audit of its buildings from Central Office to Division Office.

### Access to the road network and transportation.

UNCRPD Article 9 on accessibility, classifies public transportation into four public conveyances including land transportation, rail transportation, water transportation, and air transportation (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2020). Construction or renovation of public transport utilities should follow the designs and specifications articulated in the IRR of the Accessibility Law to ensure accessibility (National Council on Disability Affairs [NCDA], 2008). In addition, Section 27 of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons articulates the right of persons with disabilities in accessing public transportation facilities. The law further mandates the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to provide social assistance to persons with disabilities in the form of subsidized transportation fees.

To ensure that the transportation system is compliant with the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, the Accessibility Law, and the UNCRPD, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) established the DOTr Task Force on Accessibility (DOTr-TFA) through the issuance of Special Order No. 2007-77 on May 11, 2007. The aim of DOTr-TFA is to provide efficient, secured, and accessible transportation that is compliant with international standards (Department of Transportation [DOTr], n.d.). In 2013, DOTr issued Department Order No. 2014-13, the Policies on Transport Accessibility which articulates the minimum requirements for accessibility and the general requirements for transportation (DOTr, 2014). This includes ensuring designated seats are provided for persons with disabilities in public transportation, spaces or facilities are adequate for wheelchair users, and streets, highways, and transport-related structures follow the requirements for accessibility. However, despite the issuance of a policy on transport accessibility, this is not fully implemented as persons with disabilities still encounter challenges in accessing public transporta-

tion. It is important to consider the varying needs of persons with disabilities when implementing policies on accessibility. For example, ramps are the most common accessibility features being provided, while working elevators are often limited in most MRT/LRT train stations. However, persons who are blind and persons who are hard of hearing will need audio and tactile implements, or sign language interpreters and printed signages, respectively, to be able to navigate transport facilities independently.

Government agencies have developed initiatives to make the road network and transportation accessible for persons with disabilities. In 2016, the DOTr launched an initiative in modernizing the accessible Point-to-Point buses for persons with disabilities. However, the OPDs interviewed in this study shared that there was no follow through after its initial press release. Further, the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) Programs Management Division Sub-Committee on Accessibility on Built Environment and Transportation, the DOTr, the DPWH, and advocacy groups are proposing to update the provisions accessible public transport stipulated in the Accessibility Law.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Equitable access to transportation is a key component of accessible public space and buildings.

Respondents from the disability sector emphasized that equitable access to transportation is a key component of accessible public space and buildings. If persons with disabilities cannot access transportation, accessibility of infrastructures critical for individuals, such as school buildings, offices, and hospitals, cannot be maximized. Some OPDs and NGOs interviewed said that federations of persons with disabilities have collaborated with their local government units (LGU) to provide transport to persons with disabilities. As a result, some local barangay officials

have facilitated the access of persons with disabilities to training courses and health care providers by providing a vehicle or transportation allowance for persons with disabilities. However, efforts such as these are not institutionalized in all LGUs, and not considered a sustainable solution for providing accessible transportation for persons with disabilities.

**Access to information and communication.** Article 9 of the UNCRPD articulates the responsibility of States Parties in ensuring information and communication technologies, including the internet, are accessible to persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2006). Republic Act 11106 or ‘The Filipino Sign Language Act’ enacted in 2018, declares the Filipino Sign Language (FSL) as the national sign language of the Philippines which shall be integrated and used in the health system, public transactions, services, facilities, and media among others (Republic of the Philippines, 2018). The FSL Act also mandates that Filipinos who have auditive disabilities should have equitable access to information and freedom of expression, including the use of the FSL in workplaces, schools, national television news and media, and in all government agencies (Republic of the Philippines, 2018). The law further articulates that FSL interpreter insets should be provided in news and public affairs programs and in education television programs for children. It also mandates Movie and Television Review and Classification Board as the agency responsible for promoting the use of FSL. However, despite being signed into law, the IRR is still being developed by the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino (KWF). **According to some respondents, the development of the IRR was delayed due to the varying perspectives of duty-bearers on the FSL Law. Ownership of the KWF in leading the development of the IRR also needs to be strengthened to be able to push through the IRR of the FSL Law. The lack of an IRR is a significant bottleneck due to the absence of clear guidelines for government agencies and stakeholders to fully implement the FSL Act.**

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) issued Memorandum Circular No. 2017-004, 'Prescribing the Philippine Web Accessibility Policy and Adopting for this Purpose ISO/IEC 40500:2012 Information Technology - W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 as the Philippine standard for making web content more accessible to a wider range of persons with disabilities. As articulated in Section 8, the Circular mandates government agencies to ensure all information uploaded on the government websites are in an accessible format (Department of Information and Communications Technology [DICT], 2017). This includes provision of images that have descriptive texts, documents in machine-readable format, and closed captions and sign language interpretations for audio-video broadcasts. However, as mentioned by one of the reference group members, the policy was not implemented fully as the digital materials uploaded in government websites were not accessible to persons with visual disabilities.

NGOs and OPD members who shared that they have been advocating for the inset of the FSL on the national television channels for news and government announcement for years. The COVID-19 pandemic made the already existing barriers persons with disabilities experience in communication more prominent. According to some NGOs and OPDs respondents, persons who have an auditive disability were one of the last community members to know about the pandemic and the health measures being implemented by the government.

### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

Persons who have an auditive disability were one of the last community members to know about the pandemic and the health measures being implemented by the government.

NGOs and OPDs lobbied rigorously with the Department of Health to ensure that health announcements and

news updates have FSL insets on screen. In response to the advocacy groups, media, national government announcements, legislative government deliberations and committee hearings, and various online campaigns have integrated FSL insets to most of their videos.

To further promote access to information and communication, the NCDA, in collaboration with key government agencies and other stakeholders, is in the process of developing proposed amendments to the Accessibility Law. These will include provisions for equitable access to information, education, and communication (IEC) materials for persons with disabilities since such provisions were not included previously.

### Participation of persons with disabilities in accessibility audits

Conducting accessibility audits on facilities, services, and programs of the government is one of the illustrative indicators of Article 9 of the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2020). The IRR of the Accessibility Law mandates the DPWH (former Ministry of Public Works and Highways) and DOTr (former Ministry of Transportation and Communications) as the government agencies responsible for the administration and enforcement of the provisions articulated in the law (NCDA, 2008). The accessibility audit of physical infrastructure is one of the national strategic programs of the DPWH (Republic of the Philippines, 2016). According to the DPWH, the accessibility audit will be conducted in phases, the first phase is an audit of the central and regional offices of the DPWH, the second phase is an audit of public-owned establishments.

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programs of the DPWH (Republic of the Philippines, 2016). According to the DPWH, the accessibility audit will be conducted in phases, the first phase is an audit of the central and regional offices of the DPWH, the second phase is an audit of public-owned establishments and other government buildings, and the third phase assesses the physical accessibility of private sector buildings and establishments.

In 2018, the DPWH started the first phase and invited OPDs and NGOs to conduct the access audit of DPWH central and regional offices. According to the DPWH respondent, a person using a wheelchair and a person with visual disabilities were invited to conduct the central office audit with their internal team. The team came up with a list of recommendations such as: (a) restrooms should be based on the standards set in the Accessibility Law; (b) ramps should be provided with handrails and follow the right elevation and gradient; and (c) continuous monitoring should be done to ensure accessibility features are put in place.

For the regional office access audits, DPWH forged a collaboration with LGUs, PDAOs represented by persons with disabilities, DSWD, architects and engineers. The DPWH Buildings Management Cluster (BMC) mentioned that the accessibility audit of the regional DPWH buildings and facilities was completed in March 2020 before the start of the community quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The key recommendations of the audit included, (1) standardized measurement of restroom and ramps, (2) installation of handrails for ramps, and (3) provision of tactile flooring for persons with visual disabilities.

Apart from the accessibility audit conducted within the department, the accessibility audit of polling precincts was also part of the major programs of the DPWH in coordination with Commission on Election (COMELEC) and Department of Education (DepEd). According to one of the reference group members, a Memorandum of Agreement between DPWH, DepEd, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), COMELEC, and United Architects of the Philippines was established

after the nationwide pre-election audit in 2016. The MOA aimed to revisit and determine if the findings of the audits were being addressed in preparation for the next election which was 2019. It did however not materialize as new officials were elected at the national government. The lack of political continuity resulted to no follow through on the initiative. As mentioned by the DPWH representative, there is also a plan to conduct access audits of polling precincts for the 2022 elections. However, according to the participants in this study, the implementation was hampered due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on mobilization. The date for the resumption of the accessibility audits is yet to be determined.

#### **Access to training courses and/or campaigns for relevant professionals and for persons with disabilities**

General Comment to Article 9 of the UNCRPD emphasized the importance of providing training courses that would equip professionals and frontline workers in developing accessible physical environments for all individuals, including persons with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013).

In the Philippines, the DPWH administers accessibility audit trainings and seminars for LGUs, PDAOs and DPWH regional offices. Since 2018, the trainings have been facilitated by the United Architects of the Philippines, whose work has been seminal in making public spaces accessible in the country. However, the training courses were discontinued when quarantine measures were imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the respondent from DPWH, the agency continues to explore possibilities of conducting seminars about accessibility through online platforms.

From 2015 to 2016, the DOTr-TFA held disability awareness and sensitivity seminars and orientations for key personnel and staff on the Accessibility Law. Additionally, in 2019, the Project Management Office of the DOTr organized seminars on disability awareness,

although these sessions were not conducted annually. The United Architects of the Philippines was invited to discuss the Accessibility Law and ways to make railways systems more accessible for persons with disabilities, especially for persons with visual disabilities. The 2019 series of orientations under the DOTr invited representatives from the Deaf community to share the barriers they encounter when using transportation.

The NEDA provides training for LGUs, such as disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) and disability inclusive governance. The training on disability inclusive governance is an annual conference where LGUs and PDAOs at the provincial and municipal levels are convened and are given updates, current trends on disability, and information. Further, the NEDA trains persons with disabilities on where to seek assistance on legal matters. Disability sensitivity training is also provided for prosecutors to develop skills in working with persons with disabilities.

The Federation of Las Piñas Persons with Disabilities invested in leadership training for federation officers, wherein they develop the leadership skills of officers from grassroots organizations. The members of the federation shared their lived experiences implementing laws and policies as leaders of the federation where they also collaborated with their local barangays and local government unit to implement their projects and activities.

### Summary

The Philippine government enacted the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities as its primary policy framework for disability-inclusion in the country. The law aims to implement the UNCRPD, including Article 9 on Accessibility. It states that governments should implement measures and mechanisms to ensure accessibility and enable persons with disability to be independent and have equitable participation in society (United Nations, 2006). The Accessibility Law aims to enhance the mobility of persons with disabili-

ties by providing specific measures for accessibility of facilities, buildings, institutions, establishments and other public roads or utilities and devices. It supports the promotion and the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities. However, the Law needs to be amended to update certain provisions, such as the access to online information and communication for persons with disabilities.

Despite the facilitating policy framework on ensuring accessibility of persons with disabilities in social and public services in the Philippines, data from interviews with various stakeholders indicated that persons with disabilities continue to experience barriers in accessing the physical environment, transportation facilities and services, and information and communication technologies facilities. These barriers impede participation and the enjoyment of persons with disabilities to live independently. Challenges in translating the laws and policies into programs and projects that can fulfil the needs of persons with disabilities for equitable access to public spaces. Civil society organizations (CSO) play a key role in supporting the government in their duty to ensure that roads, transportation, infrastructure, and ICT are accessible for persons with disabilities.

Respondents from OPDs reiterated that partial compliance of government agencies to the international and national laws can be considered as non-compliance.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

**Partial compliance of government agencies to the international and national laws can be considered as non-compliance.**

For OPDs, compliance to these laws would mean equitable access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communication, health care and services, rehabilitation and habilitation, and assistive devices. Without proper mechanisms in place to



ensure equitable access to social and public services, persons with disabilities mobility and quality of life remain restricted.

## HEALTH AND REHABILITATION

### Introduction

The UNCRPD recognizes that persons with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination based on disability. States Parties are required to take all appropriate measures to ensure access for persons with disabilities to health services that are gender-sensitive, including health-related rehabilitation (United Nations, 2006).

The 1987 Philippine Constitution articulates that the government's commitment in providing an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development and other social services for everyone (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). Section 12 of the Constitution stipulates the establishment of an agency for the rehabilitation services of persons with disabilities. The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons mandates the Department of Health (DOH) to provide a comprehensive and integrated national health program in coordination with the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, now NCDA for the (1) prevention of disability, (2) recognition and early diagnosis of disability, and (3) early rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). The law also specifies provisions on medical rehabilitation centers in government provincial hospitals. It stipulates that health-rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities should be available at an affordable cost, with personnel specializing in the treatment, at provincial hospitals and municipal health centers.

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Carta for Disabled Persons mandates the Department of Health (DOH) to provide a comprehensive and integrated national health program in coordination with the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons, now NCDA for the (1) prevention of disability, (2) recognition and early diagnosis of disability, and (3) early rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). The law also specifies provisions on medical rehabilitation centers in government provincial hospitals. It stipulates that health-rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities should be available at an affordable cost, with personnel specializing in the treatment, at provincial hospitals and municipal health centers.

Under the Philippine legal system, the UNCRPD Articles 25 and 26 are placed in one key area, 'Health'. Rehabilitation and habilitation are seen as part of the health-care services provided by DOH, in coordination with the DSWD. Therefore, within this study, the key area 'Health' and 'Habilitation and Rehabilitation' are combined.

### Equitable access to quality and affordable health, habilitation and rehabilitation

The Philippine government has enacted laws to promote access of all individuals to quality health services. Specific to the healthcare needs of persons with disabilities, RA 11228, an 'Act Providing For The Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage For All Persons With Disability', was enacted in 2018 to amend the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities chapter on Health. The amendment articulates provision of mandatory PhilHealth coverage for all persons with disability which paved the way for the national insurance institute, PhilHealth, in coordination with relevant national agencies – DOH, DSWD, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the NCDA, and LGUs to develop exclusive packages for persons with disabilities that will explicitly cater to their health and development needs (Republic Act of the Philippines, 2019). PhilHealth launched a Z Benefit Package in 2018 for children with developmental disabilities to protect Filipinos, including persons with disabilities, from financial risk. PhilHealth through its Circular No.

2017-0029 specified the services included in the health package for children with developmental disabilities such as assessment and planning by medical specialists and allied health professionals (PhilHealth, 2018).

Further, the Universal Health Care Bill was enacted in 2019 to initiate a massive reform in the Philippine health care sector. With the newly enacted law, all Filipinos are guaranteed equitable access to quality and affordable health care services that protect them against financial risks. The law also provides a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of agencies and stakeholders towards providing a more efficient health system in the country (Republic of the Philippines, 2019).

**Access to health services.** RA 1128 or the ‘Mandatory PhilHealth for Persons with Disabilities’ is a significant step forward in ensuring access to health care for persons with disabilities. However, the law is yet to be fully implemented, according to the NCDA. The former Chief Executive Officer of PhilHealth shared in an interview that the full implementation of the law will follow as soon as the required premium contributions for persons with disabilities are released by the national government (PhilHealth, 2019). Further, respondents from OPDs shared that persons with disabilities continue to face difficulties in accessing health care and health services due to inaccessible health care facilities, community services and transportation going to hospitals or clinics. Interviewees from OPDs shared that many persons with disabilities are hesitant to go to hospitals because of the expenses they must shoulder on top of their regular medicine or maintenance and/or assistive devices.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Many persons with disabilities are hesitant to go to hospitals because of the expenses they must shoulder on top of their regular medicine or maintenance and/or assistive devices.

Respondents from OPDs and NGOs mentioned the importance of social protection across the life cycle of persons with disabilities. They also call for equity in the provision of health services and facilities in remote and rural areas, given that most capable hospitals and clinics are centered in Metro Manila and other highly urbanized cities. One of the respondents said, (in context: we don’t need sympathy or charity-kind of help, we need concrete support that will enable us to access services or places). Respondents indicated that health service providers in the regional level support the call for comprehensive social protection. However, accurate data on persons with disabilities needs to be collected to help the government to craft programs that are more responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. The government agencies who were interviewed in the study shared that they continue to experience the same challenge for years—the lack of accurate population data, disaggregated by disability. This makes it very difficult to develop relevant and efficient policies and programs with sufficient fund allocation.

**“We don’t need awa o tulong, we need support paano magagawa ang mga bagay na hindi accessible sa amin”**

*“We don’t need sympathy or charity-kind of help, we need concrete support that will enable us to access services or places.”*

**Access to Habilitation and Rehabilitation.** Section 19 of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons mandates the DOH to establish rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). Section 20 of the law mandates DSWD to provide auxiliary services, which includes rehabilitation in community-based settings and residential care centers for persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992).

The DSWD Central Office has three (3) major types of

programs that cater to the rehabilitation and habilitation needs of persons with disabilities, (a) community-based, (b) residential care facilities, and (c) non-residential care facilities. The community-based programs include Early Detection, Prevention, and Intervention of Disability, Auxiliary Social Services for Persons with Disabilities, and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program for Children/Persons with Disabilities. DSWD established two residential care facilities, the Elsie Gaches Village and the Accelerating Minor Opportunity for Recovery (AMOR) Village. Respondents from DSWD stated that Elsie Gaches Village provides care and rehabilitation to abandoned and neglected children, including those with disabilities. The AMOR Village is a 24-hour residential care, rehabilitation, recovery, and development facility. It was established to cater to children with and without disabilities who were abused, abandoned, and neglected. How the facilities are able to accommodate and adequately respond to the needs of children with disabilities needs to be further researched. The UNCRPD states the right of children with disabilities to live with their families and participate in their communities in non-segregated settings. Non-residential care facilities provide psychosocial support for persons with disabilities. This includes vocational and social rehabilitation and skills training for socio-economic independence and productivity for persons with disabilities and other relevant target groups. Interview with department representatives revealed that non-residential care facilities are under-funded. This means that there is a limit to the number of persons with disabilities who can avail the services and not all provinces have non-residential care facilities, resulting to unequal access to services.

Respondents from DSWD indicated that the rehabilitation and habilitation services and programs aim to support persons with disabilities to become productive and independent members of the society through capacitating them to participate in economic livelihood programs. With the exception of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

(BARMM), rehabilitation and habilitation programs in all regions are facilitated by city/municipal DSWD offices. However, as city/municipal DSWD offices have many, and sometimes competing mandates, providing rehabilitation and habilitation services is not always considered a priority. This results in limited rehabilitation and habilitation programs and opportunities for persons with disabilities. According to the respondent from BARMM Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD), they are still at the initial stage of developing their respective Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities. Thus, the provision of a rehabilitation center in all cities or municipalities is yet to be institutionalized. The only rehabilitation center available for persons with disabilities in the region is the Cotabato Regional Center, which is largely inaccessible for persons with disabilities due to limited public transportation and long travel time. Both BARMM-MSSD and city/municipal DSWD offices have rehabilitation programs that provide assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, canes, and hearing aids. However, both service providers and beneficiaries recognize that available assistive devices should be customized to further support persons with disabilities to live independently.

Apart from DSWD-led services in rehabilitation and habilitation, the DOH is currently developing a five-year plan to improve their existing programs through providing additional human resources and experts such as occupational therapists in public hospitals. The DOH has also partnered with PhilHealth in providing the Z-Benefit package for children with disabilities, which includes assessment and evaluation, provision of support such as physical and speech therapy, among others (PhilHealth, 2019). However, according to some respondents, the Z-Benefit package is solely implemented in Metro Manila because hospitals and clinics in rural areas do not have a similar budget and capacity to carry out such programs, leaving persons with disabilities in rural areas with even more limited access to adequate rehabilitation and habilitation services.

### **Provision of training courses, seminars, and information on health, habilitation and rehabilitation to stakeholders**

Government duty-bearers organized seminars and workshops for their staff to build their capacity in providing disability-inclusive services to persons with disabilities.

According to respondents from the department, the DSWD provides training and seminars on disability-inclusion for their staff and other disability-stakeholders. The DSWD Program Management Bureau conducts disability-sensitivity training for their staff, as one of their core programs. Furthermore, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) ensures that their social workers and nurses as frontline staff are responsive and sensitive to the needs of all clients. Apart from these, the DSWD Field Offices also provide disability awareness-raising training for partner establishments and organizations to help them in providing reasonable accommodations in the workplace. BARMM-MSSD provides training on first aid, basic life support, and sign language to strengthen the capacity of their staff to respond to the needs of individuals who have disabilities in the communities.

The DOH Health Promotion and Communication Service and Disease Prevention and Control Bureau developed disability sensitivity modules for the training of regional coordinators that can be eventually cascaded to health officers in the LGUs.

A respondent from NCDCA presented the collation of 2017 trainings conducted for program implementers and parents of children with disabilities to strengthen capabilities in the delivery of appropriate services for persons with disabilities. Among these trainings were behavioral modification techniques for parents and trainings on rehabilitation for children with disabilities.

Persons with Disability Affairs Offices (PDAO) play a critical role in the local government level. Some PDAOs are active in providing trainings, such as awareness raising sessions, sign language training, and provision

support sessions for people with visual disabilities and persons using wheelchairs for municipality staff and personnel. Another OPD holds an annual training for disability inclusive Disaster Risk Resilience and has partnered with the DICT in their digital literacy and training programs. Although programs are still being developed, the coordinator of another PDAO collaborated with various local government field offices such as the DOLE, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), DSWD, and DOH to talk about the rights for persons with disabilities. According to respondents, PDAOs conduct trainings for both government personnel, unaffiliated individuals, and organizations of persons with disabilities at the local level.

Despite the existence of training or programs, service providers and federations of persons with disabilities shared that there are still ongoing challenges. Respondents from some OPDs mentioned that they “have to make themselves visible” instead of being proactively contacted by authorities. If persons with disabilities and their organizations do not initiate the conversation or programs for the sector itself, nothing will be done.

The annual celebration of the Disability Awareness Week in the month of July expands the opportunities for conversations and raise consciousness of service providers and the private sector to cater to the rehabilitation and habilitation needs of persons with disabilities. OPDs interviewed said that government agencies collaborate with NGOs and OPD members to organize awareness raising activities for the week.

#### **OPD PERSPECTIVE**

They “have to make themselves visible” instead of being proactively contacted by authorities. If persons with disabilities and their organizations do not initiate the conversation or programs for the sector itself, nothing will be done.

### **Participation in regular monitoring and inspections of national and local state-funded and private facilities and programs for habilitation and rehabilitation**

Article 26 of the UNCRPD includes the obligation of duty bearers to engage persons with disabilities in regular monitoring and inspection of all public and private facilities and programs for habilitation and rehabilitation (United Nations, 2006). According to the DSWD Administrative Order No. 09 Series of 2010, the DSWD Inspectorate Division conducts quarterly audits and inspections of residential and non-residential care facilities (Department of Social Welfare and Development [DSWD], 2010). For DSWD programs, monitoring is conducted on a monthly or quarterly basis. At the regional office level, the Regional Inspectorate Committee, composed of different units and divisions, conducts inspections twice a year. During inspections and audits, the committee assess if offices are compliant based on the standard set used. Regional offices submit their annual reports to the central office. The Standards Bureau under the DSWD accredits social welfare and development agencies that serve as intermediaries in the delivery of social services. This includes CSOs that cater to the needs of persons with disabilities. The Standard Bureau monitors the quality of service delivery every 1 to 3 years during renewal of accreditation.

At the regional level of DOH, respondents indicated that PDAOs, as mandated by Republic Act 10070 (R.A. 10070) – Establishing Institutional Mechanisms to Ensure the Implementation of Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities in Every Province, City, Municipality, Amending Republic Act 7277, and LGUs are responsible for conducting audits and inspections in the hospitals and clinics (Republic of the Philippines, 2016). Initiatives have been conducted by a PDAO to engage persons with disabilities in the inspections of hospitals and clinics. A PDAO representative shared that in collaboration with their local government, they created an Accessibility Audit team including persons using wheelchairs and persons with visual disabilities to conduct an audit of public facili-

ties and infrastructure in their municipality, including hospitals. Based on the interviews, the administering of monitoring and inspections are limited to assessing access to infrastructures for habilitation and rehabilitation. The regular monitoring and inspections of national and local state-funded programs for habilitation and rehabilitation still needs to be strengthened.

Interviews with government respondents from BARMM present similar information. They indicated that part of the mandate of the MSSD is to regularly monitor facilities and programs related to the social welfare of persons with disabilities. Monitoring is conducted for programs and initiatives (e.g., livelihood programs), but there are no regular monitoring and inspections of facilities for rehabilitation and habilitation. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health (MOH) in BARMM has no regular monitoring and inspections of facilities in hospitals and clinics since they are more focused on registry and database management.

OPDs have also initiated programs to improve accessibility audits in the Philippines. Women with Disabilities Leap to Economic and Social Progress (WOW-LEAP), through the Build Back Better Project, supported by the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V and Aktion Deutschland Hilft, has conducted accessibility walkthroughs in ten (10) public areas in Tacloban City: city hall, mall, public hospital, private hospital, public park, church, bunk house, PDAOs, multi-purpose halls, and public schools. Persons with disabilities who participated in the walkthrough provided recommendations in improving access features for persons with disabilities to the local government partners of the project (Zayas et al., 2017).

### **Equitable access to assistive devices and technologies**

Equitable access to assistive technology is a human right and should be included in the universal health coverage to enable persons with disabilities to become independent and to fully participate in the society (WHO, 2020). Data from the interviews indicated that assistive devices were deficient. The assistive device

must be tailored-fit for the person using it, as using a generic device might cause more discomfort. Therefore, the government and disability stakeholders must consider the provision of assistive technology that is appropriate and responsive to everyone who will use the device.

The IRR of RA No. 10754 or the Act Expanding the Benefits and Persons with Disabilities articulates that person with disabilities will be able to avail of a 20% discount and value added tax exemption when purchasing mobility assistive devices (Republic of the Philippines, 2016). This is however limited to mobility assistive devices and does not include other assistive devices.

There are also national policies and programs supporting the equitable access of persons with disabilities to assistive technology. The DSWD, DOH, and LGUs have budget allocations for free assistive devices to support persons with disabilities who do not have access to these technologies. According to the DSWD respondent, the most common assistive device provided by government agencies were wheelchairs, crutches, canes, and corrective eyeglasses. The Assistance to Individual in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program of DSWD provides augmentation support to persons with disabilities which includes assistive devices. The program provides hearing aids, braille systems, customized wheelchairs, and neural prostheses for persons with orthopedic disability. As stated by the respondent from the BARMM-MSSD, the ministry has a Physical Restoration Program which provide assistive devices to persons with disabilities in the region. However, the national government and BARMM has limited budget allocation for assistive devices. Persons with disabilities must apply to other government offices to have access to free assistive devices.

Currently, the government is in the process of developing guidelines for the provision of assistive devices. According to the OPD members interviewed, the policy has been developed and awaiting approval before being fully implemented by concerned govern-

ment agencies. Until then, OPDs and NGOs provide customized assistive devices tailored-fit to the person with disability.

### Summary

The UNCRPD requires governments to ensure that persons with disabilities can achieve their highest standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability (United Nations, 2006), and to enable persons with disabilities to enjoy maximum independence, full inclusion, and participation in all aspects of life through comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services and programs. In support of the UNCRPD, the Philippines, has the following policies: the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons which mandated the provision of medical rehabilitation centers (Republic of the Philippines, 1992), the Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage for Persons with Disabilities which developed exclusive packages for persons with disabilities that cater to specific health and development needs, and the Universal Health Care Law which broadened the access to services for persons with disabilities in hospitals and healthcare facilities (Republic of the Philippines, 2019).

Despite these policies and the programs, the access of persons with disabilities to appropriate health, habilitation and rehabilitation remains inadequate. Although, OPD members and NGOs continue to push advocacies and policy reforms to ensure a more holistic social protection for persons with disabilities, barriers still remain. Respondents indicated that persons with disabilities do not have equitable access to health care and health services because aside from the costs of these services, barriers such as the (1) inaccessibility of infrastructure, (2) lack of inclusive attitudes from health professionals, (3) tedious processes that require numerous documents, (4) lack of adequate service providers, and (5) expenses they must incur for transportation to health and rehabilitation services still need to be addressed. Furthermore, health policies and rehabilitative programs implemented in both urban and rural locations remain under-budgeted and incapable of implementing and expanding services for

persons with disabilities. Additionally, the health and rehabilitation sector further challenged by a lack of complete, accurate, and relevant data on persons with disabilities, unclear implementation guidelines, and a lack of continued engagement from service providers because of changes in leadership.

