

## Disability-Inclusion at Chemonics International

Founded in 1975, Chemonics is one of the world's leading partners in international development. Around the globe, Chemonics is committed to ensuring persons with disabilities can participate in and benefit from development programs regardless of the project's primary focus. Beyond promoting inclusive values, our systems and practices are designed intentionally to include diverse abilities. This also means representation in decision-making and resource allocation and designing programs so that persons with disabilities can fully participate.

### Inclusive Practices

We follow several principles to promote inclusion in all our work:

- Promoting a twin track approach to inclusive development by implementing disability-specific interventions to address targeted needs; and mainstreaming disability inclusion into all our programs.
- Budgeting for reasonable accommodations within our projects and proposals for different staff who have both visible and non-visible disabilities (i.e. interpreters for sign language, using universal design concepts to ensure office and event spaces are accessible, materials in braille, etc.)
- Partnering with Disabled People's Organizations and engaging persons with disabilities to advise on the design and implementation of disability-inclusion in proposals and projects.
- Targeted outreach to persons with disabilities in the hiring process and continued support of diverse abilities in performance management.
- Conducting project level inclusion assessment to ensure that projects have a strategy for including persons with disabilities in project workplans.
- Tracking how disability inclusion is represented at various stages of program design and implementation to better inform inclusive programming

#### Industry Membership and Leadership

In 2018, Chemonics became a member of Excellence in Development and Disability Inclusion (EDDI), a group working towards inclusive international development. As the current largest recipient of USAID funding and a member of EDDI, Chemonics can collaborate with the industry on promoting inclusive practices and to be a leader in mainstreaming inclusion throughout our work worldwide.

### Practices in Action

**Dominican Republic Criminal Justice System Strengthening Project (CJSSP).** CJSSP strengthens the criminal justice system in the Dominican Republic by improving the quality and effectiveness of prosecutions. Persons with disabilities have been included in the design of project assessments and trainings in order to improve access to justice for vulnerable populations. For instance, CJSSP partnered with a local organization that represents women with disabilities to facilitate a needs assessment of civil society organizations to better understand their concerns and barriers to access in the justice system. Also, in collaboration with the National School of the Public Ministry, the project supported the development of a Human Rights Diplomado certificate

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program to raise awareness and strengthen prosecutors' ability to manage cases involving persons with psychosocial disabilities. As a result of these activities, Community Justice Houses began to adopt measures to ensure adequate access for persons with disabilities and two project partners hired disability inclusion consultants to help promote the adoption of protocols for vulnerable groups in the Dominican Republic's justice system. CJSSP also provided technical assistance in the development of an instrument to determine compliance with international and national minimum standards for assisting persons with disabilities, which is currently being integrated into the adjusted management model for District Attorney offices.

**Senegal Lecture Pour Tous (ACR).** ACR provides technical assistance to Senegal's Ministry of Education to enhance the early grade reading outcomes of children in public schools and daaras <sup>1</sup> in six target regions. ACR's inclusive model prioritizes the teacher training and development of resources to support learners with disabilities. For example, the project created a module on inclusive education to help teachers tailor lessons to the specific needs of children with disabilities. Furthermore, the program's early grade reading assessments and learning tools have been adapted in Braille so they are accessible to children who are blind. In addition, the team collaborated with the National Institute for Education and Training of blind young people to translate and adapt early grade reading assessments (EGRA) light tasks in Braille. It is in this context that an expert from this institute administered the EGRA test to children with visual disabilities in one school targeted by the program.

**Rwanda Soma Umenye.** Soma Umenye aims to improve reading outcomes in Kinyarwanda for children in public and government-aided schools in Rwanda. To strengthen inclusive education practices in schools, Soma Umenye has formed a partnership with a local subcontractor, National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda, and is planning to adapt early grade reading interventions for children with disabilities focusing on remediation for students with disabilities to help them achieve grade level reading fluency and comprehension. In addition, project staff have integrated in their teacher training curriculum an accommodations checklist to assist teachers who have students with disabilities in their classrooms to make modifications to instruction in order to reach all students.



*Inad Al Kayed broadcasting municipal news and awareness messaging to the Jerash community in sign language.*

**Jordan Cities Implementing Transparent Innovative, and Effective Solutions (CITIES).** CITIES strives to make municipal governance more effective by enhancing democratic accountability. One way the project supports this goal is by working with Jordan's sub-national governments to foster more inclusive community participation through its communication strategy. CITIES facilitated a workshop on how to conduct inclusive townhall meetings which trained municipal representatives on effective use of social media in outreach to all their constituents. Workshop participants received a guide on how to streamline gender and social inclusion in town hall meetings and other public platforms so that inclusiveness becomes the norm, not the exception. As a result, the Greater Jerash's Municipal Staff who attended this workshop supported Inad Al Kayed to become the first municipal public relations employee to broadcast municipal news via social media to the local community in sign language (see photo). Inclusive public events, when merged with the effective use of social media, become a powerful tool that enable municipal staff to bring about innovative changes in how municipalities interact with the entirety of their communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Daaras are schools of Islamic education that may also provide secular instruction.