

## Protecting persons with disabilities from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in humanitarian crisis – Webinar

24<sup>th</sup> August 2022

### Questions and Answers

#### Question

Any suggestions/tools for improving accessibility for reporting for those with physical or other disabilities?

#### Answer

To make reporting accessible for persons with disabilities, we have to consider the physical environment and availability of support to persons with other impairments, like persons with visual or hearing impairments. Most importantly, consult with a wider range of people, including persons with different disabilities on the reporting channels, prior to setting up the facilities to ensure that you get it right. Having a variety of different reporting mechanisms, will increase the opportunities for the receiving complaints.

The table on page 13 of a RSH resource on disability-inclusive safeguarding in programmes provides more practical suggestions ([click here](#) to access the resource).

#### Question

How can we improve our recruitment to welcome people with disabilities beyond asking directly about disabilities in the recruitment process?

#### Answer

Welcoming people into the organization and making it a disability-friendly environment is a starting point so that people with disabilities not only apply for jobs but also stay in their roles. Sightsavers has an experience of doing this over the past 5 years and you can check out our journey [here](#). Ensure job advertisements are publicized in different forums and made as accessible as possible. The ad should be explicit in the advert that reasonable accommodations are available for applicants with a disability. Allocate a budget for assistive technologies such as screen-readers or payment of a Sign Language interpreter. It is also essential to ask candidates with disabilities what kind of support or adjustment would be needed during an interview. Some candidates may require additional time for instance, a person with a physical impairment and types with one hand. In an interview he requested for additional time during a written test but his request was not granted. He was forced to complete the test at the same time as those typing with both hands.

#### Question

What needs to be done at women centers & girls' safe spaces so that that they can be comfortable for people with disabilities, especially women with disabilities?

### **Answer**

Women and girl friendly centers and spaces should be made accessible for persons with different types of disabilities. For example, they should be physically accessible, accessible for persons with visual or hearing impairments. Conduct an accessibility audit - ideally working with a local OPD - ensure that the audit includes the different accessibility requirements for different impairments. (see [here](#)). It is also important to inform women and girls with disabilities, and their care givers where appropriate, about availability of such facilities. This should be done in a way that persons with disabilities can understand. Furthermore, it is critical to sensitize women and girls without disabilities on disability in order to address attitudinal barriers and to ensure that the spaces are welcoming and friendly for all.

### **Question**

How can we better reach out to those with disabilities? I find that one of the most difficult things is actually being able to identify those with disabilities, especially where people may hide their disability or they may have a disability that may not be visible to others.

### **Answer**

You are right that you cannot always see a person's disability and also persons with disabilities may feel anxious to participate in activities. They may also choose not to disclose they have a disability - and that is their choice. Persons with disabilities can be reached through their organizations or groups. Alternatively, community members can also support in mobilizing different individuals. But crucially, it is important that your promotional and outreach activities show your constituents that the services are accessible and welcoming for everyone. This means ensuring that your outreach considers accessibility requirements for persons with different types of disabilities.

The table on page 13 of a RSH resource on disability-inclusive safeguarding in programmes provides more practical suggestions on awareness raising ([click here](#) to access the resource).

### **Question**

Does your organisation do awareness raising with NGO staff about inclusion of people with disabilities?

### **Answer**

RSH does not provide awareness raising with NGO staff about the inclusion of persons with disabilities. RSH aims to strengthen the capacity of CSOs on safeguarding policies and practice. We do this through a number of ways; providing resources on safeguarding, organizing trainings/workshops, conducting webinars, online e-learning course and conducting the six month mentorship scheme for organisations. We aim to ensure disability-inclusion is considered throughout our resources and are continually learning in this area.

### **Question**

Are there recommendations on where we might find these tools to help us improve our infrastructure to support those we may hire who are deaf or blind, for instance?

### **Answer**

See the Sightsavers accessibility audit toolkit. While originally designed for health facilities there is a lot of content that is replicable for other settings.

[\(https://www.sightsavers.org/disability/health/accessibility-standards/\)](https://www.sightsavers.org/disability/health/accessibility-standards/)

### **Question**

In terms of employment, do you think employers are not fair or inclusive enough?

### **Answer**

Most employers in South Sudan do not take disability inclusion into consideration. For example, there are employers who have terminated contracts of staff who became impaired while working.

### **Question**

What are the key practical steps CSOs should take apart from developing policies to ensure that persons with disabilities are not left out in terms of access, recruitment and protection given the lack of awareness

### **Answer**

The process starts with building awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities, building understanding of different disabilities and recognizing the value that persons with disabilities can bring to organisation workplaces and programmes.

CSOs should genuinely engage persons with disabilities and consider their views during the design and implementation of programmes. The global principle of the disability movement is “nothing about us without us.” CSOs should establish different communication channels to communicate to the different kinds of disabilities; various reporting channels to cater for the various disabilities; and have an affirmative action for the recruitment of persons with disabilities.