### 4.1.3 Education

#### INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) affirms and ensures the rights of children with disabilities to access to education and to receive support in achieving their full potential (United Nations, 1989). Aligned with the UNCRC, the UNCRPD recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to education and reinforces the role of the government in ensuring the development of an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning (United Nations, 2006). General Comment No. 4 (GC4) to the UNCRPD gives clear guidelines on the features of inclusive education and how governments can fulfil their obligation (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

The 1987 Philippine Constitution articulates the government's commitment to protect and promote the rights of all individuals to quality education and to provide appropriate measures to make education accessible for all (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). Specific to ensuring the rights of persons with the disabilities to quality education, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons mandates equal access to education for persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). It stipulates the establishment of special education classes, and braille and record libraries in provinces, cities, and municipalities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (R.A. No. 10533), which further reinforces the goals of the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, aims towards inclusion of all children, including those with disabilities in basic education (Republic of the Philippines, 2013c). Recent policy issuances and programs of DepEd are anchored on the said act.

As an initial analysis on the extent to which the right to education is met, this section examines the following key aspects: 1) access and participation of children with disabilities to inclusive education; 2) safe and inclusive learning environments; 3) inclusive leadership, principles, and cultures; 4) training for inclusive education for all teachers; and 5) flexible and adaptable curriculum and assessment methods.

#### ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EDUCATION

The 2016 National Disability Prevalence Survey (NDPS) report revealed the highest educational attainment of persons with disability, where 23 per cent of persons with severe disability reached elementary level, 19 per cent completed elementary education, and 21 per cent completed high school education (Philippine Statistics Authority and Department of Health [PSA and DOH], 2019). Research by the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) estimates that 52.6 per cent of children with disabilities come from poor families and are not able to attend school (Development Academy of the Philippines [DAP], 2018).

Access to education for children with disabilities has been a longstanding issue. In 2009, DepEd issued DepEd Order No. 72, series of 2009, or the 'Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children' to provide a comprehensive inclusive education program for children with disabilities. It identifies the Child Find Program as one of the strategies to map children with disabilities who are not yet in school (Department of Education [DepEd], 2009). The program is implemented across all regions, including in BARMM. Schools partnered with their respective LGUs in encouraging parents to enroll children with disabilities in school. Through active finding or child mapping, children with disabilities who are out of school can access education. The Child Find Program in BARMM resulted in an increase in enrolment of children with disabilities in special education (SPED) between school year 2012-2013 to 2016-2017 (Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.).

Currently, DepEd provides three program options for children with disabilities, such as self-contained or segregated classes, inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular class, and a resource room program wherein a child with disability is partially pulled out of the regular class and is taught by a SPED teacher (DepEd, 2009).

**Segregated Class.** DepEd provides education for children with moderate to severe disabilities through segregated or self-contained classes (DepEd, 2008). The SPED Program was institutionalized in 1997 as DepEd's response to the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons to provide children with disabilities access to education (DepEd, 1997). The SPED Program mandates the establishment of SPED centers in all districts to support the needs of children with disabilities (DepEd, 1997).

Based on the report from DAP, there are around 648 government-run and private-owned schools across the country that offer special education programs for children with disabilities (DAP, 2018). The majority of children with disabilities still access education through SPED units within general schools, even though inclusive education program is being promoted as the main approach for children with disabilities (DAP, 2018). A respondent shared that often, learners are classified based on their medical condition instead of their functionality. This results to children with disabilities being taught in self-contained classes.

One respondent shared that SPED classes do not promote inclusion although it provides children with disabilities access to school.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

- Learners are classified based on their medical condition instead of their functionality.
- SPED classes do not promote inclusion although it provides children with disabilities access to school.

children with disabilities prefer their child to be taught in segregated classes. This is due to the perception of some parents that children with disabilities perform better in self-contained settings than in mainstream classes, because of the smaller number of students enrolled in self-contained units and SPED teachers are more equipped in teaching children with disabilities. Respondents also mentioned that parents of children with disabilities sometimes feel that their child might be left out if enrolled in a mainstream class.

**Integrated Class.** Some children with disabilities access education through integrated classes, wherein they are enrolled in mainstream or regular classrooms and are provided with support services (DepEd, 2008). Integration of children with disabilities in regular classes is further classified into two: partial integration and full integration. Partial integration refers to enrolling children with disabilities in a SPED class and are integrating them with children without disabilities in non-academic activities (Department of Education, 2008). On the other hand, full integration is when children with disabilities are enrolled in a regular class both for academic and non-academic activities (DepEd, 2008).

**Inclusive Class.** An inclusive education system is defined as 'one that accommodates all students whatever their abilities or requirements, and at all levels' (UNICEF, 2017). Inclusive education is ensuring children with disabilities are enrolled in regular classes with provision for accessible learning environments. This means that adaptations in the 'physical structures, teaching methods and curriculum, culture, policy, and practice of education environments' are made accessible for all children, including those with disabilities (UNICEF, 2017).

DepEd defines inclusion as "all learners shall have access to and participate in all aspects of life in school, in learning centers and other places of learning" (DepEd, 2019a). In relation to disability inclusion, DepEd describes it as children with disabilities receiving education in regular classrooms, regard-



less of the severity of their disability (DepEd, 2008). There is a lack of data on the total number of schools implementing inclusive education across the country. However, some public schools in the country have started implementing inclusive education, such as DepEd Baybay City Division. One of the inclusive practices of schools in Baybay City is the provision of itinerant teachers to support general education teachers in teaching children with disabilities. Based on the interviews and focused group discussions conducted, inclusive education is also being implemented in some schools in Cagayan de Oro City and Mandaluyong City. In Mandaluyong City SDO, children with disabilities are accepted in mainstream classes based on the Early Childhood Care and Development checklist submitted to the school. The ECCD Checklist is a tool “to determine if the child is developing adequately or is at risk for developmental delays” (UNICEF, 2011).

The UNCRPD emphasizes the goal for full inclusion of children with disabilities in general education (United Nations, 2006). Providing education in segregated and integrated classes is not aligned with the UNCRPD. The GC4 discourages to keep both segregated and inclusive systems of education, since it is not appropriate to maintain two systems of education that would provide education for children with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Further, GC4 states that integrated education does not guarantee full inclusion of children with disabilities in the longer term (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

As a strategy for a more inclusive education, DepEd Bureau of Learning Delivery – Student Inclusion Division shared that the department is in the process of developing a policy to convert SPED centers to inclusive learning resource centers that will provide support to regular classes. Moreover, the Inclusive Education Bill is being developed in the Congress. The House of Representatives and the Senate are currently working to harmonize the Substitute Bill House Bill Number 8080 and the Substitute Bill Senate Bill Number 1907 through weekly pre-bi-camera workshop meetings.

The development of the Inclusive Education Bill was participated by key stakeholders from the government, NGOs and OPDs.

### SAFE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Creating a learning-friendly environment is one of the core features of an inclusive education system. This means all children have access to a learning environment where everyone feels safe, supported, stimulated, and able to express themselves (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). A safe and inclusive learning environment includes accessible physical infrastructures and facilities, accessible learning resources, and a positive school community for all children, including those with disabilities. Aligned to this, DepEd Order No. 21, series of 2019, or the Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program states that the learning environment encompasses the physical environment and teaching-learning process (DepEd, 2019a). This means that aside from accessible physical environment, a learning environment should provide children with disabilities a positive school community.

**Accessible physical infrastructure.** The Accessibility Law mandates the accessibility of education institutions. It requires schools to have ramps with railings, classrooms that could fit wheelchair users, wide hallways, accessible toilets, and well-lit classrooms (Republic of the Philippines, 1982). DepEd and DPWH are the key government agencies responsible for designing and constructing accessible school buildings and facilities.

According to the Education Facilities Division of DepEd, new school buildings are designed and constructed in accordance with the Accessibility Law. DepEd issued its revised DepEd Educational Facilities Manual in 2010 reinforcing the Law and emphasizing mobility of persons with disabilities in the design and construction of school buildings and facilities. Additionally, considerations for disaster risk reduction had been integrated into the manual (Department of Education, 2010).

The department also issued DepEd Order No. 64, series of 2017 (Establishing the Minimum Standards and Specifications for DepEd School Buildings). Specifically, it articulates that ramps should be in accordance with the Accessibility Law (BP 344). However, in the Philippines, many old school buildings remain inaccessible. ***In some schools, only the ground floors have accessibility features, while the rest of the school buildings are not accessible. In such cases and where there are children with disabilities enrolled, schools make sure to hold classes at the ground floor, thereby ensuring learners reach their classrooms.***

**Accessible learning resources.** Accessible learning resources are an important aspect of an inclusive learning environment. This includes ensuring textbooks and teaching and learning materials are made accessible for all children, including children with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). For example, learning materials should be available in braille format, books must be in accessible and alternative formats (e.g., printed in larger fonts, converted into electronic copies, or placed in tactile graphics), and sign language support should be provided for children who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Children who are Deaf and hard of hearing often have difficulty in accessing learning materials.

To this end, DepEd has partnered with different organizations. Further, the K to 12 policy mandates learning resources be transcribed into braille format and adapted in other forms, such as providing sign language interpreters in class, making learning materials accessible to all learners (DepEd, 2019a). The Resources for the Blind, Inc. (RBI) has more than two decades of partnership with DepEd in supporting the

education of children with visual disabilities. They had initiated translating learning materials to braille format, which is now being continued by DepEd. They have also provided assistive devices in some schools, such as computer screen readers. However, not all children with disabilities have access to learning resources in accessible format, since not all schools have braille and other equipment needed to make learning resources available for all types of learners. Respondents mentioned that children who are Deaf and hard of hearing often have difficulty in accessing learning materials, such as teacher-made activities and instructional materials.

Recent initiatives include the development of an Inclusive Education Handbook for teachers of children with disabilities as part of the Sustaining Education Reform Gains (SERG) Program funded by Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

**Safe school environment.** DepEd issued DepEd Order No. 40, series of 2012, or the DepEd Child Protection Policy to protect children from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and other forms of abuse (DepEd, 2012). The policy articulates the roles and responsibilities of DepEd offices in upholding the rights of the child, aligned with the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989).

DepEd established the Child Protection Unit (CPU) and Child Rights in Education Desk (CREDe) through DepEd Order No. 03, series of 2021 to recognize the right of the child to special protection and emphasizes the zero-tolerance policy for any act of abuse and violence. CPU is under the Office of the Undersecretary for Field Operations, Palarong Pambansa Secretariat, and the DepEd Employees Associations Coordination Office, while CREDe is under the purview of the Office of the Undersecretary for Legal Affairs. Both CPU and CREDe are mandated to develop policies and guidelines on the rights of children to basic education and child protection (DepEd, 2021).

While there are policies in place to ensure protection

of all children, including children with disabilities, children with disabilities still encounter discrimination and bullying in schools. One respondent shared that bullying is one of the reasons children with disabilities drop out of school. Another respondent shared that in mainstream classes, children with disabilities experience bullying. The respondent also mentioned that due to bullying incidents, some parents of children with disabilities perceived segregated or self-contained classes as safer settings for children with disabilities to learn. Clear guidelines on the protection of children of disabilities from bullying and discrimination should be in place to promote a safe school environment.

### **INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP, PRINCIPLES, AND CULTURES**

Inclusive leadership, principles, and cultures should be embedded in the education system based on the definition of a whole education environment of the GC4 to Article 24 of the UNCRPD (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). This means that education leaders across all levels of governance in education should be capacitated and supported to fully implement inclusive education. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 mandates the training of school leadership (Section 7c) to promote skills and competency development among education leaders (Republic of the Philippines, 2013c).

Aligned with this, the Inclusive Education Policy Framework for Basic Education of DepEd identifies school leadership and management as one of its key dimensions. It states that school leaders should be provided with support in promoting and implementing inclusive education (Department of Education, 2019a). Respondents shared that capacity building on inclusive education is provided not only for school leaders, but also for division supervisors and other education leaders in the education system. In DepEd Baybay City Division, division supervisors, department heads, and school leaders participated in the roll-out on inclusive education in 2018. The aim of the training was to provide education leaders with a common understanding of the key principles of inclusive education to help them in its implementation (DepEd Baybay City

SDO, 2018). One of the respondents also mentioned that the topic on inclusive education is being proposed to be a part of the induction program for principals. This is to ensure that new principals are knowledgeable on how to implement inclusive education in their respective schools.

To further support the professional development of school heads and supervisors, DepEd issued DepEd Order No. 24 or the 'National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for School Heads (PPSH)' and DepEd Order No. 25, or the 'National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Supervisors (PPSS)' in 2020.

The PPSH policy recognizes the importance of professional standards in the continuing professional development of school heads. It sets out clear expectations of school heads based on the stages of professional development, engage school heads to achieve the highest level of proficiency, and support their professional learning and development based on identified need. Further, the PPSSH framework reflects the principles of inclusivity and learner-centered pedagogy (Department of Education, 2020a). On the other hand, the PPSS aims to provide clear guidelines on the career stages of professional development of supervisors. This includes ensuring supervisors are provided with adequate support to address their professional development needs (Department of Education, 2020b). Both frameworks are based on the principles of learner-centeredness, lifelong learning, and inclusivity (Department of Education, 2020b).

However, there is still a lot to be done to ensure that education leaders across all levels of DepEd governance are equipped in implementing inclusive education. One respondent emphasized that administrators and leaders should be among the first education staff to receive capacity building on inclusive education. This is because they are the ones responsible for approving projects and activities for children with disabilities. Another respondent mentioned that the attitude of

administrators towards inclusive education can be a barrier. The respondent mentioned that “administrators are aware of the concept of inclusive education, but it is not properly implemented in real-life.”

### TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL

All teachers need to be supported through training and other forms of professional development that would help them in creating an inclusive learning environment for all children (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). This core feature of inclusive education has been adopted by DepEd and is reflected in the department’s Inclusive Education Framework (DepEd, 2019a). DepEd Order No. 21, series of 2019, or the Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program, states that teacher professional development is one of the key dimensions of the Inclusive Education Framework for Basic Education. Teachers are seen as the key implementers of inclusive education (DepEd, 2019a). The Inclusive Education Framework is also aligned with the Domain 3: Diversity of Learners of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasizes the significance of ‘teachers’ knowledge and understanding of learners’ diverse characteristics as inputs to the planning and design of learning programs’ (DepEd, 2019a).

Teacher professional development is anchored on Section 7 of the Enhanced Basic Education Act (2013) which articulates the importance of teacher education and training to ensure the ‘program meets the demand for quality teachers and school leaders’ (Republic of the Philippines, 2013c).

In-Service Training (INSET). The provision of INSET on content and pedagogy that is aligned with the standards of the K to 12 Curriculum is articulated in the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. Prior to the issuance of DepEd Order No. 11, series of 2019 or the ‘Implementation of National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) Transformation’, INSETs are conducted at different levels of governance in DepEd.

Central office-led INSET is in the form of training of trainers (ToT) which is then cascaded at the regional, division, and school level. Teacher training on inclusive education is conducted annually as part of the school orientation or INSET of teachers. With the Implementation of the NEAP Transformation Policy, professional development of teachers and school leaders will be integrated and streamlined to ensure effective links between professional development with career progression and efficient use of resources (DepEd, 2019b). One of the expected impacts of the NEAP Transformation is schools will no longer be a catch basin (Bagsakan Center) for the various training activities of DepEd Bureaus. The means that provide professional development trainings and programs will now be ‘integrated and streamlined, and will be coordinated administratively with the regional offices’, which will avoid overlaps and scheduling conflicts on the ground (Research Centre for Teacher Quality and SiMERR National Research Center, 2019, pp. xxvii).

DepEd supports the professional development of newly hired teachers through the issuance of DepEd Order No. 43, series of 2017, or the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) Policy. The TIP is a comprehensive support system for newly hired teachers and teachers with less than three years of teaching experience in the public school system (Department of Education, 2017). At the onset, new teachers are equipped on the principles of inclusion through the Pedagogies for Inclusive Education which is part of the TIP’s Module 4: The Teaching Process (Department of Education, 2017). This includes topics on differentiated instruction and other strategies that aim to help teachers teach children in inclusive settings. Recently, the Research Center for Teacher Quality supported the development of new TIP modules that are consistent with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers. An amended TIP policy will be developed once the validation of the new modules has been completed.

DepEd piloted implementation of inclusive education in select schools. Under the Basic Education Sector Transformation (BEST) Program, DepEd Baybay

City Division is one of the pilot divisions to implement inclusive education. According to the respondents in this study, schools selected received series of training on inclusive education to equip teachers and school leaders in teaching children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Further, DepEd also provides different sets of trainings for SPED teachers and general education teachers. For example, the Cagayan de Oro City Division has conducted a ten-day program for SPED teachers for Deaf and hard of hearing. However, sign language was not part of the said training. On the other hand, general education teachers are also provided with training on teaching children with disabilities as part of the DepEd's plan to move towards inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. For example, general education teachers in Cagayan de Oro City Division received a re-orientation training on how to implement mainstream education and the roles and responsibilities of receiving teachers. In Mandaluyong City Division, a SPED Caravan is conducted wherein general education teachers who do not have experience in teaching children with disabilities are trained on how to support children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

**Learning Action Cell (LAC).** Another form of professional development is Learning Action Cell (LAC). LAC is a part of school-based professional development of teachers to improve teaching and learning that is aligned with the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (DepEd, 2016). DepEd Order No. 35, series of 2016 institutionalized LACs to support teacher development (DepEd, 2016). Training implemented at the central, regional, or division level are cascaded to schools through LACs. Inclusive education is among the topics discussed during school LACs and district LACs.

Respondents of this study shared that, general education teachers and SPED teachers collaborate in teaching children with disabilities in mainstream classes. This is important since general education teachers need support in implementing inclusive

education. Further, respondents also mentioned that during LAC sessions, SPED teachers are often invited to conduct sessions on how to teach children with disabilities. Post-conference meetings during classroom observations are also conducted to provide feedback and technical support to general education teachers.

### FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

A whole person approach to inclusive education includes ensuring curricula are flexible. This involves providing support and reasonable accommodations<sup>2</sup> for all children, including children with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). GC4 emphasizes that children with disabilities should be provided with reasonable accommodations and equality in relation to assessment and examination procedures (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). The Inclusive Education Framework of DepEd provides a policy guideline to ensure curriculum and assessment are flexible and adaptable to the needs of diverse learners. Specifically, it articulates that curriculum and assessment should be inclusive (DepEd, 2019a).

**Flexible Curriculum.** The issuance of DepEd Order No. 72<sup>3</sup> articulates curriculum modifications and assessment as components of a comprehensive inclusive education program (DepEd, 2009). Adaptations and accommodations in the curriculum should be implemented to ensure the individual needs and potentials of learners are addressed (DepEd, 2009). This includes modifications in classroom instruction and service delivery options (DepEd, 2009). Respondents shared that some of the accommodations implemented for children with disabilities are translating the exams into braille format for children with visual disabilities and modifying teacher-made activity sheets.

The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 states that the K to 12 curriculum should be 'learner-cen-

<sup>2</sup> The UN definition of reasonable accommodation is "necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms."

tered, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate' to address the diverse needs of learners (Republic of the Philippines, 2013c). Aligned with this, DepEd Order No. 21, series of 2019, articulates that the Inclusive Education Framework will be the overall policy framework that will ensure the K to 12 Curriculum is responsive to the needs of diverse learners (DepEd, 2019a). The policy framework emphasizes that curriculum should be flexible and contextualized based on the ability of learners, socio-cultural background, historical context, and bio-geographical realities (DepEd, 2019a). In addition, DepEd has issued the K to 10 additional curriculum content for children with visual disabilities. According to a respondent, this will help children with visual disabilities in the mainstream or inclusive class cope with the competencies and skills requirement. It will also enable them to participate actively alongside their peers. However, the UNCRPD and the GC4 state that students with disabilities should have the right to access the same high-quality curriculum as other students without disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016; United Nations, 2006). There is no evidence supporting the need for a special curriculum for children with disabilities (Croft, 2020; Norwich and Lewis, 2005). Further, specialized curricula often lead to lower expectations, lower quality education, and limited learning opportunities (Hart, Dixon, Drummond, and McIntyre, 2004).

One respondent mentioned that there are children with disabilities who have been in the SPED program for a long time and there is no exit strategy for them. In 2020, a new policy was issued by DepEd to provide a Transition Curriculum Framework for children with disabilities. DepEd Order No. 21, series of 2020, or the 'Policy Guidelines on the Adoption of the K to 12 Transition Curriculum for Learners with Disabilities' aims to provide exit outcomes or life pathways for children with disabilities (DepEd, 2020c). Based on the policy, children with disabilities may choose from five exit outcomes or life pathways, such as (1) higher education, (2) entrepreneurship, (3) middle level skills development, (4) employment, and (5) functional life

path (Department of Education, 2020c). Further, plans of the Bureau of Curriculum Development of DepEd include development of an essential adaptive curriculum for children with severe or profound disability to help them become independent. The target of the Bureau is to develop the essential adaptive curriculum either in 2021 or 2022.

**Inclusive Assessment.** DepEd describes inclusive assessment as providing different methods to test the mastery of competencies of learners. It enables learners to participate in activities that would enhance their knowledge and skills (DepEd, 2019a). The department recognizes the importance of providing reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities, in relation to assessment. Prior to the issuance of the Inclusive Education Framework, DepEd Order No. 72, already mandated SPED centers to provide support to regular schools in the assessment process of children with disabilities (DepEd, 2009).

Teachers may use different assessment strategies, tools, and methods in determining learners' mastery. DepEd reiterates that principles of universal design for learning should be adopted in the assessment of learners (DepEd, 2019a). **Respondents shared that teachers provide the following to support learning of children with disabilities: (1) modifications in the assessment and (2) provision of sign language interpreters for learners who are Deaf and hard of hearing and giving extra time when answering an exam.**

Further, DepEd also uses the Multi-factored Assessment Tool (MFAT) in assessing Grade 1 learners enrolled in regular schools (DepEd, 2018). This is based on DepEd Order No. 29, series of 2018, or the Policy on the Implementation of MFAT. The MFAT is a classroom-based activity assessment that covers the five domains of learning: (1) cognitive, (2) communication, (3) socio-emotional, (4) psycho-motor, and (5) daily living skills. The policy states that MFAT will be used in identifying children with disabilities who

3 DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009: Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children

may need support and services and in planning and designing appropriate interventions for children with disabilities (DepEd, 2018).

## SUMMARY

The Philippines has implemented various initiatives to provide children with disabilities with access to quality education. At the policy level, the Congress is in the process of developing the Inclusive Education Bill. DepEd has issued department orders to promote inclusive education, such as DepEd Order No. 72, s. 2009 or the Inclusive Education as Strategy for Increasing Participation Rate of Children, and Inclusive Education Policy Framework for Basic Education as part of DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019. Capacity building activities on inclusive education for general education teachers and education leaders are also being implemented. Across different levels of governance, DepEd has been implementing INSET programs and LAC on inclusive education. However, the capacity of in-service teachers to teach diverse learners still needs to be strengthened. General education teachers and school leaders should be capacitated on the principles of inclusive education and approaches to effectively implement inclusion in the classroom. This includes ensuring all teachers are equipped with inclusive classroom pedagogy and strategies, such as conducting training on universal design for learning, differentiated instruction, and inclusive assessment. These trainings and refresher courses will help general education in teaching diverse learners in mainstream classrooms.

In Pre-Service teacher education, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has issued CHED Memorandum Orders No. 74 to 82, series of 2017 that require all teacher education students to take a three-unit course on 'Foundation of Special and Inclusive Education' as part of the professional education courses. The course aims to provide teacher education students with 'philosophies, theories, and legal basis of special needs and inclusive education and equip teacher education students with strategies to teach diverse learners in mainstream classes (Commission

on Higher Education, 2017). The first batch of teacher education students who took the Foundation of Special and Inclusive Education course will graduate in 2022.

There are still gaps that need to be addressed to ensure full implementation of inclusive education. The rights-based concept of inclusive education, as intended in the UNCRPD and GC4, is not fully understood in the Philippines at the policy and implementation levels. Segregated and integrated classes as options for education of children with disabilities continue to exist, which is not aligned with the UNCRPD and the GC4. It is clearly articulated in the UNCRPD that persons with disabilities should have access to high-quality education on the same basis as others, in inclusive settings (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Further, special curricula for children with disabilities still exist and may lower the quality of education for children with disabilities. GC4 reiterates that flexible curriculum should be provided to children with disabilities, which includes adaptations and modifications to ensure diverse needs of learners are addressed (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

Access to physical infrastructures and buildings should be improved as majority of schools are not compliant with the Accessibility Law. Accessibility features should also not be limited to provision of ramps and handrails. Based on the data gathered, children with disabilities have difficulty accessing schools due to inaccessible physical environments. Aside from physical environment, safe school environment is important to keep children with disabilities in school. Bullying and discrimination are some of the reasons children with disabilities drop out of school. Clear guidelines to protect children with disabilities should be established and implemented.

## 4.1.4 Work and Employment

### INTRODUCTION

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the

right of everyone to work and to free choice of employment, with equal pay for equal work under just and favorable conditions (United Nations, 1948). Aligned to this, the UNCRPD affirms the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, in an environment that is open, inclusive, and accessible (United Nations, 2006).

Likewise, the Philippine Constitution affords full protection to labor and promotes full employment and equal employment opportunities for all, including entitlement of workers to security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage, as well as participation in policy and decision-making processes affecting their rights and benefits (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). This imperative is affirmed in the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons which upholds the rights of persons with disabilities to access opportunities for suitable employment, subject to the same terms and conditions of employment and the same compensation, privileges, benefits, fringe benefits, incentives, or allowances as other workers (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). Additionally, as amended in Republic Act No. 10524, an ‘Act Expanding The Positions Reserved For Persons With Disability’, at least one per cent of all positions in all government agencies, offices, or corporations shall be reserved for persons with disabilities; while private corporations with more than 100 employees are encouraged to reserve at least one per cent of all positions for persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 2013b).

As an initial analysis of the extent to which these rights are being met, this section examines two broad aspects of work and employment: (1) equitable access of persons with disabilities to decent work and employment, and (2) equality in employment opportunities for all workers including persons with disabilities.

### EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DECENT WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

Access to decent work is integral to reducing poverty and achieving equitable, inclusive, and sustainable

development. This entails productive work that pays a fair income, guarantees security in the workplace, provides social protection for workers and their families, and promotes freedom of workers to express their concerns, organize themselves, and participate in decisions that affect their lives (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2012).

The right of persons with disabilities to access to decent work in an open labor market is championed by multiple stakeholders nationally and internationally. However, access remains limited. According to the International Labour Organization, “it is generally but not universally accepted and at times disputed, that for some persons with disabilities, open employment may not be a practicable option, for various reasons” (ILO, 2015). “For persons with disabilities whose needs cannot be met in open employment, small units of sheltered or supported employment may be an alternative,” per Rule 7 of the United Nations Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (as cited in International Labour Organization, 2015, p. 69). In addition, government agencies and civil society organizations also promote livelihood programs as another option for accessing decent work for all, including persons with disabilities.

**Access to the open labor market.** According to the 2017/2018 Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment, total employment in the surveyed establishments was estimated at 5,077,410, of which 6,042 were persons with disabilities or 0.12 per cent of the total employed.<sup>4</sup> Manufacturing industry employed the highest percentage of persons with disabilities at 27.1 per cent, followed by wholesale and retail trade at 22.1 per cent. Refer to Annex 6 for the number of employed persons with disabilities in surveyed establishments, classified by major industry groups (Philippine Statistics Office, 2019).

To promote inclusive employment in the private sector, private corporations which employ persons with disabilities are entitled to incentives, as certified and accredited by DOLE. Private corporations are



entitled to an additional deduction from their gross income equivalent to 25 per cent of the total amount paid as salaries and wages to persons with disabilities. Those that improve or modify their facilities to provide reasonable accommodation, not covered by the requirements under the Accessibility Law, are also entitled to an additional deduction from their net income equivalent to 50 per cent of direct cost of the improvements or modifications (Republic of the Philippines, 2013b).

A respondent in this study reported that the process of certification and accreditation is currently being reviewed by DOLE to make it more streamlined and efficient, allowing qualified private corporations to access the incentives and further promote the employment of persons with disabilities. The respondent also acknowledged the need to monitor its implementation and maintain a databank of persons with disabilities employed in the private sector, as mandated by law. In the public sector, the Inventory of Government Human Resources recorded 8,176 persons with disabilities employed in government agencies nationwide as of August 2020. This constituted 0.46 per cent of the total number of government employees reported at 1,762,301 (Civil Service Commission [CSC], 2020).

The Civil Service Commission (CSC), responsible for regulating the employment and working conditions of civil servants, issued Memorandum Circular No. 7 series of 2014 to improve access of persons with disabilities in the public sector (CSC, 2014). Further, Memorandum Circular No. 31 series of 2017 provides guidelines on the categories of examinees and the administration of civil service examinations on persons with disabilities, among others (CSC, 2017). Applicants who are interested to work in government agencies are required to pass the civil service examination administered once or twice a year. According to respondents, reasonable accommodations are made for examinees who are categorized as persons with disabilities, as verified through the presentation of a valid persons with disabilities identification card.

Applicants with apparent physical disabilities who are unable to present the identification card shall also be considered and categorized as persons with disabilities examinees. Reasonable accommodations on the administration of the examination include extension of time limits, assignment of rooms, randomization procedures, assignment of room examiners and proctors, and preparation of test materials (CSC, 2017).

A respondent in this study shared that the CSC also supports government agencies in developing their human resource management systems and practices. In its Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (Prime-HRM), the CSC assesses the maturity level of government agencies based on their systems of recruitment, selection, and placement, learning and development, performance management, and rewards and recognition. Based on the assessment results, the agencies are classified according to four levels of maturity: (1) transactional HRM, (2) process defined HRM, (3) integrated HRM, and (4) strategic HRM. The CSC uses this classification as a starting point for providing customized technical assistance to help government agencies institutionalize best practices in HRM, including those that facilitate equal employment opportunities for all workers, and, ultimately, deliver excellent service to the public (CSC, n.d.).

Respondents in this study acknowledged the progress made in improving access of persons with disabilities in the open labor market. However, they also pointed out that barriers in the workplace and the wider community continue to hinder access to work opportunities in the private and public sectors, specifically, the lack of accessible information and communication facilities, public transportation system, and physical infrastructure. In some cases, respondents report negative attitudes and perceptions from employers. To quote one respondent: “Sometimes just for their physical appearance, they are not hired even if they are qualified.” Another respondent said: “There is a perception of higher risk when hiring persons with

4 The survey sample included establishments of 20 or more workers.

disabilities.” A respondent also shared: “There is still discrimination in terms of hiring persons with disabilities, but we still encourage our members to declare their state during the application process. We believe that it is important to declare your disability so that they can look into how they can provide reasonable accommodation for you.”

**“Sometimes just for their physical appearance, they are not hired even if they are qualified.”**

**“There is a perception of higher risk when hiring persons with disabilities.”**

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

There is still discrimination in terms of hiring persons with disabilities, but we still encourage our members to declare their state during the application process. We believe that it is important to declare your disability so that they can look into how they can provide reasonable accommodation for you.

**Access to sheltered employment.** Sheltered employment as defined in the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons refers to the provision of productive work for persons with disabilities through workshops providing special facilities, income-producing projects, and homework schemes. This allows persons with disabilities to earn a living while acquiring a working capacity required in the open industry. Section 6 states that the government shall offer this provision if suitable employment for persons with disabilities cannot be found through open employment (Republic of the Philippines, 1992).

In support of this provision, the DSWD issued Administrative Order No. 67 series of 2004 to enable older persons and persons with disabilities to attain maximum social and economic development for life through vocational skills training and employment in a sheltered workshop (DSWD, 2004). The DSWD has established seven vocational rehabilitation centers that provide programs and services on social, medical, and psychological services, capacity-building activities, livelihood, and vocational skills training, sheltered employment, and job placement. These facilities served a total of 880 clients in 2020, of which 85 were from rehabilitation sheltered workshops (DSWD, 2021).

Currently, sheltered employment programs are operated by government agencies and NGOs across the country, catering to a wide range of segregated vocational and livelihood programs for persons with disabilities. These programs vary extensively in terms of their mission, priority services, and funding resources.

One of the oldest institutions to establish sheltered employment, Tahanang Walang Hagdanan provides services to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities by providing training, educational assistance, mobility aid assistance, and livelihood. Per respondent in this study, approximately 250 persons with disabilities, most of them with orthopedic impairment, are currently living in their dormitories and engaging in various workshops including medicine packaging, metal craft, woodcraft, sewing, and leatherworks.

The International Deaf Education Association Philippines (IDEA Philippines) is another organization that offers sheltered employment to improve the socio-economic quality of life of persons with disabilities, particularly those with hearing impairments. A respondent in this study shared that IDEA Philippines has provided educational aid, residential dormitories, and psychosocial support, as well as employment opportunities in its own social enterprises and with other partner

organizations. In support of these programs, it has created establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, construction firms, hearing clinics, and a high school with a vocational track, where about 70 per cent of the workers are persons with disabilities.

Access to supported employment. Supported employment can integrate persons with disabilities into the open labor market by providing opportunities to learn and perform better at work, including employment coaching, specialized job training, individually tailored supervision, transportation, and assistive technology (US Department of Labor, 1993 as cited in World Health Organization, 2011). In the Philippines, supported employment is implemented in a variety of ways, as illustrated by respondents in this study.

The Autism Society of the Philippines (ASP) program ASP Works, aims to increase the quality of life of their working age members and avoid the “cliff”. This term, as explained by a respondent, refers to instances when adults within the autism spectrum disappear from productive society after graduating from school since no one wants to hire them. To address this, ASP follows their members throughout the employee life cycle by: (1) assessing their well-being and identifying work and vocational interests through the Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC) Test; (2) providing a life and job coach to help them develop a life plan; (3) supporting job application by helping them improve their resume and prepare for job interviews, as well as working with companies to make the screening process more inclusive, and (4) conducting performance management and counselling. Currently, the program has helped 260 members to access work in various industries operating in 11 provinces.

Project Inclusion Network (PIN), a non-profit organization, uses the Access to Work model wherein they collaborate with both jobseekers and employers to

improve access to employment opportunities. Per respondent, jobseekers with disabilities undergo career readiness assessment, work preparations, and skills training. Employers on the other hand engage in partnership-building, preparation of the workplace, and conduct of worksite walkthrough. Once these steps are done, both the jobseekers and employers go through the process of job matching, job screening, disability sensitivity training, and transition support visits. During employment, PIN facilitates catch-up sessions to support the health and wellness of employees with disabilities, discuss strategies for managing their roles and responsibilities, and help them achieve regularization at work.

Forward Together, a program of Humanity & Inclusion (formerly known as Handicap International), empowers youth with disabilities to participate in economic opportunities through capacity-building, competency development, and community involvement. According to a respondent, Humanity & Inclusion also engages with employers to create a more inclusive work environment by conducting technical training, providing relevant resources, and connecting them with youth jobseekers. The respondent also highlighted that they employ a personalized social support approach to ensure that, while support for skills and competency development is provided, youth with disabilities are also empowered to decide on personalized projects that they can implement independently.

While acknowledging its benefits, respondents also reported challenges in implementing supported employment. Despite private companies becoming more open to hire persons with disabilities, some require more advanced skills than are currently available. Another respondent observed that those who are hired are usually persons with disabilities who have graduated from private educational institutions. To quote:

**“I am afraid that the notion of inclusivity becomes elitist because only those who have completed their education in these institutions and have access to basic services like education, transportation, and assistive devices, among others, are getting the right jobs.”**

Respondents also reported that many offices still have no ramps and still lack assistive devices and other necessary support services.

**Access to livelihood programs.** Government agencies and civil society organizations also promote and implement livelihood programs as another option for accessing decent work for all, including persons with disabilities. The Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns of DOLE facilitates community-based livelihood programs through its Integrated Livelihood Program or Kabuhayan Program. According to a respondent in this study, the program provides livelihood assistance to the working poor, vulnerable, persons with disabilities, and marginalized workers. To start, enhance, or restore lost livelihoods, program beneficiaries are provided capability building trainings and working capital in the form of raw materials, tools and equipment, and jigs and fixtures. In partnership with the Government Service Insurance System, program beneficiaries are also signed up for micro-insurance coverage, particularly the group personal accident insurance, to provide risk protection and relief against various hazard at work. In 2020, a total of 615 persons with disabilities were provided livelihood assistance amounting to more than 12 million pesos. This helped establish livelihood in retail and trade such as rice retailing and consumer store, production such as slippers and bag-making, and agribusi-

ness, such as, poultry farming and cattle fattening. In BARMM, a similar program is being implemented by the MSSD to help those who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bangsamoro Sagip Kabuhayan Program provides cash assistance to persons with disabilities to help them start or sustain their own small businesses.

Women with Disabilities LEAP to Social and Economic Progress is an organization of persons with disabilities that promotes the rights of women with disabilities to lead and to participate in social and economic activities within their community. Per respondents in this study, the organization supports women with disabilities across the country by helping them establish livelihood programs, access government services, link with funding institutions, and strengthen leadership and organizational management. It is currently supporting 20 local organizations, led by women with disabilities, in preparing project proposals and business plans.

The Las Piñas Federation for Persons with Disabilities is an organization that implements livelihood programs for persons with disabilities. According to a respondent, the organization conducts personal development activities and skills training and enhancement. An example of a successful initiative is their skills training program on beauty and wellness which was showcased in a local trade fair. The respondent also shared that the local government of Las Piñas City has provided a building where they can conduct their activities. Their dream is to turn this into a model building for accessibility where persons with disabilities can come and go, without need for assistance, and showcase their skills and hone their craft.

## **EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Two aspects of equality in employment are important: equality of opportunity and equality in treatment. Equal opportunity means having an equal chance to apply for a particular job, to be employed, to attend educational or training courses, to be eligible to attain certain qualifications, to be considered as a worker,

or to be considered for a promotion in all occupations or positions, including persons with disabilities. Equal treatment refers to entitlements in pay, working conditions, security of employment, among others. The promotion of equality requires dynamic continuous efforts and the implementation of concrete measures and is a step beyond the prohibition or elimination of discrimination (ILO, 2011).

To promote full employment and equal employment opportunities, the Labor Code of the Philippines was promulgated in 1974 through Presidential Decree No. 442, A Decree Instituting a Labor Code Thereby Revising and Consolidating Labor and Social Laws to Afford Protection to Labor, Promote Employment and Human Resources Development and Insure Industrial Peace Based on Social Justice. It was enacted to regulate the relations between workers and employers and avoid unfair treatment or exploitation in the workforce. The Labor Code covers the key stages and crucial components of employment: (1) pre-employment, (2) human resources development, (3) conditions of employment, (4) health, safety, and social welfare benefits, (5) labor relations, (6) and post-employment (Department of Labor and Employment [DOLE], 2017).

**Pre-employment.** The Labor Code mandates the promotion of a state of full employment through, (1) improved manpower training, allocation, and utilization, (2) facilitation of free choice of available employment by persons seeking work, (3) and strengthening of the network of public employment offices and participation of the private sector in the recruitment and placement of workers. It also recognizes the need to formulate and develop employment programs designed to benefit disadvantaged groups and communities (DOLE, 2017).

Given these mandates, the respondents shared that the Bureau of Labor and Employment of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE-BLE) has implemented initiatives to promote inclusive recruitment and placement of persons with disabilities. Phil-JobNet, an internet-based system, was established

to fast-track the matching of the job seekers' skills and interests with the employers' human resource requirements. Department Order No. 165 series of 2016 instructs the addition of major features and functionalities which include a special job categorization, where vacancies are classified and positions that accept specific clients such as persons with disabilities are highlighted. (DOLE, 2016) According to a respondent in this study, of the 8,300 vacancies in the portal in 2020, 257 persons with disabilities were registered and 46 employers indicated that they are accepting persons with disabilities.

JobStart Philippines is another program of DOLE-BLE, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, implemented across the country through the Public Employment Service Offices (PESO). This program aims to enhance the employability of youth, with or without disability, through (1) one-on-one career coaching and life and technical skills training, (2) a paid internship in partnership with different establishments for a maximum of three months, (3) and a full-cycle employment facilitation service facilitated by the PESO. Since its implementation in 2016, the program has benefitted 14,684 youth where 8,921 youth were eventually employed (DOLE, 2020). Although there were relevant feature stories on some of the persons with disabilities who have successfully benefitted from the program, no data were reported pertaining to the number of persons with disabilities who have completed the program.

**Human resources development.** Assistance in the establishment and operation of adult education programs must be provided by every employer for their workers (DOLE, 2017). Employers are encouraged to assist and help their employees to enroll and to complete further education. For employees who have been out of school and want to complete their basic education, the DepEd implements an Alternative Learning System which is in parallel with the basic education track of the country. Likewise, for technical and vocational education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)

offers training and vocational courses that can help in empowering individuals through mastery of their technical skills that are beneficial for their work and livelihood.

In 2017, the NCDA and TESDA signed a memorandum of agreement to provide free skills training for persons with disabilities under the Training for Work Scholarship Program. This program is part of TESDA's two-pronged strategy on poverty reduction which aims to implement interventions through skills development and provide access to training to qualified persons with disability and uplift their socio-economic status (NCDA, 2017). From 2018 to 2019, 11,630 persons with disabilities have enrolled in skills training courses, of which, 10,753 graduated from the course, 6,795 have been assessed, and 6,349 were certified. Enrollees almost doubled from 2018 to 2019, however, most of them availed of training programs that have no training regulation and were community-based. Refer to Annex 7 for the total number of persons with disabilities enrolled, graduated, assessed, and certified in 2018 and 2019, classified by region (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, 2019). TESDA has also been actively exchanging information, plans, and programs with NCDA through a series of conferences, webinars, and monthly celebrations that integrate skills demonstrations. Other initiatives include the development of a Basic Sign Language course and strengthening of promotions and advocacy through partnerships with OPDs, NGOs, and government agencies.

**Conditions of employment.** All employees, as defined in appropriate regulations, are entitled to normal hours of work not exceeding hours a day, weekly rest periods, observance of holidays, service incentive leaves, and service charges. Wage shall be paid to employees under a written or unwritten contract of employment for work, done or to be done, or for services rendered or to be rendered. Regional minimum wages shall be established to maintain the minimum standards of living necessary for the health, efficiency, and general well-being of employees.

Moreover, employees have the freedom to bargain for higher wages with their respective employers, especially when wages are not enough to sustain their daily needs. Employees are also entitled to (1) compulsory coverage in the state insurance fund, (2) medical benefits that include medical and rehabilitation services, (3) disability benefits for temporary total, permanent total, or permanent partial disabilities, and (4) death benefit to be provided to the covered employee's primary beneficiaries (DOLE, 2017).

To promote safe and healthy working conditions, the DOLE shall establish and enforce mandatory occupational safety and health standards in all workplaces, as well as institute the necessary programs and services (DOLE, 2017). There are no specific programs under the Bureau of Working Conditions that pivots on reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. However, in the Labor Inspection Checklist, one of the compliance indicators is the accessibility of persons with disabilities in support of the Accessibility Law.

**Labor relations.** The Labor Code recognizes the primacy of free collective bargaining and negotiation, and free trade unionism. Employees have the power to build an organization or union to protect themselves from unfair labor practices and participate in decisions that affect their rights, duties, and welfare. When faced with unfair labor practices, unions have the right to call for an agreement with their employers. If unsatisfactory action was taken by the employer, unions have the right to strike and picket. In case of disputes, the DOLE steps up to investigate and ensure that labor cases undergo legal processes and all actions taken are under the jurisdiction of the law (DOLE, 2017).

As of the first quarter of 2021, there are 102,885 labor organizations with more than 4.8 million reported members nationwide. In particular, the labor organizations are composed of 83,005 workers' association with 2.7 million reported members, 18,005 private sector unions with 1.6 million reported members, and 1,825 public sector unions with one million reported members (DOLE, 2021). At the time of writing, there

were no available data pertaining to the membership of persons with disabilities, nor programs promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in labor unions.

Post-employment. In case of regular employment, the employer shall not terminate the services of an employee except for a just cause or when authorized by specific provisions of the law. An employee may terminate without just cause the employee-employer relationship by serving a written notice at least one month in advance. In case of retirement, the employee shall be entitled to receive retirement benefits under existing laws and any collective bargaining agreement (DOLE, 2017).

#### SUMMARY

In summary, significant efforts were made at the policy and program levels to safeguard the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. Access to decent work in an open labor market is championed by multiple stakeholders, with policies in place to regulate relations between workers and employers in both private and public sectors. The Labor Code affords protection to labor and avoids unfair treatment, as well as exploitation in the private sector, while the CSC regulates the employment and working conditions in the public sector. Government agencies and CSOs have also initiated programs to increase access to decent work through sheltered employment, supported employment, and livelihood programs.

However, literature review and data collection indicate that inclusive employment is not yet fully understood and implemented, as segregated employment and discrimination towards employees with disabilities continue to exist. Barriers to accessing work opportunities in an open labor market must be addressed, including low participation in basic and technical education and lack of accessible infrastructure and communication. Advocacy and awareness-raising must also be strengthened to address negative attitudes and perceptions in the workplace and in the wider community.

## 4.1.5 Civil Participation and Governance

### INTRODUCTION

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims the right of everyone to take part in the government of one's country directly, with equal access to public service, or through freely chosen representatives as expressed in periodic and genuine elections by universal and equal suffrage. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association is likewise articulated, with emphasis that no one may be compelled to belong to any association (United Nations, 1948). In alignment with these rights, UNCRPD affirms the right of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right to vote and be elected; and to participate fully in the conduct of public affairs by forming, joining, and participating in organizations and associations (United Nations, 2006).

Similarly, the Philippine Constitution safeguards the right of its citizens to vote – emphasizing that no literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage – and guarantees equal access to opportunities for public service. It also recognizes the role of independent people's organizations in enabling citizens to pursue and protect their interests and aspirations and to participate at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making. (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). In turn, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons protects the rights of persons with disabilities to vote, allowing them to be assisted by a person of their choice in national and local elections. It also recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities to assemble and participate in concerned action held in public, as well as to form organizations or associations that promote their welfare and advance their interests (Republic of the Philippines, 1992).

As an initial analysis of the extent to which these rights are being met, this section examines two broad aspects of political and public life: (1) participation of

persons with disabilities in the electoral process, and (2) freedom of association and participation in public life of persons with disabilities.

### PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Republic Act 10366, ‘An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens’, guarantees the right to participation in electoral processes. Section 3 guarantees the political rights of persons with disabilities and senior citizens, in line with the concept of universal design by, ensuring that (1) voting procedures, facilities, and materials are appropriate, accessible, easy to understand and use, (2) protecting the right of persons with disabilities and senior citizens to vote by secret ballot in elections without intimidation, (3) facilitating the use of assistive and new technologies where appropriate, and (4) guaranteeing the free expression, in the exercise of the right of suffrage, of persons with disabilities and senior citizens, allowing assistance in voting by a person of their own choice (Republic of the Philippines, 2013a).

Per official records of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), there were a total of 61,843,771 registered voters during the 2019 elections, of which 46,937,139 actually voted on election day, putting the voter turnout at 75.90 per cent. Of the total registered voters, 350,049 were persons of disabilities (0.57 per cent), 233,727 of the 350,049 exercised their right on election day, with voter turnout at 66.70 per cent (Commission on Elections [COMELEC], 2019b). At the time of writing, no data were gathered through desk research or key informant interviews pertaining to the number of persons with disabilities who ran for public office in the same year.

**Voter education and awareness.** The Commission and other government agencies, civil society organizations, public and private media, and other institutions are responsible for disseminating information to voters about the details and mechanics of the electoral process. According to respondents, this includes

information on who are eligible to vote, how voters can register, who the candidates are, when and how to vote, and how to file complaints, among others.

In recent years, social media has become a vital platform for sharing information but has also largely contributed to disinformation and the spread of fake news. Ong et al. (2019) note that ‘with citizens spending ten hours and two minutes a day on social media—twice the global average and ranking first worldwide—the Philippines is among the first to witness Facebook’s transformation from a platform to stay connected to becoming a platform to perpetuate divisions’ (p.7). According to a respondent, the Legal Network for Truthful Elections has proposed an election bill to counter disinformation and fake news. The organization is currently conducting a norm-building activity to involve the public in setting a standard of behavior for social media use and engagement.

Advocating for inclusive political participation, the Alyansa ng may Kapansanang Pinoy, a cross-disability national organization, promotes the voting rights of persons with disabilities and provides support in voter registration. A respondent shared that the organization has also contributed to the passage of the law on accessible polling places, in collaboration with partners and allies.

**Voter registration.** To ensure that persons with disabilities and senior citizens exercise their right to political participation without discrimination and restrictions, the government approved Republic Act 10366<sup>5</sup> (Republic of the Philippines, 2013a). According to the respondents in this study, the Commission has implemented measures in support of this law, particularly in the registration process. These include: (1) providing special lanes in all election offices, (2) adding special days of registration for persons with disabilities, (3) allowing persons with disabilities to amend their voter identification so they can be included in the Accessible Polling Precinct, (4) revising voter registration form to indicate the type of disability as well as the form of assistance needed, and (5) establishing offsite registrations where COMELEC officials go to the



barangay to set up satellite registration offices.

Although generally appreciated, some of the respondents in this study lamented the gaps in the implementation of the registration process for persons with disabilities. One respondent said that he had amended his voter identification since 2013, but until now his name is still listed in his old precinct, which is not located on the ground floor.

Another respondent mentioned the lack of sign language interpreters and communication assistance in election offices during registration.

**Party-list system.** The Philippine Constitution mandates the creation of the party-list system to allow for greater democratic participation in the national legislature. In 1995, the Republic Act 7941 or the Party-List System Act was passed to promote proportional representation in the election of representatives to the House of Representatives. Representation is ensured through a party-list system which will enable Filipino citizens belonging to marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations, and parties, and who lack well-defined political constituencies to become members of the House (Republic of the Philippines, 1995). In 2013, the Supreme Court clarified that party-list groups may either be “(1) marginalized and underrepresented including labor, peasant, fisherfolk, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, handicapped, veterans, and overseas workers, or (2) lacking in well-defined political constituencies including professionals, the elderly, women, and the youth” (Aning, 2013).

According to respondents in this study, since the implementation of the party-list system in 1998, groups representing persons with disabilities, Pilipinong May Kapansanan (Pinoy May K) and Filipinos with Disabilities (Disabled/Persons with Disabilities), have joined the party-list race but were, ultimately

unable to secure a seat in the House of Representatives. At the time of writing, the research team was unable to receive official information if there were other groups representing persons with disabilities that also participated in previous elections.

**Election campaigns.** In 2019, the Commission issued Resolution 10488 or the Rules and Regulations in Implementing Republic Act 9006 (Fair Elections Act) to promote more accessible election campaigns. Candidates and parties are required to incorporate sign language interpreters and closed captioning in broadcast election propaganda intended for exhibition on television and/or the internet and are encouraged to ensure the availability of their respective printed campaign materials in braille (Section 6). They are also encouraged to ensure the accessibility of campaign activities and events for persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and heavily pregnant women by providing accessibility features such as access ramps, reserved seating areas, among others (Section 30) (COMELEC, 2019a).

The inclusion of sign language interpreters was evident during the 2016 presidential election. However, one of the respondents in this study pointed out that the gaps lie in the local election, to quote: “During the campaign period, especially for the local election, we do not understand the programs or agenda that they are campaigning for. We only get information from our family members and some leaflets that were handed out. But we need access to quality interpreters to decipher who is a good or bad candidate”. This was seconded by another respondent who also lamented the challenges experienced by those who communicate through Filipino Sign Language, American Sign Language, or the native way of signing. “Persons with visual disabilities should also be given attention”, another respondent said, as campaign materials do not include braille or are uploaded to inaccessible websites.

5 Republic Act 10366, An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

“During the campaign period, especially for the local election, we don’t understand the programs or agenda that they are campaigning for. We only get information from our family members and some leaflets that were handed out. But we need access to quality interpreters to decipher who is a good or bad candidate.”

**Protocols on election day.** In consonance with the measures implemented by the Commission to ensure inclusive voter registration, reasonable accommodations were also provided during election day. Republic Act 10366<sup>6</sup> mandates the creation of precincts for persons with disabilities and senior citizens (Section 9). Every voting center must have at least one accessible polling place, located on the ground floor, where assistive devices and experts are available to assist persons with disabilities. In cases where a person with disability cannot accomplish the ballot alone, they may be assisted by a relative or an election officer. Emergency polling place, on the other hand, was established to address the needs of those who were not able to amend their voter identification during the registration process (Republic of the Philippines, 2013a).

In implementing these measures, respondents in this study have pointed out the challenges experienced while availing of the accessible polling place. One respondent mentioned the lack of ramps on some precincts where the accessible polling place is supposedly situated. Another respondent mentioned the long queues and waiting time, as there is only one personnel designated to support persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and other voters needing assistance.

### FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

The UNCRPD recognizes the importance of actively

promoting an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in the conduct of public affairs, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others, and encourage their participation in public affairs, including: (1) participation in NGOs and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country and in the activities and administration of political parties; and (2) forming and joining organizations of persons with disabilities to represent persons with disabilities at international, national, regional and local levels (United Nations, 2006).

**Enabling environment for organizations and associations.** According to a 2016 study conducted by the Caucus of Development NGO Networks, the legal, regulatory, and policy environment in which CSOs operate is generally positive and enabling; thereby allowing organizations to form and operate and ultimately, contribute to development. Procedures and requirements for the formation of organizations are clear, with generally no restrictions on the purposes. There are also no legal impediments for organizations to access financial resources and no prohibition to receive and use public funds. On the whole, organizations enjoy freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, wherein tolerance for critical statements is observed, even on controversial issues; and rallies, demonstrations, marches, and other forms of public assembly are generally accepted as legitimate and strategic action (Caucus of Development NGO Networks, 2016).

**Formation of organizations of persons with disabilities.** DSWD issued Administrative Order No. 13, series of 2008<sup>7</sup>, providing guidelines on organizing persons with disabilities into self-help groups by cluster barangays, municipalities, provinces/cities, regions, and national federation, with the goal of becoming self-reliant, productive, and contributing members of society. Field offices are tasked to coordinate with persons with disabilities, support the creation of self-help groups at different levels, provide capability building opportunities, and conduct monitoring and evaluation (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2008).

6 Republic Act No. 10366, An Act authorizing the Commission on Elections to establish precincts assigned to accessible polling places exclusively for persons with disabilities and senior citizens

In 2010, Republic Act 10070<sup>8</sup> was enacted to amend the role of national agencies and LGUs originally set out in the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons. It reaffirms the role of local government units in promoting the establishment of organizations of persons with disabilities within their territorial jurisdictions. In addition, to improve governance structure for the participation of persons with disabilities and ensure implementation of relevant programs and services, LGUs are mandated to create a Persons with Disability Affairs Office in every province, city, and municipality. In consideration of budget constraints, local chief executives of fourth, fifth, and sixth class municipalities may designate a focal person in lieu of the creation of a PDAO (Republic of the Philippines, 2010).

According to a 2018 report by the Coalitions for Change Program, only six of every 10 LGUs had PDAOs (Alampay et al., 2018). Respondents acknowledged that limited funds are allocated for the creation of PDAOs: many municipalities cannot afford to hire a PDAO head given the qualifications for the role and the corresponding salary grade and assign a focal person instead.

Respondents emphasized the importance of having a clear purpose for establishing and participating in an organization. One respondent shared that some organizations secured official registration to take advantage of opportunities presented to them (for example, to qualify to receive a grant fund), without fully understanding the motive and rationale behind the creation of the organization. Another respondent highlighted the need for independence and meaningful participation, to quote: “Most of the OPDs are controlled by the local government and are not entirely independent. We can identify organizations at the barangay level, but if we are looking for meaningful participation, then I don’t think so.”

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

**“Most of the OPDs are controlled by the local government and are not entirely independent.”**

One respondent mentioned that there were oppositions, especially from men, when they were initially setting up an organization focused on women with disabilities. Some do not believe that women with disabilities have the capacity to lead and organize, while others question the motive behind the creation of a women-focused organization within the sector. The respondent highlighted that the intersectionality of being a woman and having a disability result in multiple and aggravated forms of discrimination that are not addressed and seem invisible even within the sector. By establishing women-led and women-focused organizations, they can address these issues through a support group of women empowering women and promote the exercise of their rights and full participation in society. The respondent concluded: “If we give value to human dignity, we need them to participate, to live in equal rights with others, be given the support they need, and feel valued.”

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

**Some do not believe that women with disabilities have the capacity to lead and organize, while others question the motive behind the creation of a women-focused organization within the sector.**

7 RDSWD Administrative Order No. 13, s. of 2008: Guidelines in Organizing Persons with Disabilities into Self-Help Groups (SHGS).

8 Republic Act 10070, Establishing institutional mechanism to ensure the implementation of programs and services for persons with disabilities in every province, city and municipality, amending Republic Act. No. 7277, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, as amended, and for other purposes

**Allocation of financial resources.** The government allocates an annual budget in support of programs and projects related to persons with disabilities. For fiscal year 2021, Section 33 of the General Appropriations Act states that: “Pursuant to existing laws, all agencies of the government shall formulate plans, programs, and projects intended to address the concerns of senior citizens and persons with disability, insofar as it relates to their mandated functions, and integrate the same in their regular activities” (Department of Budget and Management, 2020).

Respondents in this study highlighted that there will be significant changes in the roles and functions of PDAOs upon the implementation of the Mandanas-Garcia Ruling in 2022. The Ruling will devolve funds to the local government equivalent to 234 million pesos, five million of which will be allocated to the barangay level. The challenge, according to one respondent, is for PDAOs to bring the local government closer to the people and ensure that federations of persons with disabilities and those who are part of the marginalized sector can participate in local governance and budget allocation.

Aside from the government, some NGOs also provide financial resources to programs and initiatives that advance the rights of persons with disabilities. An example is the NORFIL Foundation that implements interventions directly, as well as indirectly through provision of funds to its local partners. As confirmed by respondents, the Foundation has successfully supported the International Deaf Association Philippines and the Adaptive Technology for the Rehabilitation, Integration, and Empowerment of the Visually-impaired in their pursuit of inclusive education and equal employment opportunities for all, including persons with disabilities.

**Provision of technical assistance.** Administrative Order No. 13 series of 2008<sup>9</sup> mandates the municipal/city and provincial Social Welfare and Development Offices to provide capability building opportunities to enhance the competencies of OPDs in organizational

planning, leadership, entrepreneurial skills, management of activities (psychosocial support and counseling as well as employable skills), and networking and resource generation. The central office and field offices are also tasked to monitor the provision of technical assistance and evaluate progress in terms of organizational building and management. (DSWD, 2008)

Respondents shared that technical assistance is provided by the local government and organizations such as the Las Pinas Federation for Persons with Disabilities and Women with Disabilities LEAP to Social and Economic Progress. Technical assistance includes capability-building on how to organize and federate, manage politics at different levels of government, develop strategic plans and programs, engage stakeholders and build networks, and prepare pertinent documents and reports. Respondents also highlighted the importance of conducting values formation and improving awareness of persons with disabilities on different disability laws.

**Consultation and representation.** Multiple institutionalized spaces are provided for CSOs to participate in policy formulation, implementation, and review. However, it is worth noting that many of these opportunities are perceived as mere compliance with obligations, rather than authentic and dynamic platforms for participation and cooperation. On the whole though, the relationship with government agencies is described as harmonious, paving the way for greater cooperation and, in many aspects, genuine partnership (Caucus of Development NGO Networks, 2016).

Most of the respondents in this study confirmed the representation of persons with disabilities in discussions regarding their rights through participation of their organizations in consultations and membership in relevant sub-committees. These are usually coordinated by the NCDA and also involve other government agencies and NGOs. Respondents cited the following engagements, among others:

<sup>9</sup> DSWD Administrative Order No. 13, s. of 2008: Guidelines in Organizing Persons with Disabilities into Self-Help Groups (SHGS).

1. Adaptive Technology for the Rehabilitation, Integration, and Empowerment of the Visually-impaired as member of the sub-committee on education, advocacy, and social and auxiliary services
2. Alyansa ng May Kapansanang-Pinoy on the policy formulation and creation of accessible polling places
3. Las Pinas Persons with Disabilities Federation on the provision of accessible public transportation, learning support and development, and accessible polling places
4. Life Haven Center for Independent Living on the provision of mandatory PhilHealth coverage, provision of assistive devices, accessible public transportation, and disability support allowance
5. Philippine Federation of the Deaf including its federation member, Dumaguete Effata Association of the Deaf, on the formulation of the Filipino Sign Language Law, use of mother tongue-based communication, and budget allotment of sign language interpreters in schools
6. Tahanang Walang Hagdanan as member of the sub-committee on training, employment, and livelihood
7. Women with Disabilities LEAP to Social and Economic Progress on discussions of women and disability and formulation of the Sexual Reproductive Health Bill

Respondents acknowledged the value of these consultation mechanisms and articulated the need for even more participation from OPDs. Some respondents recommended having more structured discussions that focus on resolution of specific issues and concerns, thereby moving the collective agenda forward.

### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

There is a need for more structured discussions that focus on resolution of specific issues and concerns, thereby moving the collective agenda forward.

### SUMMARY

In summary, substantial efforts are made at the policy and program levels to protect and promote the right of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life, on an equal basis with others. The law guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to participate in electoral processes and provisions are made to ensure voting procedures, facilities, and materials are appropriate and accessible. Freedom of association is exercised within a generally positive and enabling legal, regulatory, and policy environment. The formation and sustainability of organizations of persons with disabilities is supported through allocation of financial resources and provision of technical assistance. Consultation mechanisms are also established to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in public affairs and in discussions about their rights and welfare.

However, literature review and data collection indicate that political and public life remains inaccessible. Data show that only a small number of persons with disabilities register as voters and exercised their right to vote on election day. Despite provisions in the law, persons with disabilities are excluded from participating in the electoral process due to the lack of accessible infrastructure and communication such as sign language interpretation and assistive devices. While it is recognized that an increasing number of persons with disabilities are able to exercise their freedom of association and become active proponents of positive change, many are still left behind and unable to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

While it is recognized that an increasing number of persons with disabilities are able to exercise their freedom of association and become active proponents of positive change, many are still left behind and unable to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

#### 4.1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, efforts were made at the policy and program levels to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, and its amendments, is the overarching law that guides the government in implementing guidelines and programs that ensure access and participation of persons with disabilities in the society. It guarantees persons with disabilities full enjoyment to their rights without discrimination. However, there are provisions in the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons that are not aligned with the UNCRPD, such as implementation of special education to provide persons with disabilities access to education. The UNCRPD clearly articulates that persons with disabilities should be taught in an inclusive setting, alongside their peers.

Specific to accessibility, the government enacted the Accessibility Law that promotes access of persons with disabilities to physical infrastructures and buildings and transportation. However, the law is outdated and needs to be amended to include provisions on information and communication, transport terminals, and other provisions. Furthermore, there are still gaps in implementing the Accessibility Law since most physical infrastructures, buildings, transportation, and information and communication are not compliant with the minimum standards set by its IRR. Based on the respondents in this study, amendments to the law are being developed through various consultation dialogues with key stakeholders. The FSL Law

promotes equitable access to information and communication for persons who are Deaf and hard of hearing. It also mandates that FSL will be the official national sign language of the Philippines, which means that this should be used as the medium of communication in all transactions with persons who are Deaf. Provision of insets in broadcast media helps persons who are Deaf in accessing information and keeping up to date with the important events in the country. On the other hand, provision of sign language interpreters in various government agencies, help persons who are Deaf and frontline workers and staff communicate easily.

However, despite the enactment of the law, the IRR of FSL is not yet developed. The IRR will guide government agencies in ensuring the law is properly implemented.

In health and rehabilitation, the Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage for Persons with Disabilities Law, and the Universal Health Care Law were enacted specifically to provide access for persons with disabilities to health-care services. However, based on the results of this study, rehabilitation centers are often limited to urban locations, which makes it difficult for persons with disabilities from rural areas to access rehabilitation services. While access of persons with disabilities to healthcare services is often hindered by inaccessible health facilities, lack of accessible transportation, and attitudinal barriers of healthcare professionals. Limited funding, especially in rural areas, also restrict the provision of accessible health and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.

In education, the DepEd ensures access of persons with disabilities to quality education through policy issuances, while inclusive education is still being developed by the Congress. Overall, the rights-based concept of inclusive education is not yet fully understood and implemented in the Philippines. Majority of children with disabilities are still being educated in segregated classes which is not aligned with the provisions of the UNCRPD and GC4. Further, special curricula for persons with disabilities still exist which

may lower the quality of education of persons with disabilities in general.

In work and employment, significant efforts were made at the policy and program levels to safeguard the right of persons with disabilities to decent work and employment. The Labor Code of the Philippines protects all workers from unfair treatment or exploitation in the private sector, while the CSC regulates the employment and working conditions in the public sector. Key duty-bearers have also invested resources and initiated programs to increase access of persons with disabilities to work opportunities. However, the results of this study indicate that inclusive employment is not yet fully understood and implemented. Segregated employment continues to exist, as access to employment in the open labor market remains limited. Discrimination in the workplace, low participation in basic and technical education, and lack of accessible infrastructure and communication, among others, continue to hinder persons with disabilities for accessing their rights to work on an equal basis with others.

In civic participation and governance, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life. Key duty-bearers have implemented initiatives to make voting procedures, facilities, and materials more appropriate and accessible. Provisions were also developed to support the formation and strengthening of organizations of persons with disabilities through technical and financial assistance, thereby promoting freedom of association. However, results of this study indicate that political and public life remains inaccessible. The lack of accessible infrastructure and communication, among others, continue to hinder persons with disabilities from participating in elections. Data showed that only a small number of persons with disabilities registered as voters and voted in the previous elections. While it is recognized that an increasing number of persons with disabilities can exercise freedom of association and become active proponents of positive change, many are still unable to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

## 4.2 BARRIERS: WHAT ARE THE EXISTING BARRIERS THAT HINDER PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FROM ACCESSING THEIR RIGHTS?

### 4.2.1 Overview

The Philippines has enacted and strengthened policies and programs with its ratification of the UNCRPD. However, persons with disabilities are continually hampered by barriers from accessing their rights which limits their opportunities from independently participating in the society. The following section articulates broad categories encompassing the barriers persons with disabilities experience as articulated by the respondents. The main categories identified were: (1) inaccessible infrastructure and communication, (2) lack of comprehensive social

protection, (3) limited capacity of frontline workers, (4) lack of awareness and understanding of rights, and (5) lack of inclusive attitudes and perceptions.

Accessibility to infrastructure and communication facilities, accommodations, and devices ensures persons with disabilities freedom of movement and equitable participation to the society. (United Nations, 2006). Despite the provisions of the Accessibility Law access to basic services, roads, and transportation remain hindered due to physical barriers, and inaccessible communication and information tools.

Placing ramps is one way of increasing accessibility to public spaces and buildings.

### 4.2.2 Inaccessible Infrastructure and Communication

Access to public transportation, however, still needs considerable improvement. Accessible public transport means fully implementing accommodations in the journey cycle of persons with disabilities without incurring extra expenses. However, available public transportation in the Philippines, such as tricycle, jeepneys, and buses are not equipped with access facilities such as provision of mobile ramp, braille, audio or visual signages, and standard measurement to accommodate persons with disabilities. Certain accessible features continue to be tackled in silos, and though there are inter-agency committees formed, concrete plans have yet to be implemented. For example, the DOTr Task Force on Accessibility was formed years ago yet there are no mechanisms yet for public transportation to be more accessible for persons with disabilities.

**Education.** The GC4 to Article 24 of the UNCRPD clearly articulates provision of accessible learning environment for all learners (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013). However, inaccessible school buildings and other physical facilities continue to hinder persons with disabilities from accessing high-quality education, alongside their peers.

Result of the 2014 audit commissioned by The Asia Foundation revealed that most public schools do not have designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities (The Asia Foundation, 2018). While based on the 2018 policy research conducted by Alyansa ng may Kapansang Pinoy and ANSA, around 55% of schools surveyed have smooth paved pathways from the main entrance of the school to the school buildings (ANSA, 2018). Further, ramps constructed in schools are inconsistent or not aligned with minimum standards set by the government, where only 21%

of the ramps are sturdy and 21% of the ramps have railings (ANSA, 2018). In relation to the measurement of hallways, only 62% of the schools surveyed have sufficiently wide hallways for wheelchair users (ANSA, 2018).

Like the findings of the 2018 research, most respondents in this study agreed that schools have limited space and are not fully accessible for children with disabilities. One respondent even mentioned that physical infrastructures of mainstream schools are not compliant with the Accessibility Law. Another respondent said that mostly SPED centers are provided with accessibility features for children with disabilities. In the ANSA report, majority (78%) of schools do not have accessible toilet for persons with disabilities. The policy research also highlighted that multi-level schools do not have elevators, stairs, and railings to make it accessible for persons with disabilities (ANSA, 2018).

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Physical infrastructure of mainstream schools are not compliant with the Accessibility Law.

Children with disabilities enrolled in mainstream classes often encountered difficulties due to inaccessible physical environment. One respondent shared that, children with disabilities remain inside the classroom, even during free time, because the outside facilities of the school are inaccessible to them. In DepEd Mandaluyong City Division, although the division is among the distinct child-friendly schools, some facilities are not yet fully accessible for children with disabilities. Respondents shared that some mainstream classes with children with disabilities are conducted at the ground level of school buildings, since other parts of the buildings are not accessible for persons with disabilities. A 2019 FGD done by the Advocates of Inclusion and The Asia Foundation



determined that parents of children with disabilities decided not to enroll their children for the following school year because they can no longer carry the child to higher floors since using the stairs was the only option in their school in Mandaluyong.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Children with disabilities remain inside the classroom, even during free time, because the outside facilities of the schools are inaccessible to them.

**Social and public services.** Based on the interviews and FGDs conducted, access to physical environment, and information and communication also hindered persons with disabilities from accessing social and public services. In terms of access to physical environment, inaccessibility of public transportation has been cited as one of the major challenges of persons with disabilities. Respondents shared that many persons with disabilities do not have their own vehicles or cannot afford car services. Further, OPDs and NGOs interviewed identified airports as one of the most inaccessible modes of transportation for persons with disabilities. They cited that, professionals in the aviation industry have an assumption that ramps are the sole access features needed for persons with disabilities which disregards other access facilities such as visual and audio signs, tactile flooring, standardized restroom for persons with disabilities. Another respondent shared that one of their colleagues who are Deaf and hard of hearing missed the flight because the person did not know that the flight was already boarding due to lack of accessible visual signs.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Professionals in the aviation industry have an assumption that ramps are the sole access features needed for persons with disabilities which disregards other access facilities such as visual and audio signs, tactile flooring, standardized restroom for persons with disabilities.

According to respondents, persons with disabilities also experienced challenges in accessing hospitals and clinics, especially in rural areas. It was shared that some view accessibility features as secondary features of infrastructures. In some situations, accessibility features, such as ramps and accessible toilets, are the first things removed in a construction project in case of constraints in the budget. However, as stated by the respondents and the reference group members in the study, making buildings accessible for persons with disabilities at the onset is more cost-efficient than reconstructing facilities to provide accessibility features. The DPWH-BMC recognizes that the full implementation of the Accessibility Law has been protracted over the years, however, the department identified priority infrastructures, such as, government buildings, roads, bridges, and school buildings.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Persons with disabilities also experienced challenges in accessing hospitals and clinics, especially in rural areas.

Respondents shared that, the Z Benefit Package was put on hold in some hospitals, particularly in rural areas, due to the incapacity to cater to the needs of persons with disabilities due to lack of financial and human resources.

**OPD PERSPECTIVE**

There are some cases, where women who are Deaf and hard of hearing were not able to report incidents of abuse because of lack of reasonable accommodations, such as provision of sign language interpreters at the police station.

Apart from physical infrastructure barriers, it was reported that the provincial and municipal governments do not have accessible information dissemination activities specifically targeted to persons with disabilities. This resulted in citizens with disabilities missing out on important information. Some respondents in this study shared that there were cases of women who are Deaf and hard of hearing who were not able to report incidents of abuse because of lack of reasonable accommodations, such as provision of sign language interpreters at the police station.

**Civic participation and governance.** Persons with disabilities are hindered from participating in public life due to inaccessible information and communication, and lack of accommodations provided for persons with disabilities. A respondent in this study shared that colleagues who registered and voted in the 2019 elections found the process difficult, due to lack of sign language interpreters. According to some OPDs, Deaf community members find it difficult to understand complex language, thus, the written language used in the voting precincts is challenging for them. Even campaign materials of electoral candidates are not in accessible format, resulting to difficulty in understanding the programs or agenda of the candidates. People who are Deaf and hard of hearing had to rely on information from their family members and from some collateral materials handed out.

**OPD PERSPECTIVE**

Campaign materials of candidates are not in accessible format, resulting to difficulty in understanding the programs or agenda of the candidates.

Inaccessible facilities for polling places often hindered persons with disabilities from exercising their right to vote. The Emergency Access Facilities for Polling Places, coordinated between the COMELEC and the DPWH to ensure that polling places are accessible for persons with disabilities, were not fully implemented. Some of the respondents in the interviews shared that ramps were unavailable and the transportation to the precincts/polling places were not accessible. A colleague of the respondent had to be carried up as his ballot was at the 4th floor, which was not accessible for him. There were also concerns regarding the system management of the COMELEC as some of the respondents shared that they had to go to another barangay because of their names were not listed to the polling precinct voters' list during the voting period. Most of the OPD respondents shared that people with visual disabilities struggle to access websites related on election periods.

**OPD PERSPECTIVE**

- “Ramps were unavailable and the transportation to the precincts/polling places were not accessible.”
- “People with visual disabilities struggle to access websites related on election periods.”

**Work and employment.** Access to work and employment opportunities becomes difficult when physical environment, and information and communication are inaccessible for persons with disabilities. Some of the

respondents identified the lack of accessible and safe transportation available for persons with disabilities remains one of the top challenges for persons with disabilities to fully participate in employment. Public transport vehicles are often not accessible and roads and narrow sidewalks are not favorable to those who use a wheelchair. Persons with disabilities therefore have no other option but to use private transportation which costs more than their daily wage.

Further, company inclusion policies remain inadequate. Based on the interviews, most companies do not have policies on the provision of sign language interpreters, visual and audio aid, or other reasonable accommodations. This makes the workplace inaccessible for persons with disabilities. Some respondents shared that in some cases persons with disabilities were not aware of their right to communicate to their employers about reasonable accommodations. Most persons with disabilities believe that online jobs are the most convenient form of employment because of the work-from-home set up, which helps them avoid inaccessible facilities. Some OPDs interviewed highlighted the significance of mobility for persons with disabilities to enjoy their right to work.

There are organizations, such as Autism Society Philippines, that conduct ocular inspection of offices for companies that provide work for their members. The results of revealed that oftentimes, these workplaces are not conducive for persons with autism because of attitude and physical environment barrier.

Based on the online survey conducted by the Sub Committee on Children with Disabilities, 2,625 (39%) out of the 40,066 respondents declared that families lost their income or employment because of the lockdown (Council for the Welfare of Children, 2020). 48% (3,232) of the respondents of the survey said that children with disabilities were unable to access habilitation and rehabilitation facilities and services, and 43% (2,853) were unable to access general health facilities and services due to the lack of available

transportation (Council for the Welfare of Children, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the barriers in accessing information and communication for the persons with disabilities because of the lack of sign language interpreters and inaccessibility of shared information and announcements from LGUs.

One respondent shared that, persons who are Deaf and hard of hearing were not aware of any changes to the rules or ordinances concerning COVID-19 restrictions because of the inaccessible communication channels that do not have sign language interpreters. In addition, respondents mentioned it was challenging to share their feedback and complaints with relevant agencies due to communication issues, including a lack of sign language interpreters in the LGU. The transition of most persons with disabilities to digital platforms because of the COVID-19 pandemic helped them become more familiar with the digital space. However, there are organizations which were challenged like the IDEA Philippines and Tahanang Walang Hagdanan because most of their work is done face to face.

### 4.2.3 Lack of Comprehensive Social Protection

According to the Social Protection and Human Rights (n.d.), social protection plays a key role in realizing the rights of persons with disabilities of all ages: providing them with an adequate standard of living and a basic level of income security, thus reducing levels of poverty and vulnerability.” It is a powerful tool that can create “more inclusive and sustainable development pathways by liberating people from the fear of poverty and privations and by helping to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty” (ECA et al., 2012). Social protection can help correct inequalities, including reduced economic resilience brought about by extra costs related to disability, and “meet the needs of persons with disabilities with regard to income security, health protection, and social inclusion” (Martinho, 2016).

In the Philippines, the persons with disabilities

identification card is the main targeted disability social assistance program, designed to provide discounts on basic goods and services, and amended to include privileges in education through the provision of scholarships, grants, financial aids, and other incentives. Disability costs are currently addressed through this discount program, as well as the non-contributory national public health insurance program. Additionally, income deprivation may be addressed through a conditional cash transfer program for the informal sector and through social insurance for formal sector employees. However, conditional cash transfer programs are not designed specifically to target families with children or parents with disabilities. In the formal sector, workers are entitled to disability benefits, but the proportion of workers with disabilities in this sector remains low. Support services such as rehabilitation and assistive devices, employment and vocational training, and educational assistance are also limited (Palmer, 2014).

As articulated by respondents in this study, these coverage gaps in social protection negatively impact their standard of living and prevent them from accessing opportunities for growth and development. Persons with disabilities, and their families, experience financial hardship due to disability-related costs including medical services, maintenance medicines, assistive devices, communication assistance, and mobility support. According to one respondent, this translates to approximately 30 per cent additional cost for a household with a person with disability. On top of that, and even more significant, are the opportunity costs which result from interconnected factors, specifically, inadequate health and rehabilitation services, low participation in basic education, reduced work and employment opportunities, and exclusion from political and public life.

**Health and rehabilitation.** Limited social protection in the form of public health insurance and social assistance, among others, curtail the enjoyment of persons with disabilities of the highest attainable

standard of health. Persons with disabilities report a common experience of inadequate and often delayed access to medical attention and intervention and rehabilitation services. Even when available, usually in urban cities in Metro Manila, coverage gaps in social protection make these services very expensive and beyond the reach of many persons with disabilities and their families.

**Education.** Failure to provide early detection and intervention services to children with disabilities create inequities in their ability to access learning and development opportunities. Moreover, limited social protection in the form of a conditional cash transfer program is not adequate for families to absorb the extra costs of sending their children to school. A respondent explained the difficulty encountered by many families in complying with the requirements of the conditional cash transfer program:

**“Many cannot comply with the conditionalities because they do not have the necessary support. Children with disabilities need to go to special education centers that are difficult to access or reach. The requirement is for children to go to school at least four times a week, but the cash transfer that they provide is only enough to send children to school once a month.”**

As presented in the previous section, as much as 52.60 per cent of children with disabilities come from families living in poverty and are not able to attend school, per study conducted by the DAP in 2018.

**OPD PERSPECTIVE**

There are difficulties in complying with the requirements of the conditional cash transfer program.

**Work and employment.** As a result of low participation in education and limited social protection in the form of disability-targeted technical and vocational training, persons with disabilities are faced with reduced work and employment opportunities compared to other workers. Some respondents reported that private companies are eager to tap into new talent sources and engage workers with disabilities. However, the challenge remains in matching the current skills and competencies vis-a-vis requirements of available job positions. As presented in the previous section, persons with disabilities constitute only 0.12 per cent of the total employed in the surveyed private establishments, per study conducted by the Philippine Statistics Office in 2017/2018; and only 0.46 per cent of the total employed in government agencies as of August 2020, per Civil Service Commission.

**Civic participation and governance.** Due to reduced education and employment opportunities and limited social protection in the form of effective and customized assistive devices, among others, persons with disabilities experience difficulties in accessing information and communication, a prerequisite to participation in political and public life. As reported in the previous section, persons with disabilities constitute only 0.57 per cent of total voters in the 2019 elections. Respondents also highlighted that participation in public life, including advocacies and civic affairs, remain limited. Though an increasing number of persons with disabilities can become active proponents of positive change, many are still left behind and not able to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

In the time of COVID-19, respondents report that medicines, therapies, and health services, including

sexual and reproductive health services and commodities, have become even more difficult to access, both financially and logistically. Some respondents also lamented the lack of consideration for disability-related costs in the social amelioration program. To quote a respondent who represents an organization of persons with disabilities: “Some of our members are afraid to go outside their homes, so their source of income is really affected. And yet they are not prioritized for social assistance by the government.” As one respondent summarized, as long as barriers are not addressed, opportunities cannot be accessed, despite opportunities increasing and becoming seemingly within reach.

**“Some of our members are afraid to go outside their homes, so their source of income is really affected. And yet they are not prioritized for social assistance by the government.”**

**OPD PERSPECTIVE**

“Despite opportunities increasing and seemingly becoming within reach, as long as barriers are not addressed, opportunities cannot be accessed.”

Capacity of frontline workers and professionals in implementing policies, programs, and services is important in upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. The UNCRPD articulates that training for professionals working with persons with disabilities should be provided to ensure support and services for persons with disabilities are delivered (United Nations, 2006). Further, the General Comment on Article 9 states that the limited technical knowledge among frontline workers and professionals often

result to lack of accessibility among persons with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013).

#### 4.2.4 Limited Capacity of Frontline Workers

Provision of capacity building for frontline workers and professionals are articulated in laws and policies to ensure implementers are equipped in carrying out their assigned roles and responsibilities. The interviews indicated that government agencies, NGOs, and OPDs often conduct disability training and awareness raising activities. Specific training programs are also implemented based on the needs and requirements in implementing programs and services. For example, provision of professional development for teachers and education leaders are clearly articulated in the laws and policies since they are the primary implementers of inclusive education (Republic of the Philippines, 2013c; DepEd, 2019a). Policy documents of DepEd reiterate that teachers should be equipped with teaching strategies and methods that would help them in teaching diverse learners in inclusive settings. Capacity building of professionals on accessibility are conducted by DPWH, DOTr, and other relevant government agencies to ensure the Accessibility Law is properly implemented.

Based on the data gathered during interviews and FGDs, access of persons with disabilities to full enjoyment of human rights and freedom are often hindered when frontline workers and professionals working with persons with disabilities are not capacitated.

**Health and rehabilitation.** Limited capacity of healthcare workers hinders persons with disabilities from accessing health and rehabilitation services. Some respondents shared that one of the difficulties persons with disabilities encountered is the lack of awareness and sensitivity of healthcare frontline workers and professionals on the rights of persons with disabilities. This can be attributed to limited training on how to support persons with disabilities in accessing healthcare and rehabilitation services.

Further, healthcare professionals in rural health units (RHU) lack the capacity to conduct basic assessment services for persons with disabilities. This affects provision of early intervention and identification services, and access to education among children with disabilities. For example, one respondent mentioned that identification of autism spectrum disorder should be done as early as possible, so that children with autism are provided with necessary support at the onset. Provision of early identification and intervention services during the early years of the child will help in eliminating inequalities and social exclusion (Patana, 2020). Such support will also enable persons with disabilities from accessing education and employment opportunities.

“There is difficulty in accessing physical environments in train stations due to invited knowledge and skills of transportation staff on how to properly assist persons with disabilities.”

**Physical environment.** One respondent shared that *difficulty in accessing the physical environment is experienced due to limited knowledge and skills of the transportation staff on how to properly assist persons with disabilities in train stations.* Staff training on disability awareness and sensitivity should be improved to ensure needs of persons with disabilities are addressed.

**Education.** While laws and policies are in place to ensure professional development of teachers is provided, most teachers still need support to fully implement inclusive education in their classrooms. General education teachers often lack the capacity to teach diverse learners in inclusive settings, which affects access of children with disabilities to equitable quality education. This was also cited in the interviews as the main reason for teachers not accepting children with disabilities in regular schools. Specifically, the respondents in this study believed that general

education teachers lack support in implementing inclusive classroom pedagogy and strategies, which affect teaching and learning delivery. They need support in providing flexible curricula for children with disabilities. Further, some respondents shared that, teachers find it difficult to teach children with intellectual disabilities in mainstream classrooms, which can be attributed to limited training on inclusive pedagogy and strategies available for general education teachers.

**Work and employment.** Issue on the lack of access to equal work and employment opportunities can also be attributed to the lack of technical know-how of recruiters and employers on the rights of persons with disabilities and on how to operationalize inclusion in their processes (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013). Some respondents emphasized the importance of conducting disability sensitivity training to equip recruiters and employers with methods on how to create a more inclusive recruitment process and work environment.

**Civic Participation and Governance.** Election officers should be capacitated on how to support persons with disabilities to ensure persons with disabilities can exercise their right to vote. One respondent shared that one of the challenges encountered is the non-comprehension of the policy among field offices, which affect implementation of the policy. Particular to the Deaf community, another respondent cited difficulty in communicating with government personnel hinders them from participating in the election. This can be attributed to the lack of capacity of election officers in communicating using sign language or the lack of provision for sign language interpreters during voter's registration and on the election day.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

**Difficulties in communicating with government personnel hinders people with disabilities from participating in elections.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected implementation of capacity building programs of organizations due to lockdown restrictions. The shift from face-to-face training to virtual or online training has impacted some of the training programs. For example, some frontline workers or professionals had trouble using online video call platforms, such as Zoom, in conducting the training programs. Slow and unreliable internet connections and other technical issues further impeded conducting trainings online. OPDs conducting disability sensitivity training also experienced challenges in conducting training using online platforms. One respondent mentioned: "We want the participants/stakeholders to feel what it is like to have a disability. We have activities wherein participants are blindfolded or in a wheelchair, but because we shifted to online learning, we cannot emphasize the experiential aspect of the training." In the health sector, implementing online training is a challenge especially if the focus of the training is on assessment and screening for eye cases, like cataracts. This kind of training is better implemented via face-to-face training.

Awareness-raising is defined as the process of informing and educating the people on a topic to influence their attitude, behavior, and beliefs (TAP Network, n.d.). Awareness and understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities is a key aspect of an inclusive society. The UNCRPD states that governments should implement measures that would raise awareness of all individuals on the rights of persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2006). Effective awareness-raising campaigns eliminate stereotypes, discrimination, and other forms of harmful practices towards persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2006).

## 4.2.5 Lack of Awareness and Understanding of Rights

The General Comment on Article 9 states that the lack of awareness often result to lack of accessibility among persons with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2013). Thus, it is necessary to create awareness and understanding of the rights of person with disabilities that will promote positive attitudes among key duty-bearers and members of the community (Rohwerder, 2015). In the Philippines, the government issued proclamation orders to raise awareness of the public about persons with disabilities (DAP, 2018). The government issued Proclamation No. 1157, s. 2006 that declares the third of December each year as the “International Day of Persons with Disabilities” (Republic of the Philippines, 2006; DAP, 2018). It also issued Proclamation No. 361, s. 2000 stating National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week shall be observed every third week of July (Republic of the Philippines, 2000; DAP, 2018).

Respondents in this study also highlighted the importance of educating not only the key duty-bearers, but also persons with disabilities, families of persons with disabilities, and the public. This includes strengthening their knowledge and understanding of their rights that would support and enable persons with disabilities in accessing their rights.

**Health and rehabilitation.** Difficulty in accessing health and rehabilitation services among persons with disabilities can be attributed to the lack of awareness among health workers and professionals. A respondent shared, “when we are at the hospital the medical professionals do not understand us as well.” In addition, another respondent emphasized that most often, health professionals do not communicate directly with persons with disabilities. Rather, they talk to the family members or to the person accompanying the person with disability.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Often, health professionals do not communicate directly with persons with disabilities. Rather, they talk to the family members or to the person accompanying the person with disability.

**Education.** Lack of awareness and understanding of the rights persons with disabilities among education leaders and teachers greatly affect access of persons with disability to high-quality inclusive education. Respondents in this study emphasized continued advocacy campaigns as a strategy to increase awareness and understanding of education leaders and teachers on the rights of persons with disabilities. One respondent shared, “We have to educate our leaders. It will not flourish if the leaders are bingi, bulag, and pilay on the issues of persons with disabilities.”

**“We have to educate our leaders. It will not flourish if the leaders are bingi, bulag, and pilay on the issues of persons with disabilities.”**

In the same way, lack of awareness and understanding of parents on the rights of children with disabilities is among the factors that contribute to low enrollment of children with disabilities in school. Respondents shared that DepEd implements Child Find or Child Mapping to encourage parents in enrolling children with disabilities in school. However, low enrollment is still a challenge. As stated in the 2016 NDPS report, only 23% of persons with disabilities reached elementary level (PSA and DOH, 2019).



**Participation in home setting.** One respondent shared that accessibility starts at home. Lack of awareness and understanding of parents and family members on the rights of persons with disabilities hinder persons with disabilities from participating in the society. The respondent emphasized that the inability of parents to understand the needs of children with disabilities has an impact on how children with disabilities participate in the society. Opportunities to participate should start at the household level, and support should be provided to enable participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making.

**Work and Employment.** In some situations, employment opportunities for persons with disabilities are limited due to lack of reasonable accommodations in the workplace provided by employers and recruiters. This can be attributed to lack of awareness and understanding of employers and recruiters on the right of persons with disabilities. One respondent shared that, persons who are Deaf and hard of hearing have low passing rates in the Civil Service Exam. One respondent noted, “There is FSL, but the grammar [language for Deaf] is Sign Exact English (SEE). They are not using SEE. The passing rate of persons who are Deaf in the Civil Service is only 0.001%. How can they pass the Civil Service Exam if the proper grammar and writing is not taught to them?” This also reflects that the exams used in recruitment are not accessible for persons who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

The passing rate of persons who are Deaf in the Civil Service is only 0.001%. “There is FSL, but the grammar [language for Deaf] is Sign Exact English. They [Civil Service Exams] do not use SEE.”

**Civic Participation and Governance.** The lack of access on the right to vote is often the result of

limited awareness and understanding of reasonable accommodations among election officers. One respondent shared that the unavailability of sign language interpreters resulted to difficulties in communication during voter’s registration process. On election day, persons with disabilities encountered challenges in accessing the precincts due to lack of designated personnel to man the accessible polling places (APP) and emergency accessible polling places (EAPP).

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

The unavailability of sign language interpreters resulted to difficulties in communication during voter’s registration process.

### 4.2.6 Lack of Inclusive Attitudes and Perceptions

Persons with disabilities experience negative perceptions from various sources, including, government officials, as well as family members which can result to their exclusion from society (Buijn et al., 2012). Given these attitudinal barriers, persons with disabilities are often kept within the household because of shame and/or fear of judgement from people.

The data highlighted that because of the negative attitudes expressed to persons with disabilities, they still find it difficult to have access to the right support and services from institutions. According to most of the OPDs interviewed, there is a perception from service providers that inclusion for persons with disabilities is additional work. OPDs and NGOs articulated that, policymakers continue to craft one-for-all bills and policies without recognizing the need for explicit provisions for persons with disabilities. Some of the OPDs, NGOs, and even regional government representatives working with various communities

shared that oftentimes, there is no disability sensitivity or awareness in the policymaking and government field which would support the implementation of those policies and address existing negative attitudes and perceptions. The respondents shared that they have been advocating for awareness raising activities for decades.

**Attitudes of parents and family members.** Attitude of parents towards their child with disability affect how the child will receive education. Based on the interviews, the attitude of parents is one of the main reasons why children with disabilities are not enrolled in schools. This could indicate that parents have not been sufficiently informed about the rights of their children and how inclusive education benefits all learners. For children with disabilities who are in school most of them are taught in segregated classes. Some respondents indicated that parents of children with disabilities want their child to be in a self-contained class, since these classes are usually conducted in one-on-one or small group settings. SPED teachers can provide more focus on children with disabilities than general education teachers. A respondent also said that some parents believed that their child with disability performs better if there are fewer students in a classroom. Some respondents further mentioned that parents of children with disabilities feel that their children might be left out if they are enrolled in mainstream class.

Attitude of family members also affect participation of persons with disabilities from participating in the public life. According to OPDs interviewed, persons with disabilities recognize that accessibility starts at home. There were also cases wherein family members inhibit persons with disability from leaving the household due to overprotectiveness and/or family perceptions. This impedes persons with disabilities from participating in the community. Furthermore, most of the respondents from OPDs and NGOs mentioned that parents and/or close family members often find it difficult to understand the needs of children with disabilities which disrupts their

self-determination and enjoyment of an independent life.

### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

Persons with disabilities recognize that accessibility starts at home. Parents and/or close family members seldom find it difficult to understand the needs of children with disabilities which disrupts their self-determination and enjoyment of an independent life.

**Attitudes of teachers and school leaders.** Attitudes of teachers and school leaders affect the delivery of inclusive education in schools. Some of the respondents shared that, some schools do not allow the enrollment of children with disabilities if the child has not been assessed by a professional development psychologist. Since the assessment will determine whether the child will be placed in mainstream or SPED classes. Unfortunately, this promotes segregation. The UNCRPD clearly articulates the right of children with disabilities to learn alongside their peers in inclusive settings (United Nations, 2006), and the result of assessments should not hinder them from accessing their right.

As shared by one of the reference group members, DepEd released Division Memo no. 309, s. 2020 entitled 'Dissemination of Guidelines on the Use of the Curricula for Learners with Disabilities During Crisis Situations'. The memo iterated that FSL subjects will be provided to schools implementing the Special Education Program. The curriculum aims to address the linguistic structure of FSL (Department of Education, 2020). One respondent mentioned that some general education teachers, especially in rural areas, opted not to use the curriculum developed to mainstream FSL. The respondent added that general education teachers preferred teaching hearing learners than learners who are Deaf and hard of hearing. As mentioned earlier, the

perception of providing disability-inclusive services especially in education is seen as an additional burden for service providers, this may be caused by the lack of operationalization measures for disability-inclusive education for children with disabilities.

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

Some general education teachers, especially in rural areas, opted not to use the curriculum developed to mainstream FSL. General education teachers preferred teaching hearing learners than learners who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

**Attitudes of peers.** Negative attitude of peers also hindered children with disabilities from accessing education in inclusive settings. A respondent in this study cited bullying as one of the main reasons why children with disabilities drop out of school. According to the discussion of Advocates of Inclusion in 2019, children with disabilities who remain in schools often feel isolated inside mainstream classrooms, mainly due to the inaccessibility of other school facilities.

**Attitudes of employers and recruiters.** According to one respondent there is a perception among employers that hiring persons with disabilities result to higher risks of not being able to deliver work tasks. Discrimination in hiring persons with disabilities still exists. OPDs or support groups of persons with disabilities encourage persons with disabilities to go out of their comfort zones and explore possible equal work and employment opportunities. There are cases wherein persons with disabilities are denied of work due to appearances. In response, some organizations of persons with disabilities advocate and campaign for policies on hiring persons with disabilities to be improved and strengthened to make the sustained employment for persons with disabilities a possibility.

**Attitudes of community members.** The attitude of

community members towards persons with disabilities still present a tangible barrier for the disability sector, despite awareness campaigns. Most respondents recommended inclusion of disability awareness and/or sensitivity in the curriculum of DepEd.

**Attitudes of government representatives.** One respondent recalled a situation wherein an election officer preferred to ask information with the personal assistant accompanying the person with disability. As mentioned by one of the reference group members, some elected officials perceive persons with disabilities as a “small sector” because the population do not translate into a significant count of vote.

One organization felt challenged working with the PDAO because they were seen as a “nuisance” and often, the space for engagement and collaboration were not given an opportunity. Needs of persons with disabilities are often ignored or rarely addressed as a result of the service providers’ lack of awareness and ineffective communication which is largely due to the lack of accessibility and training of personnel, especially frontline workers (Rohwerder, 2015).

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

There are some challenges in working with the PDAO as the space or opportunity to engage and collaborate were not provided.

**Attitudes of men.** Some respondents experienced additional discrimination and subordination from their male counterparts. In the experience of women-led organizations for persons with disabilities, opposition came from men who do not believe in the capacity of women with disabilities to organize themselves. These organizations were formed to promote the rights of women with disabilities and to enable them to become active participants in both social and economic activities in their respective communities. They also recognized the multiple identities of women

with disabilities - being a woman and being a person with disability.

### OPD PERSPECTIVE

**“In the experience of women-led organizations for persons with disabilities, opposition came from men who do not believe in the capacity of women with disabilities to organize themselves.”**

According to the World Report on Disability in 2011, an estimated one in five women live with disabilities and the prevalence of disability is higher among women (19.2%) than men (12%). There is also a negative perception that women with disabilities are more likely to experience discrimination and subordination than women without disabilities (Hunt, 2008). This “intersection” of gender and disability combines to create a distinct experience of disadvantage and discrimination for women with disabilities that is not suffered by others. Yet, there has been a lack of recognition of this multiple marginalization. The voices of women with disabilities are not always heard even within the mainstream disability community (United Nations Population Fund, 2016), or likely subsumed under women or persons with disabilities. Thus, women with disabilities remain at the margins on both issues of gender equality and disability rights.

### 4.2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, despite policies in place, persons with disabilities continue to experience barriers in accessing their rights. Persons with disabilities are restricted in mobility because of inaccessible school infrastructures, hospital buildings and facilities, polling places, work and employment policies, transportation, and information and communications. The lack of social

protection and the disparities of the existing programs for persons with disabilities amplify the inequalities they experience in accessing opportunities for growth and development. Programs for social protection and support are most likely implemented in Metro Manila and less likely in provincial areas where capacity of service providers and financial resources are limited. Persons with disabilities continue to experience financial instability, lack of opportunity for work and employment, and difficulties in exercising their right to participation in both political and public life.

Basic services remain inadequate to persons with disabilities because of the limited capacity and lack of awareness and understanding of frontline workers such as teachers, healthcare workers, designers, and other professionals. The transition from face-to-face to online disability rights awareness workshops due to COVID-19 likewise reduced the availability of events that persons with disabilities can attend due to inaccessibility and limitations of the digital platforms. Awareness and understanding in hospitals, school environments, home settings, work and employment, and civic participation and governance are crucial for self-determination and the exercise of their rights.

Furthermore, lack of inclusive attitudes and perceptions towards persons with disabilities result to difficulties in accessing the services and programs from respective institutions. Because of pre-conceived notions and assumptions about persons with disabilities, service providers and policymakers continue to implement disability insensitive programs. The attitudes of service providers or mandated institutions play a major role in the access of persons with disabilities to services. Lastly, women with disabilities experience discrimination and subordination from their male counterparts, and the intersectionality of gender and disability also needs to be acknowledged by policy makers and program implementers in the sector.

## 4.3 POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN ADDRESSING BARRIERS: HOW DO THE KEY DUTY-BEARERS ADDRESS EXISTING BARRIERS AND PROMOTE DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT?

### 4.3.1 Overview

As an initial analysis of how key duty-bearers address existing barriers, this section examines the alignment of current interventions and practices vis-à-vis principles and standards of disability-inclusive development. This section begins with a description of the roles and functions of the key duty-bearers (5.3.2), then proceeds with a discussion of each component of disability inclusive-development, namely: leadership and strategic direction (5.3.3), data collection, consolidation, and management (5.3.4), policy formulation and review (5.3.5), budget deliberation and allocation (5.3.6), program design and implementation (5.3.7), and program monitoring and evaluation (5.3.8).

As the country's focal point on disability, this section looks at how the NCDCA provides leadership and strategic direction to the sector, particularly through the development of an operational framework on disability-inclusive development. Current initiatives of government agencies in establishing a database for persons with disabilities are presented, with examples of data collection tools and various forms of management information systems. Feedback from respondents regarding national laws and policies are discussed, including an explanation of how budget requirements are deliberated and allocated. The twin-track approach to program design and implementation is described and its application illustrated in the four key areas – social and public services, education, work and employment, and civic participation and governance. Initial efforts to track progress and elicit feedback from persons with disabilities are also presented, while highlighting the need for a robust national monitoring and evaluation system.

This section concludes with a summary of how key duty-bearers address existing barriers, with emphasis on what needs to be improved on and prioritized moving forward.

### 4.3.2 Roles and Functions of Key Duty-Bearers

To advance the rights of persons with disabilities and effectively address existing barriers, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the roles and functions of the key duty-bearers, namely, the government, OPDs, and NGOs. This allows key duty-bearers to focus on their primary mandates and missions, be accountable for their commitments and actions, and work together in ways that optimize their expertise and resources.

**Roles and functions of the government.** The data show that the government crafts and enacts policies and programs with the objective of supporting persons with disabilities to have equitable access to, and independent participation in all aspects of the society. The policies and programs are dependent on the mandate of the respective agencies. Government institutions have the full authority to decide the level of prioritization of certain policies and programs catered to support persons with disabilities through financial resource allocation. These policies and programs go through a series of consultations with industry experts, NGOs, and OPDs before they are finalized. The government is mandated to collect data and establish a baseline for planning and budget allocation and monitor and evaluate if existing policies and programs meet the set objectives to support persons with disabilities. In coordination with NGOs and OPDs, government agencies also form inter-agency committees and/or technical

working committees for specific agenda such as the Sub-Committee on Accessibility, Built Environment, and Transportation of persons with disabilities for the overall accessibility agenda and Sub-Committee on Health for health-related concerns.

**Roles and functions of organizations of persons with disabilities.** The data show that OPDs actively participate to be heard and to be seen as partners and contributors, not as sole beneficiaries, in implementing government-supported policies and programs. Some of the OPD respondents emphasized the significance of their participation in the first stage of program planning and development because they know their needs firsthand. At the same time, efforts for awareness-raising on the rights of persons with disabilities should be prioritized by government agencies and NGOs, ensuring adequate technical support for persons with disabilities in the realization of their rights and eligibility for services. Given this, persons with disabilities can continue educating and influencing policies, decisions, and activities that strengthen their social protection. OPDs indicated that partnership and collaboration play an integral part in pushing for more inclusive and sustainable programs because it expands their network, and their call to action are heard more clearly by the policymakers. Furthermore, OPDs reiterated that apart from being able to contribute and support in policy and program development and implementation, there should be a proper mechanism for feedback and evaluation that they can access and report to. This promotes the full exercise their right to self-determination and representation in policies and programs that concern them.

**Roles and functions of non-government organizations.** According to the NGOs involved in the study, their role is to support persons with disabilities in the realization of their rights and their potential in actively participating and contributing to society. These support mechanisms include education-to-work projects, employment placement, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.

NGOs provide opportunities in broadening the spaces for persons with disabilities to represent themselves in policy formulation and implementation. At the same time, NGOs keep the government agencies in check to hold them accountable to their mandates through policy and program interventions. These include coalition-building to call for more accessibility in school infrastructures, continuous monitoring of government financial resource allocation for persons with disabilities and strengthening relationships with existing disability inclusion champions within the government, among others.

OPDs reiterated that strengthened partnership between OPDs and NGOs advances the agenda of a disability-inclusive community, especially when it comes from the grassroots experiences of persons with disabilities. This is because inclusion does not revolve solely around persons with disabilities but rather, it emphasizes other key players in the community such as the allies, policymakers, service providers, and general population who accept and open up spaces for equitable access and inclusive participation.

### 4.3.3 Leadership and Strategic Direction

According to the United Nations, strong leadership requires championing disability inclusion internally and publicly, implementing effective policies and strategies, with corrective actions taken as needed, and establishing mechanisms for accountability. ***Commitment to mainstreaming disability inclusion, in combination with targeted measures, must be reflected in strategic planning and delivered by a unit with substantive expertise on human rights-based approach to disability, in coordination with others. (United Nations, 2019)***

NCDA is the national government agency mandated to formulate policies and coordinate activities of all public and private agencies concerning disability issues and concerns. As such, it is the lead agency tasked to steer the course of program development

for and delivery of services to persons with disabilities. NCDCA has the following objectives: (1) formulate and advocate for policies in accordance with internationally and nationally accepted standards, (2) develop, promote, and review the national plan for prevention, rehabilitation, and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, (3) coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of policies, plans, and programs, and (4) advocate for and promote respect for the rights and privileges of persons with disabilities (NCDCA, n.d.-b). Moreover, as the country's focal point on disability, NCDCA is responsible for leading the campaign on disability-inclusive development and ensuring the active participation of persons with disabilities in achieving inclusive growth (NCDCA, 2013).

The discussion below looks at the NCDCA's strategy for addressing existing barriers, its commitment to mainstreaming disability inclusion, in combination with targeted measures, and its expertise on human rights-based approach to disability.

**Strategy for addressing existing barriers.** Attitudinal and environmental barriers limit the social, economic, and cultural participation of persons with disabilities, creating often insurmountable obstacles in relation to health services, education, and employment. This, in turn, contributes to poverty and prevents persons with disabilities from participating in public affairs and decisions that affect their rights and welfare (United Nations, 2016). Inclusive development engenders empowerment, through which persons with disabilities move from being considered 'vulnerable groups' to becoming resource groups in society and contributors to development (United Nations High-level Meeting on Disability and Development, 2013, as cited in United Nations, 2016, p. 4).

In 2016, NCDCA drafted the Operational Framework on Disability Inclusive Development which illustrates how policies are translated into programs and services. To ensure access and inclusion, the framework highlights the need for accurate data pertaining to the disability sector, adequate consultation with persons with

disabilities, inclusion of budget for administrative and operational costs, accessible structure and information, and direct feedback from persons with disabilities as input to program implementation, policy amendment, or passage of a new law (NCDCA, n.d.-d). (See Annex 9 for an illustration of the operational framework.)

**Commitment to mainstreaming disability inclusion, in combination with targeted measures.** Integration of disability-sensitive measures in development programs is essential to the participation of persons with disabilities. Known as 'mainstreaming', this ensures that persons with disabilities can access all services intended for the general population. While this is beneficial and efficient, it is also widely recognized that 'disability-specific' programs and provision of targeted support are often also necessary to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others (United Nations, 2016).

In line with this, NCDCA's operational framework includes both mainstreamed and disability-specific programs. The framework further clarifies that the goal of disability-specific programs is not to address the needs of persons with disabilities in isolation, but to provide equitable access and opportunity (NCDCA, n.d.-d).

**Expertise on human rights-based approach to disability.** A rights-based approach seeks ways to respect, support and celebrate human diversity by creating the conditions that allow meaningful participation by a wide range of persons, including persons with disabilities. Protecting and promoting their rights is not only concerned with providing disability-related services. It is about adopting measures to change attitudes and behaviors that stigmatize and marginalize persons with disabilities (United Nations Human Rights, 2010, pp. 9-11). Strengthening staff capacity and competence with regard to disability inclusion is essential for successful policy implementation. Capacity development must be prioritized to ensure that their work reflects a human rights-based approach to disability (United Nations, 2016).

Aligned with this, NCDA employs a rights-based approach to address the needs of persons with disabilities. As actors in society, persons with disabilities are entitled to enjoy all human rights and participate in decision-making on an equal basis with others (NCDA, n.d.-c). NCDA's Quality Manual affirms the primacy of retaining competent personnel with the necessary education, training, skills, and experience. It commits to implement a human resource development plan that addresses competency requirements through interventions or learning events such as training, coaching, and mentoring (NCDA, n.d.-c).

### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

Through participation in consultation meetings and membership in the NCDA's sub-committees, most of the respondents in this study confirm that they are able to provide inputs and feedback and participate in ongoing discussions that pertain to the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities.

In summary, NCDA has provided leadership to the sector by developing a disability-inclusive strategy to address existing barriers, committing to an approach that combines mainstreaming and targeted measures, and looking into its own capacity development in employing a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion. In addition, a notable practice of the Council is providing platforms for organizations of persons with disabilities and non-government organizations to participate in policy formulation, implementation, and review. Through participation in consultation meetings and membership in the Council's sub-committees, most of the respondents in this study confirm that they are able to provide inputs and feedback and participate in ongoing discussions that pertain to the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities.

Moving forward, respondents in this study highlighted the importance of setting a strategic direction and implementing system-wide transformation by employing a holistic approach to managing interconnected issues and developing a clear coordination process for all stakeholders. One respondent emphasized, "The government should focus on the strategic direction with regard to disability inclusion." Another respondent said, "We cannot just isolate the different themes with regard to disability issues because these are interconnected and have to be viewed holistically." Another respondent shared the following about coordination: "The idea is for government agencies ... to work together, but in reality, they are all working in silos. We really cannot see that there is a clear coordination process among agencies."

**“The government should focus on the strategic direction with regard to disability inclusion.”**

**“We cannot just isolate the different themes with regard to disability issues because these are interconnected and have to be viewed holistically.”**

To champion disability inclusion, compelling presence and leadership are required from the Council. One respondent said, "NCDA is there but we cannot hear them, cannot feel their presence. We have to double our efforts by intensifying our advocacy programs." Highlighting the need for all key-duty bearers to champion the cause, one respondent shared, "I think it is important for the duty-bearers to advocate and influence the government to implement the laws and policies with regard to the rights of persons with disabilities. With all the many sectors that the government is looking into, the duty-bearers should



be proactive in voicing out and putting the issues on the table. If there is no representative or champion who will rally the cause, then nothing will happen.”

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

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***Although the development of an operational framework is helpful, strategic direction must be encapsulated in a clear and comprehensive roadmap developed in consultation with key duty-bearers, with goals and targets that the sector can commit to and be accountable for.*** Key duty-bearers must examine their own capacity (including understanding of how to mainstream disability inclusion) vis-à-vis what they must deliver and fill in the gaps through capacity development and sharing of expertise and

resources. Having enhanced capacity, the NCDA can wield a stronger convening power, demand a larger budget, and propose better policies for the sector. ***With a clear and comprehensive roadmap, complementation and synchronization of efforts are possible, allowing the NCDA and all key duty-bearers to strategically address persistent and long-standing issues and challenges, and build on previous successes to gain further ground in safeguarding and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.***

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Although the development of an operational framework is helpful, strategic direction must be encapsulated in a clear and comprehensive roadmap developed in consultation with key duty-bearers, with goals and targets that the sector can commit to and be accountable for. Key duty-bearers must examine their own capacity (including understanding of how to mainstream disability inclusion) vis-à-vis what they must deliver and fill in the gaps through capacity development and sharing of expertise and resources. Having enhanced capacity, the NCDA can wield a stronger convening power, demand a larger budget, and propose better policies for the sector. With a clear and comprehensive roadmap, complementation and synchronization of efforts are possible, allowing the NCDA and all key duty-bearers to strategically address

persistent and long-standing issues and challenges, and build on previous successes to gain further ground in safeguarding and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

#### 4.3.4 Data Collection, Consolidation and Management

The lack of disaggregated data on disability is one of the barriers to assessment and planning appropriate programs and activities for persons with disabilities (United Nations, n.d.). The UNCRPD articulates the importance of data collection to inform policies and programs that would address the needs of persons with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). It reiterates the role of government in obtaining accurate and disaggregated data of persons with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

The discussion below presents how existing barriers are being addressed through data collection, ensuring that accurate and reliable data of persons with disabilities are collected and used to inform programs and projects.

**Establishment of database.** Based on the Operational Framework on Disability Inclusive Development of NCDA, government agencies are responsible for developing a database for persons with disabilities (NCDA, n.d.-d). The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons with Disabilities mandates the DOH to establish the national registration system for persons with disabilities in coordination with other government agencies such as NCDA, DSWD, DILG, and LGUs (Republic of the Philippines, n.d.; VERA Files Incorporated, 2015).

However, other government agencies have their own systems for data collection. Based on the interviews conducted, DSWD collects household level poverty data through the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) or Listahanan. The Listahanan is a mechanism for identifying poor and

non-poor households, as well as household recipients of social protection programs of the government (Office of the President of the Philippines, 2010). Basic information collected using the Listahanan includes disability data per household. For education, DepEd has the Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS) and Learner Information System (LIS) to collect reliable and accurate data of learners and schools (DepEd, 2015). The data from EBEIS and LIS are the basis of the department in planning, budgeting, and allocation of resources (Department of Education, 2015). Further, the DTI established a Persons with Disability Information Management System (PIMS), which is a fully automated database that records and stores information on DTI-assisted persons with disabilities. A respondent in this study shared that it is also used to monitor the progress and performance of Department's programs and services for persons with disabilities.

**Data collection.** *Respondents in this study mentioned that one of the roles of DOH is to capacitate focal persons from LGUs in using the national online registry system. While it is the role of LGU to encode the information in the system, therefore the extent of and the accuracy of the data encoded in the registry system is dependent on the information collected and encoded by LGUs.*

The Republic Act No. 10070<sup>10</sup> mandates the PDAO in every LGU to gather and compile relevant data on persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 2010). PDAOs play an important role in ensuring that the government collects accurate data on persons with disabilities through conducting surveys and distributing registration forms for households. The data they collected are shared with the local health office for verification (VERA Files Incorporated, 2015). However, respondents shared that not all LGUs have established a PDAO.

In education, DepEd uses the Child Mapping Tool in identifying school-age children from 4-17 years old in the community (DepEd, 2015). The tool includes

information on the child with disability, including the type of disability the child has. In social and public services, DSWD has a separate data collection tool which they use for the Listahanan (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2014). The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) provided technical assistance to National Household Targeting Office of the DSWD in developing this data collection tool (DSWD, 2014). The framework for data collection of the various agencies still needs to be evaluated in relation to their alignment to the Washington Group of questions which focuses on documenting functioning and is reflective of the principles of inclusion cited in the UNCRPD.

**Management of data.** Data collected should be analyzed and used to plan for policies and programs for persons with disabilities. The data collected through the national registration system of DOH is the basis for the issuance of identification cards for persons with disabilities (VERA Files Incorporated, 2015). An identification card is a requirement in claiming the 20 per cent discount persons with disabilities are entitled to, in accordance with the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons. Further, the data obtained by DOH will be used as baseline for community-based rehabilitation programs for persons with disabilities as mandated by the law (VERA Files Incorporated, 2015). On the other hand, DSWD used the data from Listahanan in identifying recipients of the government's social protection programs.

In summary, respondents in this study emphasized the need to establish a consolidated database that would collect, store, and update information of persons with disabilities. They reiterated the importance of accurate and reliable data in informing policies and programs, and even budget allocation for persons with disabilities. While there are initiatives from each government agency to collect data on persons with disabilities, there is no established centralized data system that captures accurate data of persons with disabilities in the country, which impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of how government agencies plan their programs and activities. Thus, it

is crucial to establish a centralized data system that would inform planning and budgeting of all sectors.

### 4.3.5 Policy Formulation and Review

Governments should develop legislation and policies aligned with the UNCRPD to ensure full realization of all human rights and freedom of persons with disabilities (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

The discussion below presents how existing barriers are addressed through policy formulation and review. Specifically, it focuses on the laws and policies developed for persons with disabilities, as well as how persons with disabilities are involved in policy development and review.

**Strategies to address the barriers.** The government has developed laws and policies to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. The Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and its amendments is the national law that articulates the rights of persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). Department Orders, Memorandum Circulars, or issuances of government agencies concerned with persons with disabilities should be aligned with the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons.

The Accessibility Law is enacted to ensure accessible physical spaces and infrastructure, and transportation for persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 1982). Minimum standards are developed to guide government and private organizations in creating accessible public spaces and transportation (National Council on Disability Affairs, 2008). However, respondents in this study shared that the law is outdated and needs to be revised since the current Accessibility Law does not articulate provisions for information and communication and transport terminals. Government agencies, in consultation with NGOs and OPDs are currently working on the

<sup>10</sup> RA 10070 – Establishing Institutional Mechanism To Ensure The Implementation of Programs and Services For Persons With Disabilities In Every Province, City and Municipality, Amending Republic Act No. 7277, Otherwise Known as The Magna Carta For Disabled Persons, As Amended, And For Other Purposes

proposed amendments to the law. One respondent also mentioned that two new bills are being proposed at the Congress in relation to amending the law.

Some laws and policies are still in the drafting phase. Respondents mentioned that the ***Congress is in the process of developing the Inclusive Education Bill. The Inclusive Education Bill, when enacted, will be the national law where programs and projects of DepEd are anchored on.*** Respondents stated that different government agencies, NGOs, and OPDs are working in developing the said bill. Also, the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Filipino Sign Language (FSL) Law is still being developed. The Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino the lead agency for the development of the IRR.

Active involvement of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities should be consulted and involved in policy development and decision-making processes on programs that concern them (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). A systematic consultation process or mechanism should be in place to address all disability-specific issues (United Nations, n.d.).

One of the thrusts and directions of the NCDA is to conduct policy review and consultation dialogues with duty-bearers and right holders. Executive Order No. 709<sup>11</sup> mandates the NCDA to establish an executive committee composed of eight sub-committees responsible for addressing policy issues and program recommendations (Office of the President of the Philippines, 2008). The policy also mandates one person with disability to seat in the executive committee as member of the board (Office of the President of the Philippines, 2008). Respondents in this study shared that sub-committees consult NGOs and OPDs when developing policies aimed at upholding the rights of persons with disabilities. Further, respondents shared that government agencies have organized technical working groups for policy development and review. OPDs, as well as NGOs are consulted in these processes.

In social and public services, the North-South Commuter Railway Extension (NSCR) Project Team conducted consultation dialogues with the disability sector in developing the Accessible Travel Policy. A respondent shared that the consultation dialogues were represented by different groups within the disability sector, such as women with disabilities, persons with intellectual disability, persons with visual disabilities, and persons with disabilities who are part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) community. In these dialogues, representatives from the disability sector provided insights and discussed issues regarding the use of railways. In relation to health and rehabilitation, some OPDs are consulted regarding social auxiliary services and on the development of the Social Reproductive Health Bill. One respondent mentioned that their organization is part of the technical working group in developing the policy on disability support allowance.

In education, OPDs are consulted in policy development and review of education policies. Respondents shared that they are consulted in the following: (1) mother tongue language, (2) allotment of budget for interpreters in schools, and (3) inclusive education. There are also OPDs that are members of NCDA's sub-committee on education.

### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

In education, OPDs are consulted in policy development and review of education policies. Respondents shared that they are consulted in the following: (1) mother tongue language, (2) allotment of budget for interpreters in schools, and (3) inclusive education. There are also OPDs that are members of NCDA's sub-committee on education.

11 Executive Order No. 709, s. 2008: Redefining the functions and organizational structure of the national council for the welfare of disabled persons which is renamed as the National Council on Disability Affairs and attached to the Office of the President, and amending for the purpose Executive Order 676 (2007) and Executive Order 232 (1987)

For work and employment, the sub-committees of NCDAs address the concerns of persons with disabilities in relation to training, employment, and livelihood. The OPDs have the opportunity to represent the disability sector during sub-committee meetings.

In the areas of civic participation and governance, respondents in this study shared that they were consulted in creating accessible polling places for the election. Due to consultations, OPDs were able to influence policy development and there are provisions for persons with disabilities that are included in the law. In summary, respondents of this study recognized that laws and policies for persons with disabilities are promising. However, there are grey areas in the laws which make implementation difficult. One example cited by the respondents is the PDAO Law which does not stipulate sanctions or penalties for LGUs that do not fulfill their roles in accordance with their mandates. Implementation of the PDAO Law is dependent on the political will of LGU officials. Respondents also mentioned the lack of policing of implementing agencies to ensure that laws are properly implemented.

#### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

The PDAO Law does not stipulate sanctions or penalties for LGUs that do not fulfill their roles in accordance with their mandates. Implementation of the PDAO Law is dependent on the political will of LGU officials.

Respondents in this study reiterated the importance of genuine consultation with key duty-bearers and rights holders in during policy development. They should play a key role in decision-making processes, especially on how to address issues and concerns of persons with disabilities.

### 4.3.6 Budget Deliberation and Allocation

Deliberation of budget requirements is important to ensure programs and projects of the government will be implemented (NCDAs, n.d.-b). The annual budget allocation of government agencies is provided through the enactment of General Appropriations Act (GAA), which provides a comprehensive source of budget appropriations of the national government (Department of Budget and Management, n.d.). Government agencies receive budget through the GAA based on approved programs and projects. The Operational Framework on Disability Inclusive Development of NCDAs discussed that budget deliberation for government agencies is an important process, whether programs for persons with disabilities will be mainstreamed in the regular program or a disability specific program (NCDAs, n.d.-b).

#### Budget allocation for persons with disabilities.

The government allocates a percentage of the budget appropriations per government agencies for persons with disabilities. The Executive Order No. 417 was issued in 2005 mandating national and local government agencies to allocate at least one percent (1%) of the total annual budget allocation for programs and projects for persons with disabilities and their organizations (Republic of the Philippines, 2005). One respondent shared that the Commission on Audit issues Audit Observation Memorandum (AOM) to agencies that do not allocate budget for persons with disabilities.

However, there are government units that do not comply with the national policy on allocating at least one per cent of any agency's budget for persons with disabilities. ***In most cases, budget is divided between programs for senior citizens and persons with disabilities at the barangay level. In practice, it leads in practice to situations where persons with disabilities receive a smaller share of the budget since they have a smaller population size than the senior citizens.***

**Disability-inclusive budgeting.** Allocating budget for disability mainstreaming includes taking into account the costs of necessary measures to ensure persons with disabilities benefit from and participate in programs and plans on an equal basis as others (United Nations, 2016). Mainstream programs with persons with disabilities included as beneficiaries entail allocation of budget for disability-related expenses, such as conduct of disability sensitivity training, provision of sign language interpreter, conversion of documents in accessible formats, and installation of accessibility features (National Council on Disability Affairs, n.d.). On the other hand, budget for disability specific program is aimed at providing equitable opportunities for persons with disabilities to effectively participate in the society (National Council on Disability Affairs, n.d.).

Based on the interviews, government agencies across different sectors have a budget for disability sensitivity training to raise awareness among frontline workers and other personnel. Budgets for accessible buildings and transportation are included in the plans of government agencies as mandated by the Accessibility Law.

The GC4 emphasizes the importance of a reformed governance system, including financing mechanisms, to guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to high-quality education (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). This means allocated budgets should prioritize investing in inclusive teacher education, providing accessible transportation and physical infrastructures, developing accessible teaching and learning resources, providing reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities, and implementing awareness raising campaigns (UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). Respondents shared that there are initiatives in DepEd that support implementation of inclusive education. This includes allocation of budget for training of general education teachers and school leaders on inclusive education, building accessible schools, and developing accessible learning materials. DepEd received funding from the 2020 GAA for the procurement of special facilities and equipment

for the SPED Program. However, the fund had to be realigned to support the COVID-19 response of the government. In 2021, funding allocation for SPED was no longer included in the proposed budget of the department, due to under-utilization of budget in the previous fiscal year. This can potentially reduce the capacity of the department to procure the equipment and materials needed that can encourage the access of persons with disabilities to mainstream classes.

In summary, respondents in this study emphasized that budget on programs and projects for persons with disabilities should be prioritized. Laws and policies developed contain provisions for budget to ensure that relevant government agencies have the budget for the implementation of the laws and policies (National Council on Disability Affairs, n.d.). However, as mentioned in the previous section, accurate and reliable data is one of the key elements in allocating funds to policies and programs. The issue on data should be addressed as it is closely linked to proper appropriations of financial resources for programs for persons with disabilities.

Further, it is also important for government agencies to spend their allocated funds within the specified period. Funds should be used efficiently since it has an impact in the way government appropriates its budget for the succeeding fiscal year. Unused funds are returned to DBM and can no longer be used for programs and projects. The amount of budget to be appropriated for the next fiscal year is also based on the government agency's capacity to utilize its allocated funds. Low utilization of funds may result in a decrease in the budget appropriation for the next fiscal year, since the government agency does not have the capacity to efficiently execute its proposed planned programs and projects.

#### 4.3.7 Program Design and Implementation

***The concerns and experiences of persons with disabilities must be an integral dimension of the design and implementation, as well as monitoring***

**and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres.** This means assessing the implications for persons with disabilities of any policies and programs and ensuring their meaningful participation in each stage of the process. Principles of universal design must be applied to ensure accessibility, addressing barriers in the built environment, information and communication, and technology and services, among others (United Nations, 2019).

The discussion below presents how existing barriers are addressed through the twin-track approach to program design and implementation and how disability-inclusive programs and services are currently being implemented.

**Twin-track approach to program design and implementation.** Application of the principles of universal design means that programs and services are ‘usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design’ (United Nations, 2006, p.4). This ensures accessibility so that persons with disabilities can live independently, participate fully in society, and enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms, on an equal basis with others. In particular situations, reasonable accommodation can be used to ensure accessibility for an individual with disability, providing necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments to achieve non-discrimination and equality (United Nations, 2014).

Mainstreaming, in combination with targeted measures, is the key strategy for advancing the rights of persons with disabilities and achieving disability inclusion and empowerment (United Nations, 2019). Taken together, mainstreaming disability while simultaneously undertaking targeted measures is known as the ‘twin-track approach’ to advancing disability-inclusive development (United Nations, 2016, p. 9).

In social and public services in the Philippines, a set of minimum requirements in building accessible infrastructures and facilities has been established,

while key duty-bearers are in the process of developing proposed amendments for equitable access to information and communication. Specific to rehabilitation and habilitation, respondents shared that key duty-bearers have established residential and non-residential facilities to provide care and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities. Community-based programs and services also include (1) early detection, prevention, and intervention of disability, (2) mainstreaming of children and youth with disabilities in regular day care service program, (3) referral of children in regular or special day school, (4) provision of auxiliary services, (5) comprehensive program to address total rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and integration into mainstream society, and (6) promoting non-disabling environment to create barrier-free communities both physically and socially.

In education, respondents shared that some public schools have started implementing inclusive education where all learners are accommodated. The public school system is working toward greater inclusion through investments in the learning environment, training of teachers, school leaders, and other personnel, and modifying the curriculum and assessment methods.

In work and employment, respondents acknowledged that key duty bearers endeavor to make employment practices fairer and more inclusive so all workers including persons with disabilities can access employment in an open labor market. In parallel, government agencies and CSOs implement programs for persons with disabilities to increase opportunities for work through sheltered employment, supported employment, and livelihood programs.

In civic participation and governance, the law guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to participate in the electoral process by ensuring that voting procedures, facilities, and materials are appropriate and accessible, in line with the concept of universal design (Republic of the Philippines, 2013). Although implementation

still needs to be strengthened, provisions are available to make elections more accessible, including special lanes in all election offices and special days for voter registration. Voters can indicate their disabilities and be assigned to vote in accessible polling places. On election day, persons with disabilities may vote with the assistance of a person of their choice. To promote proportional representation, the party-list system enables Filipino citizens belonging to marginalized and underrepresented sectors, including persons with disabilities, to become members of the House of Representatives.

**Implementation of disability-inclusive programs and services.** In either mainstreamed or disability-specific program, an implementation mechanism must be established in consultation with persons with disabilities and communicated in accessible platforms. Disability-specific programs can be accessed directly or through a designated office or focal person. Mainstreamed programs are accessed directly by persons with disabilities but support services, such as live assistance or sign language interpretation, must be available when needed (NCDA, n.d.-d).

To improve governance structure for the participation of persons with disabilities and ensure implementation of relevant programs and services, LGUs are mandated to create PDAO in every province, city, and municipality. In consideration of budget constraints, local chief executives of fourth, fifth, and sixth class municipalities may designate a focal person in lieu of the creation of a PDAO (Republic of the Philippines, 2010).

Respondents in this study recognized that PDAOs are well-positioned to implement disability-inclusive programs and services at the local level, as they are embedded within the LGU. Their implementation functions include formulating and implementing policies, plans, and programs, coordinating implementation of the Accessibility Law, representing persons with disabilities in local meetings and special

bodies, enjoining the participation of CSOs, gathering and compiling relevant data, and disseminating information on programs and activities for persons with disabilities (Republic of the Philippines, 2010).

### PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SECTOR

**PDAOs are well-positioned to implement disability-inclusive programs and services at the local level, as they are embedded within the LGU.**

However, according to a 2018 report by the Coalitions for Change Program, only six in every 10 LGUs had PDAOs (Alampay et al., 2018). Respondents acknowledged that limited funds are allocated for the creation of PDAOs and many municipalities cannot afford to hire a PDAO head, given the qualifications for the role and the corresponding salary grade. In such cases, a focal person is assigned instead.

In summary, key duty-bearers recognize the importance of designing and implementing programs using the twin-track approach to address existing barriers and promote disability-inclusive development. Respondents in this study acknowledged the value of complementary programs and services to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. However, there is also a recognition among the respondents that the current approach is leaning more toward disability-specific measures rather than mainstreaming, hence disability inclusion is not yet achieved. As one respondent explained, “We have to look at the twin-track approach when we talk about inclusion. The government uses the targeted approach, hence, up until now, there’s no inclusion.” Another respondent said, “If accessibility and support services are not available for persons with disabilities, then all those opportunities are nothing, as long as there are no support services and as long as you are not serious in implementing the Accessibility Law.”



**“We have to look at the twin-track approach when we talk about inclusion. The government uses the targeted approach, hence, up until now, there’s no inclusion.”**

**“If accessibility and support services are not available for persons with disabilities, then all those opportunities are nothing, as long as there are no support services and as long as you are not serious in implementing the Accessibility Law.”**

Respondents also appreciated the rationale behind the creation of PDAOs, however the structure still needs to be established by many local chief executives while the capacity of PDAOs needs to be strengthened. One respondent said: “I think one of the best practices is the creation of PDAO. There are successes across the country. The head of PDAO should have the technical expertise and should be a plantilla<sup>12</sup> role.” Another said: “Maybe it’s a matter of capacity building so they can see their role as implementors and coordinators and providing technical assistance to OPDs.”

#### OPD PERSPECTIVE

“Head of PDAOs should have the technical expertise and should be a plantilla role.”

On the whole, respondents in the study emphasized

the need to effectively implement existing policies, programs, and services. As one respondent summarized: “The Philippines is one of the progressive countries in terms of drafting laws with regard to inclusion, but the issue is still with the implementation and follow-through.”

**“The Philippines is one of the progressive countries in terms of drafting laws with regard to inclusion, but the issue is still with the implementation and follow-through.”**

#### 4.3.8 Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Enhancing oversight through monitoring, evaluation, and audit is critical to ensure accountability for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. ***A framework must be designed to track progress in an impactful manner, establishing clearly how performance is rated accompanied with examples of good practices to support implementation.*** Evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations must be presented periodically (United Nations, 2019).

**National monitoring and evaluation framework.** As the national agency tasked to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of policies, plans, and programs, NCDCA has developed a framework that intends to monitor and evaluate the country’s progress in achieving the following priority goals in disability inclusion: (1) access to physical and social environment and information and communication technology, (2) access to social protection and other services, (3) economic empowerment, (4) participation in governance and decision-making, (5) access to justice, (6) data and knowledge management, and (7) disability inclusive policies and institutional

<sup>12</sup> Plantilla role means regular or permanent position

collaboration. For each goal, a set of indicators will be identified and monitored within a specific timeframe (NCDA, n.d.-d).

National monitoring and evaluation system. The Council's monitoring and evaluation framework specifies the outcome indicators for some of the priority goals, but actual targets and rating guidelines were not presented which suggests that baseline data are yet to be collected. There was also no mention of how relevant data will be collected, consolidated, analyzed, and reported. At the time of writing, the accomplishment reports published by the Council in their official website were dated 2010, 2012, and 2013. Only the accomplishment report in 2010 has a section on monitoring and evaluation which reported the issuance of persons with disabilities identification cards by region.

**National feedback mechanism.** The Council has established an Action Center where persons with disabilities and concerned parties can send feedback and complaints. These are then referred to the appropriate government agency for follow-up and action. A respondent highlighted that if the complaints require legal action, the Council refers them to concerned agencies that can provide legal assistance to persons with disabilities. Some respondents representing persons with disabilities also mentioned that they use social media to share their feedback and elicit response and action from relevant government agencies.

As discussed in the section on leadership and strategic direction, the strategic direction must be encapsulated in a clear and comprehensive roadmap developed in consultation with key duty-bearers, with goals and targets that the sector can commit to and be accountable for. Based on these goals and targets, a monitoring and evaluation system must be developed to track progress, determine level of achievement per target, and evaluate overall impact of disability-inclusive programs in the lives of persons with disabilities. This will complement the existing

feedback mechanism and help prioritize concerns needing immediate action.

According to United Nations (n.d.), “the lack of data on the situation of persons with disabilities at the national level contributes to the invisibility of persons with disabilities in official statistics”, presenting an obstacle to designing and implementing necessary programs and services for persons with disabilities. ***A robust system for monitoring and evaluation is crucial to inform program implementation, determine critical factors for results achievement, facilitate continuous learning and improvement, and ensure accountability for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society.***

#### 4.3.9 Conclusion

Data gathered in this study indicate that key duty-bearers have a clear understanding of their roles and functions in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. Collaboration and complementation have allowed government agencies, OPDs, and NGOs to pool their expertise and resources together and implement disability-inclusive programs and services. However, as acknowledged by the respondents, these efforts and initiatives are not sufficient to address existing barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing their rights and participating in society on an equal basis with others. As it stands, current laws and policies are promising but are not fully implemented. Some laws and policies require updating, amendment, or further clarification. Program design and implementation follow the twin-track approach to development but lean more heavily toward disability-specific measures rather than mainstreaming.

According to the respondents, leadership needs to be more compelling, strategic, and dynamic, as the sector calls for strategic direction, coordinated action, and system-wide transformation. An operational framework to promote disability-inclusive development is a good start, but a clear and comprehensive roadmap must be developed to establish goals and targets that key

duty-bearers can commit to, work toward, and be accountable for. With a roadmap guiding the sector, principles and approaches to disability inclusion can be better defined and understood by stakeholders and integrated accordingly in policy formulation and review, budget deliberation and allocation, and program design and implementation. A centralized data management system must also be established to capture accurate and reliable data that government agencies can use at the local, regional, and national levels and share with other stakeholders, as may be appropriate. Over time, data can be collected and used in a more intentional and systematic manner, allowing key stakeholders to monitor progress vis-à-vis national goals and targets and evaluate impact of programs and services on the lives of persons with disabilities. Based on concrete data and evidence, particularly the experiences and situations of persons with disabilities, key duty-bearers can address existing barriers in a more effective manner and adopt practices that truly promote disability-inclusive development.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the findings from the initial analysis, this study recommends the following to further build data on disability:

## **National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA)**

- Conduct a Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices Study for duty-bearers in key government agencies to gain understanding of barriers in knowledge, attitudes, and practices and how to address them.
- Conduct a study on best practices for inter-sectoral collaboration that can inform how stakeholders can work with each other better to advance the needs of persons with disabilities in the country.
- Conduct a policy review of policies across key areas to identify gaps in policy that affect policy implementation.

## **NCDA in coordination with DILG, DSWD, and DOH**

- Conduct research on best practices for data collection, storage, and management for disability inclusion to support the establishment of a centralized data system that would have a synergized and integrated way of collecting, storing, and updating information on persons with disabilities based on the Washington Group of questions.

## **NCDA and Commission on Election (COMELEC)**

- Examine the design and mechanism of the party-list system. Provide a comprehensive account of how organizations of persons with disabilities participated in this system in previous elections. Analyze the successes, challenges, and lessons learnt. Highlight aspects of the party-list system that need to be reviewed or redesigned to promote proportional representation of marginalized and underrepresented sectors, including persons with disabilities, in the House of Representatives.

## **Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)**

- Examine why access to employment in the open labor market remains very limited despite improvements in employment policies and practices. Analyze factors affecting supply of and demand for labor and how these influence workforce participation of persons with disabilities. Provide guidelines for key duty-bearers on how to make the open labor market more accessible and inclusive.
- Explore this statement: It is generally but not universally accepted and at times disputed, that for some persons with disabilities, open employment may not be a practicable option, for various reasons (International Labour Organizations, 2015, p. 69). Develop case studies describing how persons with disabilities transition from sheltered employment to employment in the open labor market. Highlight critical factors that supported this transition. Develop case studies describing how persons with disabilities thrived in and chose to remain in sheltered employment. If they tried mainstream employment, present reasons for returning to sheltered employment. Provide guidelines and best practices for implementors of disability-targeted employment measures.

### **Department of the Interior and Local and Government (DILG) and COMELEC**

- Examine cities or municipalities where a greater proportion of persons with disabilities participated in previous elections. Note how provisions for accessible elections are implemented in various stages of the electoral process including voter awareness, voter registration, election campaigns, and protocols on election day. Provide guidelines and best practices for local government units and civil society organizations.

On the other hand, this study recommends the following actions to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed:

### **National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA)**

- Develop a roadmap with clear targets and indicators of success for the disability sector to measure its progress. The roadmap can serve as a guide for stakeholders from various government agencies, non-government organizations and OPDs to align their programs and plans with. The development of the roadmap must be participatory.
- Evaluate the current feedbacking systems present in key government agencies for persons with disabilities to ensure that they are indeed accessible, relevant, and effective

### **Department of Education (DepEd)**

- Review teacher professional development support general education teachers receive in teaching children with disabilities in inclusive settings. Identify possible gaps and ways to strengthen content and delivery of professional development training for general education and special education teachers.

### **All relevant government agencies**

- Government agencies must conduct a self-evaluation of their agencies in relation to their mandates to see how they can further strengthen their role as duty-bearers. Development organizations can help facilitate this through initiating the development of guidelines for self-assessment of government agencies or funding such assessments and evaluations.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1. RESEARCH INDICATORS FOR EACH KEY AREA

### Social and Public Services

#### UNCRPD Article 9: Accessibility

State Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with other, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.

#### UNCRPD Article 25: Health

State Parties recognize that persons with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the highest standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability.

#### UNCRPD Article 26: Habilitation and Rehabilitation

State Parties shall take effective and appropriate measures, including peer support, to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life.

UNCRPD ARTICLE	RESEARCH INDICATORS
UNCRPD ARTICLE 9  UNCRPD ARTICLE 25  UNCRPD ARTICLE 26	<p><b>Policy environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enactment of national and local legislation and adoption of national policy/plan to guarantee equal access of persons with disabilities to quality and affordable health services, including universal health coverage, habilitation and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities <b>(PE1)</b></li> <li>• Allocation of resources with explicit guidelines to provide equitable access to health services of persons with disabilities; habilitation and rehabilitation services; and physical environment, transportation services, and information and communication <b>(PE2)</b></li> <li>• Consultation process with key stakeholders in the development and review of policies and program related to health and delivery of services; habilitation and rehabilitation; and access to physical environment, transportation, information and communication, and systems <b>(PE3)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Programs (activities, implementation, outcomes)</b></p> <p><b>1. Health and Habilitation and Rehabilitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access to quality and affordable health and habilitation and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, including access to health coverage, health clinics and hospitals, medical and health equipment, and alternative communication methods <b>(PR1)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access to trainings, seminars and information of health and habilitation and rehabilitation personnel in public and private hospitals and clinics, persons with disabilities, and families of persons with disabilities <b>(PR2)</b></li> <li>• Participation in the regular monitoring and inspections of national and local state-funded and private facilities and programs for habilitation and rehabilitation <b>(PR3)</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Equitable access to assistive devices and technologies for persons with disabilities <b>(PR4)</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>2. Accessibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services and/or systems (PR5)</li> <li>• Participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs in accessibility audits on government and facilities, services, and programs (PR6)</li> <li>• Access to trainings to increase and/or strengthen the knowledge of relevant professionals, manufacturers, and service providers of their responsibilities in ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities (PR7)</li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholder involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible feedback and complaint mechanisms and protocol for persons with disabilities are established in relation to access and delivery of health services; habilitation and rehabilitation; and access to physical environment, transportation service, information and communication, and systems. <b>(SI1)</b></li> <li>• Close collaboration among key stakeholders to promote the rights of persons with disabilities to quality and affordable health services, habilitation and rehabilitation services, physical environment, transportation, and information and communications <b>(SI2)</b></li> </ul>
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## Education

### UNCRPD Article 24: Education

State Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education.

INDICATORS	RESEARCH INDICATORS
ARTICLE 24	<p><b>Policy environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enactment of legislation and adoption of a national strategy/plan that establishes the right of all children to receive an equitable inclusive education, alongside their peers <b>(PE1)</b></li> <li>• Allocation of resources to ensure access to inclusive education in mainstream settings of children with disabilities <b>(PE2)</b></li> <li>• Extensive consultation process with key stakeholders in the development and review of policies <b>(PE3)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Programs (activities, implementation, outcomes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access and participation of children with disabilities to inclusive education <b>(PR1)</b></li> <li>• Safe and inclusive learning environments across all levels of education, including safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse, and child protection <b>(PR2)</b></li> <li>• Inclusive leadership, principles, and cultures across all levels of the education system, with specific reference to the full inclusion of children at risk of exclusion <b>(PR3)</b></li> <li>• Training for inclusive education for all teachers and personnel across all levels of the education system <b>(PR4)</b></li> <li>• Curriculum and assessment methods are flexible and adaptable to the needs of learners, including learners with disabilities <b>(PR5)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholder involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration and active involvement of key duty-bearers in raising awareness, promoting inclusive education, and informing all individuals on the right to inclusive education <b>(SI1)</b></li> <li>• Accessible feedback and complaint mechanisms and protocol for persons with disabilities are in place in relation to access to inclusive education <b>(SI2)</b></li> </ul>

## Work and Employment

### UNCRP Article 27: Work and employment

State Parties recognize the rights of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others; and State Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery or servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forced or compulsory labor.

UNCRPD ARTICLE Attributes per UNHR	RESEARCH INDICATORS
<p><b>ARTICLE 27 (1.A-E), (1.I-K)</b> Equal opportunities in the workplace</p> <p><b>ARTICLE 27 (1.F-H)</b> Access to decent work and employment</p> <p><b>ARTICLE 27 (2)</b> Protection from forced or compulsory labor</p>	<p><b>Policy environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of national policies that recognize the rights of persons with disabilities to work and be protected from forced or compulsory labor <b>(PE1)</b></li> <li>• Allocation of resources to ensure access of persons with disabilities to decent work and employment <b>(PE2)</b></li> <li>• Consultative process of policy development and review <b>(PE3)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access to decent work and employment <b>(PR1)</b></li> <li>• Fair and non-discriminatory employment practices <b>(PR2)</b></li> <li>• Safe and healthy working environment <b>(PR3)</b></li> <li>• Full exercise of labor and trade union rights <b>(PR4)</b></li> <li>• Equitable access to technical and financial services for career advancement, vocational training, and lifelong learning <b>(PR5)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholder involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of key duty-bearers in ensuring inclusive work and employment <b>(SI1)</b></li> <li>• Close collaboration among key duty-bearers to promote inclusive work and employment <b>(SI2)</b></li> </ul>



## Civic Participation and Governance

### UNCRP Article 29: Participation in political and public life

State Parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others.

UNCRPD ARTICLE Attributes per UNHR	RESEARCH INDICATORS
<p><b>ARTICLE 29 (a.i-iii)</b> Universal and equal suffrage; being elected, holding office, and performing public functions</p> <p><b>ARTICLE 29 (b.i-ii)</b> Freedom of association and participation in public life</p>	<p><b>Policy environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of national policies that promote the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life <b>(PE1)</b></li> <li>• Allocation of resources to ensure participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life <b>(PE2)</b></li> <li>• Consultative process of policy development and review <b>(PE3)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Programs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible elections including procedures, environment, facilities, materials, and use of assistive and new technologies <b>(PR1)</b></li> <li>• Participation in elections as voters and as candidates for public office <b>(PR2)</b></li> <li>• Equitable access to technical and financial assistance to strengthen freedom of association <b>(PR3)</b></li> <li>• Participation in advocacies, civic affairs, and community development <b>(PR4)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholder involvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of key duty-bearers in ensuring inclusive political and public life <b>(SI1)</b></li> <li>• Close collaboration among key duty-bearers to promote inclusive political and public life <b>(SI2)</b></li> </ul>

## ANNEX 2. GUIDE QUESTIONS - SOCIAL AND PUBLIC SERVICES

The guide questions were modified based on the mandate and role of the government agency, development organization, or OPD and the methodology used for the data gathering (FGD/KII).

### ARTICLE 25: HEALTH & ARTICLE 26: HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

The interviewer will emphasize that questions will be asked are specific to disability-inclusive health and habilitation and rehabilitation services

**PE1:** Adoption of National Policies

**PE2:** Allocation of resources

**PE3:** Consultative process of policy development and review

**SI1:** Collaboration and active involvement of key duty-bearer

**SI2:** Accessible feedback and complaint mechanism and protocols

**PR1:** Equitable access to quality and affordable health coverage and services, including habilitation and rehabilitation services

**PR2:** Equitable access to trainings, seminars, and/or information for health personnel, persons with disabilities and their families

**PR3:** Participation of persons with disabilities in regular monitoring and inspections

**PR4:** Equitable access to assistive devices and technologies for persons with disabilities

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES/ OFFICES

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Describe the mission and mandates of your agency. (If applicable: What does your department do and what is your role in your department?)
2. What is the role of your agency in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities' access to quality and affordable health services, and habilitation and rehabilitation services?

#### POLICY ENVIRONMENT

3. Describe the relevance of national and local laws/policies that guarantee equal access of persons with disabilities to quality and affordable health services including habilitation and rehabilitation services and how are these being implemented by your agency at different levels of governance? Cite specific examples.
  - Are there gaps or challenges you see in the implementation of these laws/policies? If there are gaps, how can these gaps be addressed?

**PE1**
4. How are these laws/policies developed and reviewed? Who are involved in the process? To what extent are key stakeholders involved in the development and review of policies? Please describe the process.
 

**PE3**
5. Describe how financial resources of the government are allocated to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation services? Are these resources adequate? If yes, what are the programs/activities funded? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved?
 

**PE2**

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**ACCESS TO HEALTH COVERAGE AND SERVICES INCLUDING HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION, AND ASSISTIVE DEVICES**


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| 6. | Access to health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation, and assistive devices.   | <b>PR1</b>      |
|    | • Are there programs that provide affordable, if not free, assistive devices and technologies for persons with disabilities? If yes, please describe these programs.   | <b>PR4</b>      |
| 7. | What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? Are there gaps or challenges in implementing these programs/activities? If yes, what would you want to improve? If none, what are the model practices of programs/activities that you think can be replicated? | <b>PR1, PR4</b> |
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**INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO HEALTH TRAININGS, SEMINARS, AND/OR CAMPAIGN**


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| 8.  | Are there trainings of health personnel inclusive access of persons with disabilities in public and private hospital and clinics? Cite examples.   | <b>PR2</b> |
| 9.  | Are there accessible trainings, seminars, and/or campaigns on health information including their entitlements of habilitation and rehabilitation, and assistive devices for persons with disabilities and families of persons with disabilities? Cite examples.                        | <b>PR2</b> |
| 10. | What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? Are there gaps and challenges in implementing these trainings, seminars, and/or campaigns? What would you want to improve? If there is none, what are the model practices of activities you think can be replicated? | <b>PR2</b> |
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**REGULAR MONITORING AND INSPECTIONS OF FACILITIES**


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| 11. | Are there regular monitoring and inspections of national and local public and private facilities and/or programs for habilitation and rehabilitation? Describe the process. How frequent are they? Who led these monitoring and inspections? | <b>PR3</b> |
| 12. | Are persons with disabilities included in the monitoring and inspections? If yes, describe the process. To what extend their participation is in the monitoring and inspections? If no, why do you think so?                                 | <b>SI1</b> |
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**PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**


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| 13. | Are there systems for feedback and complaint mechanisms for persons with disabilities concerning quality and affordable health services, habilitation and rehabilitation services, and assistive devices? If yes, can you describe the process for feedback and complaint mechanisms? Cite examples. Do you have any recommendations on how to improve feedback and complaint mechanisms?                                 | <b>SI2</b> |
| 14. | Are there any existing government-mandated inter-agency committees or nongovernment-led coalition that promote the rights of persons with disabilities' access to quality and affordable health services, and habilitation and rehabilitation services? Please describe. Are you part of these committees or coalitions? If yes, what is the role of your agency? Describe the programs/activities done in the committee? | <b>SI1</b> |
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**CLOSING**


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| 15. | How would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities?                                  | <b>PR1-4</b>    |
| 16. | How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the program activities and participation of stakeholders in relation to habilitation and rehabilitation? Please describe. Are there areas you want to recommend catering to these changes? | <b>PR1, SI2</b> |
| 17. | What do you think should your agency and other key stakeholders prioritize to make quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities? Cite 3 examples.  | <b>SI1</b>      |
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## GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS, ADVOCACY GROUPS, AND/OR CIVIL-SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

1. Describe the mission and objectives of your organizations?
2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities' access to quality and affordable health services, and habilitation and rehabilitation services?

### POLICY ENVIRONMENT

3. How do these relevant national and local laws/policies provide adequate support to ensure equal access of persons with disabilities to quality and affordable health services including habilitation and rehabilitation services? **PE1**
4. Has your organization ever been invited (participated in) consultation meetings to develop and/or review national policies or plans related to quality and affordable health coverage and services? Have you had opportunities to review plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples. **PE3**
5. Describe how resources are allocated to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation services? Are these resources adequate? If yes, how are these resources used? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved? **PE2**

### ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAM AND INITIATIVES

6. What programs and/or activities has your organization implemented:
  - a. Equitable Access to quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation **PR1**
  - b. Trainings to health personnel (local or national) of private and public hospitals and clinics **PR2**
  - c. Accessible health information dissemination and/or seminar to persons with disabilities and their families **PR2**
  - d. Equitable access to affordable assistive devices **PR4**
  - e. Participation of persons with disabilities in the regular monitoring and inspection of private or public facilities **PR3**
7. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s? **S1**
8. What are the notable good practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives? **PR1-4**
9. How did you monitor and evaluate your program? What specific attributes did you track and measure? How? **PR1-4**
10. Are there feedback mechanisms in place that enable exchange of information between and among persons with disabilities, families of persons with disabilities, CSOs/OPDs, and the government in relation to the implementation of your program? If yes, describe how this help you in implementing the program? **S12**

**CLOSING**

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| 1. How would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities?  | <b>PR1-4</b>  |
| 2. How would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities?  | <b>PR1-S2</b> |
| 3. What do you think should your organizations and other key stakeholders prioritize to make quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities? Cite 3 examples. | <b>S11</b>    |

**GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR FOR ORGANIZATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES****INTRODUCTION**

- Describe the mission and objectives of your organizations? What is your role in your organization?
- What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities' access to quality and affordable health services, and habilitation and rehabilitation services?

**POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

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|---|------------|
| 3. How do the relevant national and local laws/policies provide adequate support to ensure equal access of persons with disabilities to quality and affordable health services including habilitation and rehabilitation services?  | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. Has your organization ever been invited (participated in) consultation meetings to develop and/or review national policies or plans related to quality and affordable health coverage and services? Have you had opportunities to review plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples.   | <b>PE3</b> |
| 5. Describe how resources are allocated to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation services? Are these resources adequate? If yes, what are the programs/activities funded? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved? | <b>PE2</b> |

**EXPERIENCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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| 6. If you could rate the current status of health coverage and access for persons with disabilities, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, where are we know in terms of providing quality and affordable health services for persons with disabilities? What should be done to achieve a quality and affordable health services, including habilitation and rehabilitation services?  | <b>PR1-4</b>   |
| 7. Describe the experience of persons with disabilities in accessing quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation in relation to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equitable access to quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation</li> <li>Trainings to health personnel (local or national) of private and public hospitals and clinics</li> <li>Accessible health information dissemination and/or seminar to persons with disabilities and their families</li> <li>Equitable access to affordable assistive devices</li> <li>Participation of persons with disabilities in the regular monitoring and inspection of private or public facilities</li> </ol> | <b>PR1</b><br><b>PR2</b><br><b>PR2</b><br><b>PR4</b><br><b>PR3</b> |

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8. What do you think are barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from accessing quality and affordable health services including habilitation and rehabilitation? **PR1-4**

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9. How do you think these can be improved? What changes can you recommend to further improve access to quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation? **PR1-4**

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#### **ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

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10. What programs and/or activities has your organization implemented:

- a. Equitable access to quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation **PR1  
PR2**
- b. Trainings to health personnel (local or national) of private and public hospitals and clinics **PR2**
- c. Accessible health information dissemination and/or seminar to persons with disabilities and their families **PR4**
- d. Equitable access to affordable assistive devices **PR3**
- e. Participation of persons with disabilities in the regular monitoring and inspection of private or public facilities

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11. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? **SI1**

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12. What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the notable good practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives? **PR1-4**

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13. Are there feedback mechanisms in place in relation to the implementation of your program? If yes, describe how this help you in implementing the program? **SI2**

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#### **CLOSING**

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14. How would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities? **PR1-4**

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15. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the program activities and participation for the sector in relation to habilitation and rehabilitation? Please describe. Are there areas you want to recommend catering to these changes? **PR1-S2**

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16. What do you think should your organization and other key stakeholders prioritize to make quality and affordable health coverage and services including habilitation and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities? Cite 3 examples. **SI1**

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## ARTICLE 9: ACCESSIBILITY

The interviewer will emphasize that questions will be asked are specific to disability-inclusive accessibility

**PE1:** Adoption of National Policies

**PE2:** Allocation of resources

**PE3:** Consultative process of policy development and review

**SI1:** Collaboration and active involvement of key duty-bearer

**SI2:** Accessible feedback and complaint mechanism and protocols

**PR5:** Equitable access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services

**PR6:** Participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs in accessibility audits

**PR7:** Inclusive access trainings and/or campaigns for relevant professionals and for persons with disabilities

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES/OFFICES

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Describe the mission and mandates of your agency. (If applicable: What does your department do and what is your role in your department?)
2. What is the role of your agency in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities' access to the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services?

#### POLICY ENVIRONMENT

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|---|------------|
| 3. How are these national and local laws/policies that guarantee persons with disabilities' access to the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services being implemented by your agency at different levels of governance? Cite specific examples. Are there gaps or challenges you see in the implementation of these laws/policies? If there are gaps, how can these gaps be addressed? | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. How are these laws/policies developed and reviewed? Who are involved in the process? To what extent are key stakeholders involved in the development and review of policies? Please describe the process.  | <b>PE3</b> |
| 5. Describe how resources are allocated to ensure persons with disabilities' access to the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services? Are these resources adequate? If yes, how are these resources used? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved?   | <b>PE2</b> |

#### INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORTATION, SERVICE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION, AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

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| 6. Describe persons with disabilities' access to the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Physical environment</li> <li>b. Transportation</li> <li>c. Services</li> <li>d. Information and communication</li> <li>e. Emergency services</li> </ol> | <b>PR5</b> |
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What should be improved to create an accessible community for persons with disabilities?

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7.	What programs or initiatives has your agency implemented to ensure persons with disabilities' access to the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services?	<b>PR5</b>
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8.	Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives?	<b>SI1</b>
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9.	What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the notable good practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges and/or recommendations in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	<b>PR5</b>

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#### **PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS**

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10.	Has your agency implemented an accessibility audit on government and private facilities, services, and programs? Are persons with disabilities and/or OPDs involved in the implementation of accessibility audits? Cite examples. a. What were the results of the accessibility audit? b. How frequent are the accessibility audit? c. If there is none, why do you think so?	<b>PR2</b>
<hr/>		
11.	Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives?	<b>PR6</b>
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12.	What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? Are there gaps or challenges in implementing these programs/activities? If yes, what would you want to improve? If none, what are the promising practices of programs/activities that you think can be replicated?	<b>PR6</b>

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#### **INCLUSIVE ACCESS TRAININGS AND/OR CAMPAIGNS FOR RELEVANT PROFESSIONALS AND FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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13.	Does your agency provide training/seminars to increase, if not strengthen, the knowledge of relevant professionals, manufacturers, and service providers on inclusive access for persons with disabilities on the following? Describe these programs. a. Physical environment b. Transportation c. Services d. Information and communication e. Emergency services	<b>PR7</b>
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14.	Are there accessible trainings, seminars, and/or campaigns on health information including their entitlements and rights to inclusive access to the following key areas above of persons with disabilities? Cite examples.	<b>PR7</b>

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#### **PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

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15.	Are there systems for feedback and complaint mechanisms in place for persons with disabilities in relation to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services? If yes, can you describe the process for feedback and complaint mechanisms? Cite examples. Do you have any recommendations on how to improve feedback and complaint mechanisms?	<b>SI2</b>
<hr/>		
16.	Are there any existing government-mandated inter-agency committees or non-government-led coalition that promote the rights of persons with disabilities' access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services? Please describe. Are you part of these committees or coalitions? If yes, what is the role of your agency? Describe the programs/activities done in the committee?	<b>SI1</b>

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**CLOSING**

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| 17. How would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities?  | <b>PR5-7</b> |
| 18. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the program activities and participation of stakeholders in relation inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? Are there areas you want to recommend catering to these changes? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
| 19. What do you think should your agency and other key stakeholders prioritize to ensure inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? Cite 3 examples.  | <b>SI1</b>   |

**GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS,  
ADVOCACY GROUPS, AND/OR CIVIL-SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Describe the mission and objectives of your organizations?
2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities' access to inclusive physical environment, transportation, information and communication, and emergency services and/or systems?

**POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

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|--|------------|
| 3. How do the relevant national and local laws/policies guide your organization in promoting inclusive access of persons with disabilities to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities?  | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. Has your organization ever been invited (participated in) consultation meetings to develop and/or review national policies or plans related to the physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? Have you had opportunities to review plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples. | <b>SI1</b> |
| 5. Do you think that resources are allocated to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? Are these resources adequate? If yes, what are the programs/activities funded? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved?     | <b>PE2</b> |

**ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAM AND INITIATIVES**

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|---|------------|
| 6. What programs and/or activities has your organization implemented to ensure access of persons with disabilities to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? |            |
| a. Inclusive access programs and activities   | <b>PR5</b> |
| b. Participation of persons with disabilities to accessibility audits   | <b>PR6</b> |
| c. Inclusive access trainings and/or campaigns for relevant professionals and persons with disabilities   | <b>PR7</b> |
| 7. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives?  | <b>SI1</b> |

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| 8. | How did you monitor and evaluate your program? What specific attributes did you track and measure?  | <b>PR5-7</b> |
| 9. | Are there feedback mechanisms in place that enable exchange of information between and among persons with disabilities, families of persons with disabilities, CSOs/OPDs, and the government in relation to the implementation of your program? If yes, describe how this help you in implementing the program? | <b>SI2</b>   |

#### ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAM AND INITIATIVES

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|-----|--|--------------|
| 10. | How would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities?  | <b>PR5-7</b> |
| 11. | How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the program activities and participation of stakeholders in relation inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? Are there areas you want to recommend catering to these changes? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
| 12. | What programs and/or activities has your organization implemented to ensure access of persons with disabilities to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities?   | <b>SI1</b>   |

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

#### INTRODUCTION

- Describe the mission and objectives of your organization? What is your role in your organization?
- What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities' access right to access to the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services?

#### POLICY ENVIRONMENT

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|----|---|------------|
| 3. | How do the relevant national and local laws/policies that guide your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities' access right to access to the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services?   | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. | Has your organization ever been invited (participated in) consultation meetings to develop and/or review national policies or plans related to physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services? Have you had opportunities to review plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples. | <b>PE3</b> |
| 5. | Do you think resources are allocated to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services? Are these resources adequate? If yes, what are programs/activities funded? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved?          | <b>PE2</b> |

#### EXPERIENCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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|----|--|--------------|
| 6. | If you could rate the current status of accessibility for persons with disabilities, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, where are we know in terms of providing inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services for all persons with disabilities? What should be done to achieve inclusive accessibility? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
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| 7. | Describe the experience of persons with disabilities in accessing physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services in relation to: |                          |
| a. | Inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services   | <b>PR5</b><br><b>PR6</b> |
| b. | Participation of persons with disabilities to accessibility audits   |                          |
| c. | Inclusive access trainings and/or campaigns for relevant professionals and for persons with disabilities   | <b>PR7</b>               |
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| 8. | How do you think these can be improved? What changes can you recommend to further improve access to physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
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#### **ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

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|----|---|------------|
| 9. | What programs and/or activities has your organization implemented:  |            |
| a. | Inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency service | <b>PR5</b> |
| b. | Participation of persons with disabilities to accessibility audits  | <b>PR6</b> |
| c. | Inclusive access trainings and/or campaigns for relevant professionals and for persons with disabilities                  | <b>PR7</b> |
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| 10. | Describe each program or initiative. How did you design/plan your program interventions? What was the rationale behind them? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
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|-----|---|------------|
| 11. | Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? | <b>SI1</b> |
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| 12. | What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
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| 13. | Are there feedback mechanisms in place that enable exchange of information between and among persons with disabilities, families of persons with disabilities, CSOs/OPDs, and the government in relation to the implementation of your program? If yes, describe how this help you in implementing the program? | <b>SI2</b> |
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#### **CLOSING**

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| 14. | How would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving inclusive access to the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
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| 15. | How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the program activities and participation for persons with disabilities in relation inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, service, information and communication, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? Are there areas you want to recommend catering to these changes? | <b>PR5-7</b> |
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| 16. | What do you think should your organization and other key stakeholders prioritize to ensure inclusive access to physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications, and emergency services for persons with disabilities? Cite 3 examples. | <b>SI1</b> |
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## ANNEX 3. GUIDE QUESTIONS - EDUCATION

The guide questions were modified based on the mandate and role of the government agency, development organization, or OPD and the methodology used for the data gathering (FGD/KII).

<b>PE1:</b> Adoption of national policies	<b>PR1:</b> Access and participation to inclusive education
<b>PE2:</b> Allocation of resources	<b>PR2:</b> Safe and inclusive learning environments
<b>PE3:</b> Consultative process of policy development and review	<b>PR3:</b> Inclusive leadership, principles, and cultures
<b>SI1:</b> Collaboration and active involvement of key duty-bearer	<b>PR4:</b> Training on inclusive education
<b>SI2:</b> Accessible feedback and complaint mechanism and protocols	<b>PR5:</b> Curriculum and Assessment

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

#### INTRODUCTION

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| 1. Describe the mission and mandate of your agency. What is your role in your department?  | <b>SI1</b> |
| 2. What is the role of your agency in promoting the rights of children with disabilities to receive equitable access to quality education, alongside their peers, in inclusive settings? | <b>SI1</b> |

#### POLICY ENVIRONMENT

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| 3. Describe the relevant national laws/policies established to ensure the right of children with disabilities to inclusive education is achieved.   | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. How are these laws/policies developed and reviewed? Who are involved in the process? To what extent are the key stakeholders involved in the development and review of policies? Cite specific examples.   | <b>PE3</b> |
| 5. How are these policies implemented by your agency? Cite specific examples.   | <b>PE1</b> |
| 6. Describe how financial resources are allocated to ensure equitable access to inclusive education for all children with disabilities. Are these resources adequate? If yes, what are the programs/activities funded? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved to ensure children with disabilities have access to quality education in inclusive settings? | <b>PE2</b> |

#### ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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| 7. What are the provisions for children with disabilities to access education? What are the learning approaches provided to support education of children with disabilities (mainstream, segregated/special education)? | <b>PR1</b> |
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8.	Are there strategies or interventions being implemented to keep children with disabilities from dropping out of school? If yes, explain how these strategies are being implemented.	PR1
9.	Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the access of children with disabilities to education? If yes, in what way?	PR1
10.	What programs or initiatives has your agency implemented to ensure equitable access and participation to inclusive education of children with disabilities?	PR1
11.	Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s?	SI1
12.	What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the promising practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	PR1
<b>SAFE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS</b>		
13.	What programs or initiatives has your agency implemented to create positive and welcoming learning environments for all children, including children with disabilities? Are there programs in place that promote safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse, child protection?	PR2
14.	What are the programs or initiatives in place to ensure children with disabilities' equitable access to quality education in relation to the following? a. Physical infrastructures and facilities b. Learning materials and resources c. School activities d. Information and opportunities for knowledge/skills development	PR2
15.	Are there government standards for accessible infrastructures and facilities? Are schools designed in a way that is accessible for all children, including children with disabilities? What should be improved to create a disability-inclusive school for all children?	PR2
16.	Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the access of children with disabilities to safe and inclusive learning environments? If yes, in what way?	PR2
17.	Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s?	SI1
18.	What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the promising practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	PR2
<b>INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP, PRINCIPLES, AND CULTURES</b>		
19.	Are there trainings on inclusive education implemented for school leaders and education authorities? If yes, explain how these trainings are implemented.	PR3
20.	Is there a multi-disciplinary committee established specifically for disability inclusive education? If yes, who are included in the committee? What are the roles and responsibilities of the committee?	PR3
21.	Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of these programs or initiatives across the education system? If yes, in what way?	SI1

22. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s?	<b>PR3</b>
23. What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the notable good practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	<b>PR3</b>
<b>TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL TEACHERS AND PERSONNEL</b>	
24. What were the major INSET and school-based training programs on disability-inclusive education that your agency implemented? How are these training programs implemented? How did it benefit the teachers and education personnel?	<b>PR4</b>
25. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of INSET and/or school-based training programs on disability-inclusive education? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR4</b>
26. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement the training program on inclusive education? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the training? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s?	<b>SI1</b>
27. What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the notable good practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What were the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	<b>PR4</b>
28. How does the training on inclusive education impacted the way teachers teach their students? Cite specific examples	<b>PR3-4</b>
<b>CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT</b>	
29. Are there measures in place to ensure that curricula are flexible and adaptable to the needs of all learners, specifically to the needs of children with disabilities? If yes, describe how it is being implemented.	<b>PR5</b>
30. What programs or initiatives has your agency implemented in relation to flexible and adaptable curricula?	<b>PR5</b>
31. What are the approaches used to ensure assessment methods are inclusive? What are the accommodations provided for children with disabilities?	<b>PR5</b>
32. Describe the experience/s of children with disabilities in accessing remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. How was their access to assistive technologies during the pandemic?	<b>PR5</b>
33. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s?	<b>SI1</b>
34. What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the promising practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	<b>PR5</b>
<b>FEEDBACK MECHANISMS AND COMPLAINT PROTOCOLS</b>	
35. Are there feedback mechanisms in place that enable exchange of information between and among children with disabilities, parents/families, teachers, school leaders, schools, division office, regional office, central government, and CSOs/OPDs? If yes, describe how these mechanisms improve access of children with disabilities to inclusive education. If none, how can this be further improved?	<b>SI2</b>

**CLOSING**

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| 36. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress, in terms of achieving inclusive education?   | <b>PR1-5</b> |
| 37. What do you think should your agency and other key stakeholders prioritize to make quality education more accessible and inclusive for all children? Cite 3 examples. | <b>SI1</b>   |

**GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR CSOs****INTRODUCTION**

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| 1. Describe the mission and goals of your organization. What is your role in your department?  | <b>SI1</b> |
| 2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of children with disabilities to receive equitable access to quality education, alongside their peers, in inclusive settings? | <b>SI1</b> |

**POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

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| 3. Describe the relevant national laws/policies that guide your organization in promoting the right of children with disabilities to inclusive education.   | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. How do these laws/policies provide support and protection for children with disabilities' access to equitable inclusive education? Are there gaps in the laws/policies that you would want to be addressed?  | <b>PE1</b> |
| 5. Has your organization ever been invited (participated in) consultation meetings to develop and/or review national policies or plans related to inclusive education? Have you had opportunities to review plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples.   | <b>PE3</b> |
| 6. Describe how financial resources of the government are allocated to ensure access to inclusive education for all children with disabilities. Are these resources adequate? If yes, what are the programs/activities funded? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved to ensure children with disabilities have access to quality education in inclusive settings? | <b>PE2</b> |

**ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

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| 7. What programs or initiatives has your organization implemented to promote: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equitable access and participation of children with disabilities to inclusive education</li> <li>Safe and inclusive learning environments, including           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse, and child protection</li> <li>Accessible school infrastructures and facilities</li> <li>Learning materials and resources, such as assistive technologies</li> <li>School activities</li> <li>Information and opportunities for knowledge/skills development</li> </ol> </li> <li>Inclusive leadership, principles, and cultures (training for school leaders and education leaders on inclusive education)</li> <li>Training on inclusive education for all teachers and personnel</li> <li>Curriculum and assessment that are flexible and adaptable to the needs of all learners</li> </ol> | <b>PR1</b>   |
| 8. Describe each program or initiative. How did you design/plan your program interventions? What was the rationale behind them?   | <b>PR1-5</b> |

9. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s?	<b>SI1</b>
10. What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented?	<b>PR1-5</b>
11. What are the promising practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives?	<b>PR1-5</b>
12. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your programs or initiatives? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR1-5</b>
13. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	<b>PR1-5</b>
14. How did you monitor and evaluate your program? What specific attributes did you track and measure? How?	<b>PR1-5</b>
15. Are there feedback mechanisms in place in relation to the implementation of your program? If yes, describe how this helps you in implementing the program?	<b>SI2</b>

#### **CLOSING**

16. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress, in terms of achieving inclusive education?	<b>PR1-5</b>
17. What do you think should your organization and other key stakeholders prioritize to make quality education more accessible and inclusive for all children? Cite 3 examples.	<b>SI1</b>

### **GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR OPDs**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Describe the mission and goals of your organization. What is your role in your department?	<b>SI1</b>
2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of children with disabilities to receive equitable access to quality education, alongside their peers, in inclusive settings?	<b>SI1</b>

#### **POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

3. Describe the relevant national laws/policies that guide your organization in promoting the right of all children to inclusive education.	<b>PE1</b>
4. How do these laws/policies provide support and protection for children with disabilities' equitable access to inclusive education? Are there gaps in the laws/policies that you would want to be addressed?	<b>PE1</b>
5. Has your organization ever been invited (participated in) consultation meetings to develop and/or review national policies or plans related to inclusive education? Have you had opportunities to review plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples.	<b>PE3</b>
6. Describe how financial resources of the government are allocated to ensure access to equitable inclusive education for all children with disabilities. Are these resources adequate? If yes, what are the programs/activities funded? If not, why do you think so? What could be improved to ensure children with disabilities have access to quality education in inclusive settings?	<b>PE2</b>

#### **EXPERIENCES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

7. Imagine a fully inclusive school, what does it look like? Describe what is in an inclusive school.	<b>PR1-5</b>
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8. If you could rate the status of education for children with disabilities, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, where are we now in terms of providing inclusive education for all children? What should be done to achieve a fully inclusive school?	PR1-5
9. Describe the experiences of children with disabilities in accessing quality education in relation to:	
a. Equitable access and participation of children with disabilities to inclusive education	PR1
b. Safe and inclusive learning environments including safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse, and child protection, physical infrastructures, and facilities, learning materials and resources, school activities, and information and opportunities for knowledge/skills development	PR2
c. Flexible and adaptable curricula and assessment methods	PR5
10. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the access of children with disabilities to education? If yes, in what way?	PR1,2,5
11. What do you think are barriers that hinder children with disabilities from accessing quality education in mainstream settings? How can these barriers be addressed?	PR1,2,5
<b>ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES</b>	
12. What programs or initiatives has your organization implemented to promote:	
a. Equitable access and participation of children with disabilities to inclusive education	PR1
b. Safe and inclusive learning environments, including	PR2
i. Safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse, and child protection	
ii. Accessible school infrastructures and facilities	
iii. Learning materials and resources, such as assistive technologies	
iv. School activities	
v. Information and opportunities for knowledge/skills development	
c. Inclusive leadership, principles, and cultures (training for school leaders and education leaders on inclusive education)	PR3
d. Training on inclusive education for all teachers and personnel	PR4
e. Curriculum and assessment that are flexible and adaptable to the needs of all learners	PR5
13. Describe each program or initiative. How did you design/plan your program interventions? What was the rationale behind them?	PR1-5
14. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your programs or initiatives? If yes, in what way?	PR1-5
15. Who did you partner or collaborate with? How did you work together to implement these programs or initiatives? What were your roles and responsibilities in implementing the programs or initiatives? What were the roles and responsibilities of your partner organization/s?	SI1
16. What were the results of the programs or initiatives implemented? What are the promising practices that emerged during the implementation of the programs or initiatives? What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of these programs or initiatives?	PR1-5
17. Are there feedback mechanisms in place in relation to the implementation of your program? If yes, describe how this helps you in implementing the program?	SI2
<b>CLOSING</b>	
18. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress, in terms of achieving inclusive education?	PR1-5
19. What do you think should your organization and other key stakeholders prioritize to make quality education more accessible and inclusive for all children? Cite 3 examples.	SI1

## ANNEX 4. GUIDE QUESTIONS - WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

The guide questions were modified based on the mandate and role of the government agency, development organization, or OPD and the methodology used for the data gathering (FGD/KII).

<b>PE1:</b> Adoption of national policies	<b>PR1:</b> Access to decent work and employment
<b>PE2:</b> Allocation of resources	<b>PR2:</b> Fair and non-discriminatory employment practices
<b>PE3:</b> Consultative process of policy development and review	<b>PR3:</b> Safe and healthy working environment
<b>SI1:</b> Collaboration and active involvement of key duty-bearer	<b>PR4:</b> Full exercise of labor and trade union rights
<b>SI2:</b> Close collaboration among key duty-bearers	<b>PR5:</b> Access to technical and financial services

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Describe the mission and mandates of your agency.	<b>SI1</b>
2. What is the role of your agency in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to work and to be protected from compulsory and forced labor?	<b>SI1</b>

#### ON POLICY ENVIRONMENT

3. Describe the national laws/policies that guide your agency in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to work and to be protected from forced or compulsory labor. To what extent has your agency implemented these policies?	<b>PE1</b>
4. Are there gaps in the national laws/policies? If yes, how can these gaps be addressed?	<b>PE1</b>
5. How are national laws/policies developed and reviewed? Are there opportunities for persons with disabilities and other stakeholders to review draft plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples.	<b>PE3</b>
6. Have adequate financial resources been allocated to ensure disability inclusive work and employment? If yes, how are these resources used? If not, why? If more resources were available, how should these be used?	<b>PE2</b>

#### ON ACCESS TO DECENT WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

7. Describe the access of persons with disabilities to decent work and employment. What percentage of persons with disabilities do you think are able to access decent work and employment? What factors do you think promote or hinder their participation?	<b>PR1</b>
8. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected access of persons with disabilities to decent work and employment? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR1</b>

9. Describe how workers with disabilities are engaged in various sectors -- public, private, self-employed, cooperatives. What are the successes and challenges in each sector?	PR1
10. To what extent has your agency promoted the participation of persons with disabilities in the work force? Cite specific programs.	PR1
11. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	SI1-2
12. What are the results of these programs? What are the successes and challenges?	PR1
<b>ON FAIR AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES</b>	
13. Evaluate the current employment practices in our country. If the ideal is a 10 (employment practices are completely fair and non-discriminatory), where are we from 0 to 10? Why do you say so? Describe the current practices in (one at a time): recruitment, hiring, remuneration, social protection, performance assessment, and career advancement.	PR2
14. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the employment practices in our country? If yes, in what way?	PR2
15. To what extent has your agency promoted fair and non-discriminatory employment practices? Cite specific programs.	PR2
16. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	SI1-2
17. What are the results of these programs? What are the successes and challenges?	PR2
<b>ON SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT</b>	
18. On the whole, would you describe the workplace as safe/unsafe, healthy/not healthy for all its workers? Why do you say so? Are reasonable accommodations provided to persons with disabilities? Cite specific examples.	PR3
19. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the health and safety of our workplace? Cite specific examples.	PR3
20. Are mechanisms in place to protect all workers from harassment? Are there protocols on how to address complaints and grievances? Describe these mechanisms and protocols.	PR3
21. To what extent has your agency promoted safe and healthy working environment? Cite specific programs.	PR3
22. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	SI1-2
23. What are the results of these programs? What are the successes and challenges?	PR3
<b>ON THE FULL EXERCISE OF LABOR AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS</b>	
24. Describe the level of awareness of workers, including persons with disabilities, on their right to self-organize and join labor/trade unions. What percentage of workers with disabilities do you think are able to participate in labor/trade unions?	PR4
25. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the exercise of labor/trade union rights? If yes, in what way?	PR4

26. What are the key advocacies of labor/trade unions in our country? Do you think they are able to negotiate and bargain within their legal rights and limitations? How can they better promote the legal rights of workers with disabilities?	<b>PR4</b>
27. To what extent has your agency promoted the full exercise of labor/trade union rights? Cite specific programs.	<b>PR4</b>
28. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	<b>SI1-2</b>
29. What are the results of these programs? What are the successes and challenges?	<b>PR4</b>
<b>ON ACCESS TO TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>	
30. Describe the services available to promote career development, vocational training, and lifelong learning of workers, including persons with disabilities. How can these be accessed?	<b>PR5</b>
31. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the access of workers with disabilities to these services? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR5</b>
32. To what extent has your agency enhanced the skills and competencies of workers, including persons with disabilities? Cite specific programs or initiatives.	<b>PR5</b>
33. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	<b>SI1-2</b>
34. What are the results of these programs? What are the successes and challenges?	<b>PR2</b>
<b>CLOSING</b>	
35. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving disability inclusive work and employment?	<b>PR1-5</b>
36. Moving forward, what do you think should your agency and other stakeholders prioritize to make work and employment more accessible and disability inclusive?	<b>SI2</b>
<b>GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR CSO AND PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
1. Describe the mission and goals of your organization.	<b>SI1</b>
2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to work and to be protected from compulsory and forced labor?	<b>SI1</b>
<b>ON POLICY ENVIRONMENT</b>	
3. Describe the national policies that guide your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to work and to be protected from forced or compulsory labor.	<b>PE1</b>
4. Are there gaps in the national laws/policies? If yes, how can these gaps be addressed?	<b>PE1</b>
5. Has your organization participated in consultation meetings to develop national policies related to work and employment? Have you had opportunities to review draft plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples.	<b>PE3</b>

6. Do you think financial adequate resources have been allocated to ensure disability inclusive work and employment? If more resources were available, how do you think should these be used?	<b>PE2</b>
<b>ON THE ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES</b>	
7. What programs does your organization implement to promote: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equitable access to decent work and employment</li> <li>Fair and non-discriminatory employment practices</li> <li>Safe and healthy working environment</li> <li>Full exercise of labor and trade union rights</li> <li>Equitable access to technical and financial services</li> </ol>	<b>PR1</b>
8. Explain the objectives of your programs.	<b>PR1-5</b>
9. What were your key findings during needs assessment, community/sectoral mapping, etc.? Describe how you designed your technical interventions.	<b>PR1-5</b>
10. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement your programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	<b>SI1-2</b>
11. What issues or concerns have you encountered during implementation? How did you address those challenges?	<b>PR1-5</b>
12. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your programs? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR1-5</b>
13. How do you monitor and evaluate your programs? What specific attributes or indicators do you track and measure? How?	<b>PR1-5</b>
14. What are the results of your programs? What are the successes and challenges? What are you most proud of about your programs?	<b>PR1-5</b>
15. If you could start over (If you knew then what you know now), are there things that you would do differently? Cite specific examples and explain.	<b>PR1-5</b>
<b>CLOSING</b>	
16. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving disability inclusive work and employment?	<b>PR1-5</b>
17. Moving forward, what do you think should your organization and other stakeholders prioritize to make work and employment more accessible and disability inclusive?	<b>SI2</b>

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR OPD REPRESENTATIVES

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Describe your organization. How was it formed? Who are its members? What are its mission and goals?	<b>SI1</b>
2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to work and to be protected from compulsory and forced labor? What factors help or hinder your organization from fulfilling its role? Who do you consider as your partners or collaborators? What do you think are their roles and responsibilities? What about xxx (duty-bearer/s that were not mentioned)? What do you think are their roles and responsibilities?	<b>SI1-2</b>

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**ON POLICY ENVIRONMENT**


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| 3. | Describe the national policies that guide your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to work and to be protected from forced or compulsory labor.   | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. | Are there gaps in the national laws/policies? If yes, how can these gaps be addressed?  | <b>PE1</b> |
| 5. | Has your organization participated in consultation meetings to develop national policies related to work and employment? Have you had opportunities to review draft plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples. | <b>PE3</b> |
| 6. | Do you think financial adequate resources have been allocated to ensure disability inclusive work and employment? If more resources were available, how do you think should these be used?                            | <b>PE2</b> |
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**ON THE EXPERIENCES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**


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**Equitable access to decent work and employment**

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| 7.  | Describe the access of persons with disabilities to decent work and employment. What percentage of persons with disabilities do you think are able to access decent work and employment? What factors do you think promote or hinder their participation? | <b>PR1</b> |
| 8.  | Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the access of persons with disabilities to decent work and employment? If yes, in what way?  | <b>PR1</b> |
| 9.  | Describe how workers with disabilities are engaged in various sectors – public, private, self-employed, cooperatives. What are the successes and challenges in each sector?   | <b>PR1</b> |
| 10. | Describe the work of some of your members. How did they become engaged in those kinds of work? Did they encounter barriers when they were just starting? How did they overcome those challenges?  | <b>PR1</b> |
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**Fair and non-discriminatory employment practices**

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| 11. | Evaluate the current employment practices in our country. If the ideal is a 10 (employment practices are completely fair and non-discriminatory), where are we from 0 to 10? Why do you say so? Describe the current practices in (one at a time): recruitment, hiring, remuneration, social protection, performance assessment, and career advancement. | <b>PR2</b> |
| 12. | Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the employment practices in our country? If yes, in what way?   | <b>PR2</b> |
| 13. | Describe your members' experiences in securing a job (one at a time): recruitment, hiring, and performance assessment. Do they think they are receiving a fair salary/wage for the work that they do? Are they provided social protection (benefits)? Do they feel they have opportunities for career advancement?                                       | <b>PR2</b> |
- 

**Safe and healthy working environment**

- |     |   |            |
|-----|---|------------|
| 14. | Let us imagine the safest and healthiest working environment, what does it look like? If that ideal is a 10, where are we from 0 to 10? Explain.                          | <b>PR3</b> |
| 15. | How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the health and safety of our workplace? Cite specific examples.  | <b>PR3</b> |
| 16. | Are reasonable accommodations provided to persons with disabilities? Cite specific examples.  | <b>PR3</b> |
| 17. | Are mechanisms in place to protect all workers from harassment? Are there protocols on how to address complaints and grievances? Describe these mechanisms and protocols. | <b>PR3</b> |
| 18. | Do your members feel safe and comfortable where they work? Why or why not? How can we make our working environment safer and healthier for persons with disabilities?     | <b>PR3</b> |
- 

**Full exercise of labor and trade union rights**

- |     |  |            |
|-----|--|------------|
| 19. | Describe the level of awareness of workers with disabilities on their right to self-organize and join labor/trade unions. What percentage of workers with disabilities do you think are able to participate in labor/trade unions? | <b>PR4</b> |
|-----|--|------------|
-

**Full exercise of labor and trade union rights**

20. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the exercise of labor/trade union rights? If yes, in what way? **PR4**
21. What are the key advocacies of labor/trade unions in our country? Do you think they are able to negotiate and bargain within their legal rights and limitations? How can they better promote the legal rights of workers with disabilities? **PR4**
22. Are members of your organization part of a labor/trade union? How did they learn about it? What prompted them to join? What issues and concerns are their unions currently working on? How can unions be more effective in advancing the cause of persons with disabilities? **PR4**

**Equitable Access to technical and financial services**

23. Describe the services available to promote career development, vocational training, and lifelong learning of workers with disabilities. How can these be accessed? **PR5**
24. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the access of persons with disabilities to these services? If yes, in what way? **PR5**
25. Have your members participated in vocational education and other skills training programs? Cite examples. Who provided such assistance? What other forms of support do your members need to further enhance their skills and competencies? **PR5**

**ON THE ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

26. What programs does your organization implement to promote:
- a. Equitable access to decent work and employment **PR1**
  - b. Fair and non-discriminatory employment practices **PR2**
  - c. Safe and healthy working environment **PR3**
  - d. Full exercise of labor and trade union rights **PR4**
  - e. Equitable access to technical and financial services **PR5**
27. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement your programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? **SI1-2**
28. What are the results of your programs? What are the successes and challenges? What are you most proud of about your programs? **PR1-5**
29. If you could start over (If you knew then what you know now), are there things that you would do differently? Cite examples and explain **PR1-5**

**CLOSING**

30. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving disability inclusive work and employment? **PR1-5**
31. Moving forward, what do you think should your organization and other stakeholders prioritize to make work and employment more accessible and disability inclusive? **SI2**

## ANNEX 5. GUIDE QUESTIONS - CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

The guide questions were modified based on the mandate and role of the government agency, development organization, or OPD and the methodology used for the data gathering (FGD/KII).

<b>PE1:</b> Adoption of national policies	<b>PR1:</b> Accessible elections
<b>PE2:</b> Allocation of resources	<b>PR2:</b> Participation in elections
<b>PE3:</b> Consultative process of policy development and review	<b>PR3:</b> Access to technical and financial services
<b>SI1:</b> Collaboration and active involvement of key duty-bearer	<b>PR4:</b> Participation in advocacies, civic affairs, and community development
<b>SI2:</b> Close collaboration among key duty-bearer	

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

#### INTRODUCTION

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Describe the mission and mandates of your agency.   | <b>SI1</b> |
| 2. What is the role of your agency in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life? | <b>SI1</b> |

#### ON THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 3. Describe the national laws/policies that guide your agency in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life. To what extent has your agency implemented these policies?             | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. Are there gaps in the national laws/policies? If yes, how can these gaps be addressed?  | <b>PE1</b> |
| 5. How are national policies developed and reviewed? Are there opportunities for persons with disabilities and other stakeholders to review draft plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples.                                    | <b>PE3</b> |
| 6. Have adequate financial resources been allocated to ensure disability inclusive political and public life? If yes, how are these resources used? If not, why? If more financial resources were available, how should these be used? | <b>PE2</b> |

#### ON ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

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|--|------------|
| 7. Describe the level of accessibility of elections for all voters, including persons with disabilities.   | <b>PR1</b> |
| 8. Are qualified voters/candidates aware of their right to vote and be elected? How can they access information related to the elections?  | <b>PR1</b> |
| 9. How were previous elections designed to be more accessible? Describe the election campaign process. Describe the election procedures, environment, facilities, and materials. Describe the availability of assistive device and new technologies. | <b>PR1</b> |



11. What programs are you implementing to make the 2022 elections more accessible?	<b>PR1</b>
12. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	<b>SI1-2</b>
12. What issues or concerns have you encountered so far? How do you plan to address these challenges?	<b>PR1</b>
13. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your preparations for the 2022 elections? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR1</b>
<b>ON PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS</b>	
14. Describe the level of participation of persons with disabilities in previous elections. What percentage of persons with disabilities do you think were able to participate? What factors do you think promoted or hindered their participation?	<b>PR2</b>
15. What programs are you implementing to promote participation of persons with disabilities in the 2022 elections, as voters and as candidates?	<b>PR2</b>
16. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	<b>SI1-2</b>
17. What issues or concerns have you encountered so far? How do you plan to address these challenges?	<b>PR2</b>
<b>ON ACCESS TO TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE</b>	
18. Are there mechanisms that allow persons with disabilities to be represented in the public sphere? How do these mechanisms work? What are the successes and challenges to representation?	<b>PR3</b>
19. What kinds of assistance do organizations of persons with disabilities need to form, strengthen, and expand? What kinds of assistance are currently available?	<b>PR3</b>
20. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the access of organizations of persons with disabilities to these services? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR3</b>
21. What programs does your agency implement to further promote freedom of association?	<b>PR3</b>
22. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	<b>SI1-2</b>
23. What are the results of these programs? What are the successes and challenges?	<b>PR3</b>
<b>ON PARTICIPATION IN ADVOCACIES, CIVIC AFFAIRS, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>	
24. Describe the level of participation of persons with disabilities in advocacies, civic affairs, and community development. What factors do you think promote or hinder their participation?	<b>PR4</b>
25. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the participation of persons with disabilities in public life?	<b>PR4</b>
26. In what ways do you think can persons with disabilities be involved in addressing issues and concerns within their own communities and beyond?	<b>PR4</b>
27. What programs does your agency implement to promote involvement of persons with disabilities in their own communities and beyond?	<b>PR4</b>

28. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement these programs? What are their roles and responsibilities? (If not mentioned, determine how persons with disabilities are involved.)	<b>SI1-2</b>
29. What are the results of these programs? What are the successes and challenges?	<b>PR4</b>

**CLOSING**

30. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving disability inclusive political and public life?	<b>PR1-4</b>
31. Moving forward, what do you think should your agency and other stakeholders prioritize to make political and public life more accessible and disability inclusive?	<b>SI2</b>

**GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR CSO AND PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES****INTRODUCTION**

1. Describe the mission and goals of your organization.	<b>SI1</b>
2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life?	<b>SI1</b>

**ON THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

3. Describe the national laws/policies that guide your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life?	<b>PE1</b>
4. Are there gaps in the national laws/policies? If yes, how can these gaps be addressed?	<b>PE1</b>
5. Has your organization participated in consultation meetings to develop national policies related to political and public affairs? Have you had opportunities to review draft plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples.	<b>PE3</b>
6. Do you think adequate resources have been allocated to ensure disability inclusive political and public life? If more financial resources were available, how do you think should these be used?	<b>PE2</b>
7. What programs does your organization implement to promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Accessible elections <b>PR1</b></li> <li>b. Participation in elections <b>PR2</b></li> <li>c. Access to technical and financial services <b>PR3</b></li> <li>d. Participation in advocacies, civic affairs, and community development <b>PR4</b></li> </ul>	
8. Explain the objectives of your programs.	<b>PR1-4</b>
9. What were your key findings during needs assessment, community/sectoral mapping, etc.? Describe how you designed your technical interventions.	<b>PR1-4</b>
10. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement your programs? What are their roles and responsibilities?	<b>SI1-2</b>
11. What issues or concerns have you encountered during implementation? How did you address those challenges?	<b>PR1-4</b>
12. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your programs? If yes, in what way?	<b>PR1-4</b>
13. How do you monitor and evaluate your programs? What specific attributes or indicators do you track and measure? How?	<b>PR1-4</b>

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 14. What are the results of your programs? What are the successes and challenges? What are you most proud of about your programs?                     | <b>PR1-4</b> |
| 15. If you could start over (If you knew then what you know now), are there things that you would do differently? Cite specific examples and explain. | <b>PR1-4</b> |

### CLOSING

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| 16. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving disability inclusive political and public life?  | <b>PR1-4</b> |
| 17. Moving forward, what do you think should your organization and other stakeholders prioritize to make political and public life more accessible and disability inclusive? | <b>SI2</b>   |

## GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR OPD REPRESENTATIVES

### INTRODUCTION

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. Describe your organization. How was it formed? Who are its members? What are its mission and goals?  | <b>SI1</b> |
| 2. What is the role of your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life? What factors help or hinder your organization from fulfilling its role? Who do you consider as your partners or collaborators? What do you think are their roles and responsibilities? What about xxx (duty-bearer/s that were not mentioned)? What do you think are their roles and responsibilities? | <b>SI1</b> |

### ON THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 3. Describe the relevant national laws/policies that guide your organization in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political and public life.   | <b>PE1</b> |
| 4. Are there gaps in the national laws/policies? If yes, how can these gaps be addressed?  | <b>PE1</b> |
| 5. Has your organization participated in consultation meetings to develop national policies or plans related to political and public affairs? Have you had opportunities to review draft plans and provide inputs? Cite specific examples. | <b>PE3</b> |
| 6. Do you think that adequate financial resources have been allocated to ensure disability inclusive political and public life? If more financial resources were available, how do you think should these be used?                         | <b>PE2</b> |

### ON THE EXPERIENCES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

#### Accessible elections

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 7. Let us imagine a fully accessible election, what does it look like? If that ideal is a 10, where are we from 0 to 10? What would we need to get closer to a 10?  | <b>PR1</b> |
| 8. Are qualified voters/candidates aware of their right to vote and be elected? Are all voters educated about their rights and have access to election-related information? Explain.  | <b>PR1</b> |
| 9. Describe your members' experiences in previous elections. Was the conduct of election campaigns disability inclusive? Were the election procedures, environment, facilities, and materials accessible? Were assistive devices and new technologies used when needed? How do you think can these be improved for the 2022 elections? What changes, if any, would you recommend? | <b>PR1</b> |

<b>Participation in elections</b>	
10. Describe the level of participation of persons with disabilities in previous elections. What percentage of persons with disabilities do you think were able to participate in elections? What factors do you think promoted or hindered their participation?	PR1 PR2 PR3
11. Do you know of persons with disabilities who have run for office? If yes, cite specific examples. If not, what do you think are the challenges or barriers?	PR4
<b>Access to technical and financial services</b>	
12. Are there mechanisms that allow persons with disabilities to be represented in the public sphere? How do these mechanisms work? What are the successes and challenges to representation?	PR3
13. Describe the services available to help form and strengthen organizations that represent persons with disabilities.	PR3
14. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your access to these services? If yes, in what way?	PR3
15. Has your organization received assistance when you were starting out? Cite specific examples. Who provided such assistance? What other forms of support does your organization need to grow and expand further in terms of reach and scope?	PR3
<b>Participation in advocacies, civic affairs, and community development</b>	
16. Describe the level of participation of persons with disabilities in advocacies, civic affairs, and community development. What factors do you think promote or hinder their participation?	PR4
17. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the participation of persons with disabilities in public life? If yes, in what way?	PR4
18. What issues or concerns in your community do you think need to be prioritized? How is your organization involved? Have your members had experience of volunteering to support other communities? What were the successes and challenges?	PR4
<b>ON THE ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES</b>	
19. What programs does your organization implement to promote:	
a. Accessible elections	PR1
b. Participation in elections	PR2
c. Access to technical and financial services	PR3
d. Participation in advocacies, civic affairs, and community development	PR4
20. Who do you partner or collaborate with? How do you work together to implement your programs? What are their roles and responsibilities?	SI1-2
21. What are the results of your programs? What are the successes and challenges? What are you most proud of about your programs?	PR1-4
22. If you could start over (If you knew then what you know now), are there things that you would do differently? Cite examples and explain.	PR1-4
<b>CLOSING</b>	
23. On the whole, how would you evaluate the country's progress in terms of achieving disability inclusive political and public life?	PR1-5
24. Moving forward, what do you think should your organization and other stakeholders prioritize to make political and public life more accessible and disability inclusive?	SI2

## ANNEX 6. NUMBER OF EMPLOYED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN SURVEYED ESTABLISHMENTS, CLASSIFIED BY MAJOR INDUSTRY GROUPS

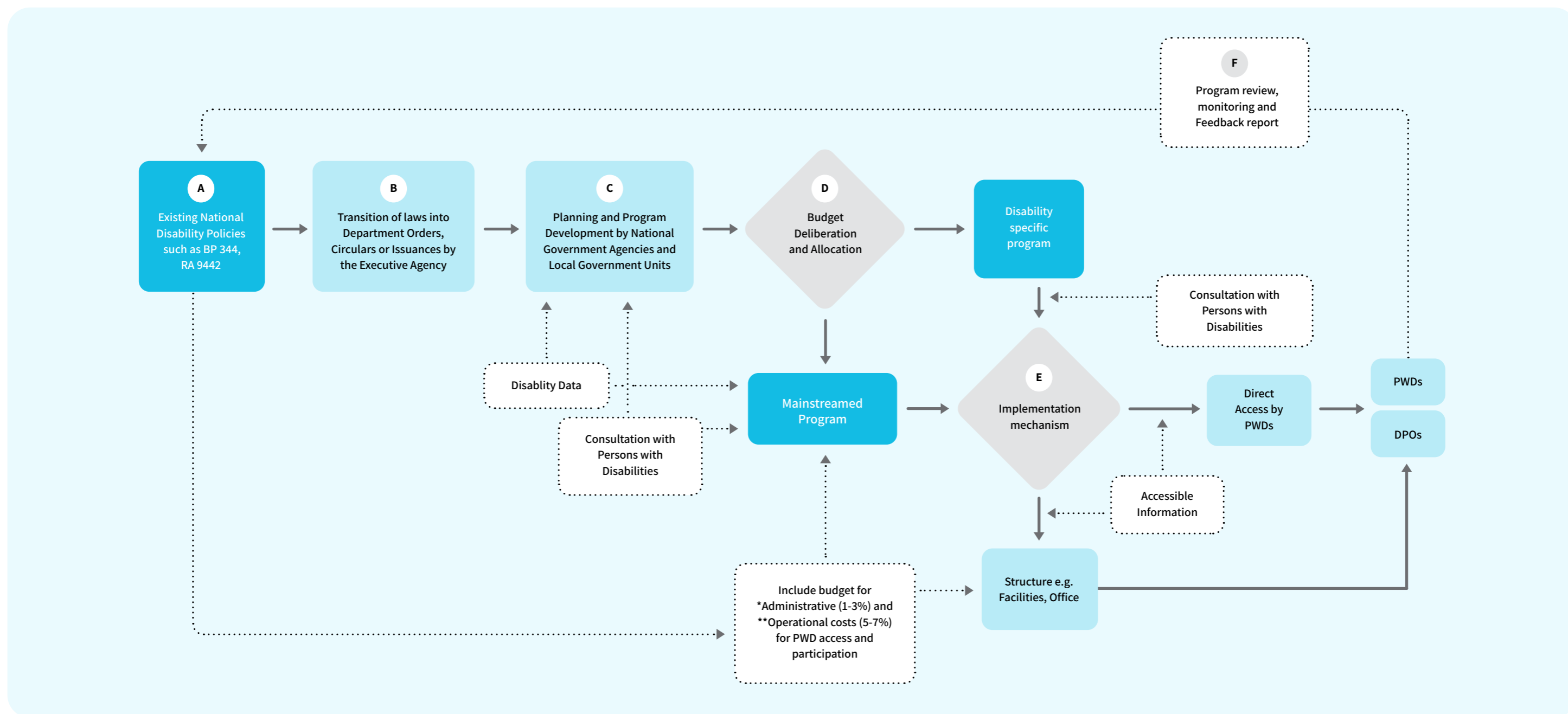
MAJOR INDUSTRY GROUP	NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WORKERS			
	TOTAL	PERCENT	FEMALE	PERCENT
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>6,042</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,976</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>5.3</b>
<b>Industry</b>	<b>2,068</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>26.3</b>
• Mining and Quarrying	76	1.3	4	0.2
• Manufacturing	1,637	27.1	473	22.8
• Electricity, Gas, Steam and Airconditioning Supply	77	1.3	18	0.9
• Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	170	2.8	32	1.5
• Construction	109	1.8	19	0.9
<b>Services</b>	<b>3,330</b>	<b>55.1</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>68.3</b>
• Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	1,335	22.1	501	24.1
• Transportation and Storage	95	1.6	24	1.1
• Accommodation and Food Service Activities	332	5.5	124	6.0
• Information and Communication	131	2.2	44	2.1
• Financial and Insurance Activities	267	4.4	110	5.3
• Real Estate Activities	41	0.7	17	0.8
• Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	106	1.8	57	2.8
• Administrative and Support Service Activities	263	4.4	107	5.1
• Education except Public Education	449	7.4	237	11.4
• Human Health and Social Work Activities except Public Health Activities	261	4.3	175	8.4
• Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	26	0.4	11	0.6
• Repair of Computers and Personal and Household Goods; Other Personal Service Activities	25	0.4	12	0.6

## ANNEX 7. TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ENROLLED, GRADUATED, ASSESSED AND CERTIFIED BY REGION

REGION	2018				2019			
	Enrolled	Graduates	Assessed	Certified	Enrolled	Graduates	Assessed	Certified
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	34		24	22	34	30	9	9
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)	192	197	25	22	307	296	93	87
National Capital Region (NCR)	687	609	595	555	1960	1732	411	407
Region I Ilocos	279	262	255	251	449	395	250	249
Region II Cagayan Valley	253	261	635	617	359	348	1407	1387
Region III Central Luzon	335	327	165	142	494	450	156	124
Region IVA CALABARZON	305	304	243	208	466	440	665	595
Region IVB MIMAROPA	177	183	74	65	366	353	81	79
Region IX Zamboanga Peninsula	106	104	84	63	319	309	50	47
Region V Bicol	512	479	89	70	451	394	100	88
Region VI Western Visayas	228	226	238	204	366	410	128	116
Region VII Central Visayas	93	88	267	258	195	171	135	128
Region VIII Eastern Visayas	84	84	30	27	217	193	46	45
Region X Northern Mindanao	387	361	47	44	800	687	196	193
Region XI Davao	29	42	110	106	445	399	55	45
Region XII SOCCSKARGEN	70	71	46	30	143	116	46	45
Region XIII CARAGA	158	150	40	26	375	353	21	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,929</b>	<b>3,779</b>	<b>2,971</b>	<b>2,713</b>	<b>7,746</b>	<b>7,076</b>	<b>3,849</b>	<b>3,659</b>

Note: Data has been validated by TESDA

## ANNEX 8: NCDA OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT: FROM POLICY ADOPTION TO SERVICE DELIVERY



\*Administrative costs may include Awareness training for staff, conversion of documents to accessible format

\*\* Operational costs may include physical accessibility, surveys, sign language, interpreters (CBM; [www.make-development-inclusive.org](http://www.make-development-inclusive.org))

DPOs - Disabled Peoples Organization

Source: [https://www.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/DID\\_Operational-Framework-1.pdf](https://www.neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/DID_Operational-Framework-1.pdf)

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