

How can Disabled People's Organisations be involved in communal management and ensure disability issues are included into decision-making processes?

Relevant articles of the CRPD: 19, 21, 27 and 29.

Country: Burkina Faso

Region: West Africa

Languages available: English, French

Involvement of a DPO in Implementing the Strategy of the Communal Management Support Unit of the Swiss Cooperation Fada N'Gourma

Description of the practice and the process involved

The city of Fada N'Gourma is the capital of the Eastern Region. Local organizations play a significant role and conduct a variety of complementary activities. Among the existing organizations, there is a DPO that operates on a provincial scale: the Association of People with Disabilities of the Gourma Region (APHG), established in 1996 and officially recognized the following year. It has 411 active members.

In the past, this organization has conducted significant activities in the fields of education and training and has developed partnerships with the city of Fada N'Gourma, the Provincial Department of Social Action, the Provincial Department of Sport, and the NGO International Service (IS).

The Swiss Cooperation, through its Communal Management Support Unit (CAGEC), has developed in collaboration with the municipality of Fada N'Gourma a support strategy for vulnerable people based on the implementation of income-generating micro projects. To identify vulnerability criteria, poverty indicators and funding opportunities, a study was conducted from 2006 to 2007 in the city. The organization of people with disabilities of Fada was involved in the Communal Management Support Unit throughout the process. This allowed members of the association to contribute to the study and to influence the policy from the outset.

At the end of the study, a steering committee, comprising officials from the city council, social services and the Swiss Cooperation was set up to manage the «social development support fund», intended to finance income-generating

micro projects. The DPO, as a result of their input into the study, was invited to join the steering committee of the social fund. This presence has allowed members of the organization to defend the socio-economic interests of people with disabilities and to meet other stakeholders with whom they have developed new partnerships.

The factors that made this practice possible

The **participatory and inclusive** approach supported by the Swiss Cooperation facilitated the involvement of the DPO in the conducting of the study and its presence on the management committee of the social development fund.

Already **well-organized**, the DPO was an **active** civil society organization in the region; its determination led to it being identified as one of the key stakeholders of the study.

Moreover, the **experience of the organization** in terms of partnerships was a factor in the quality of its contributions and further underlined the pertinence of the choices that it was advocating.

Some members of the DPO already had **ideas for projects**, which they presented to the steering committee for the purpose of obtaining funding.

Some of the difficulties encountered

In the workshops for the identification of vulnerability criteria, the **differing views** of the participants created some difficulties, but dialogue and the desire for mutual understanding helped them to reach a consensus.

Some members of the DPO did **not fully participate** in the study, especially people with disabilities working in the public administration. According to the Regional Coordinator of DPOs for the Eastern Region, *«people with disabilities who hold government posts or have a satisfactory economic and social situation are often not very involved in our struggles or in the activities of our organizations»*.

The effects / impact of the practice

- The involvement of the DPO in the definition and implementation of the strategy to support vulnerable people has enabled the various stakeholders to **see for themselves the skills and the quality** of the reflections of people with disabilities. The DPO has since been asked to **take part in other consultation mechanisms** at the local and regional levels;

- Due to the involvement of members of the DPOs in the process, the other participants of the study and the steering committee have been **educated** in the rights and needs of people with disabilities. The DPO has contributed, among other things, to the adoption of **more inclusive and politically correct terminology** on disability issues;

- The DPO has defended the **need for the creation of a social service** within the Fada City Hall. This has now become a reality. Moreover, people with disabilities have **increasing levels of access** to these services;
- The **dynamism** of the DPO has been strengthened after their involvement in the study, and people with disabilities are **increasingly invited** to attend various information-sharing meetings and events in the city. The members who have participated in the study also recognize they have acquired **additional** skills and knowledge;
- The DPO and its members are very **active in the field of handicrafts**, and have managed to integrate this sector among **the income generating activities** (IGA) that could receive **funding**. Handicrafts had originally been excluded by the Communal Management Support Unit. Thanks to lobbying by the DPO, six people with disabilities and one DPO have benefited from **microcredits** for projects in this field;
- Thanks to this experience, the DPO has now been **introduced** to stakeholders in the sectors of health, education and agriculture, and to other local authority stakeholders.

Related articles of the CRPD

This practice has ensured the needs and views of people with disabilities have been considered in the study and in selecting the activities to be implemented, such as the funding of micro projects and the creation of the municipal social service. According to the **article 29** of the CRPD disabled people took part to the political and public life, and ensured a better inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community (**article 19**), a better access to information (**article 21**), and also a better access to work (**article 27**).

What are the main points that require attention? How could it be improved?

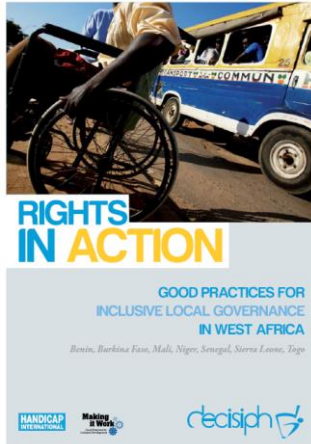
To promote the sustainability of this practice, it is very important for the city council to **take ownership of the participatory and inclusive approach** promoted by the Swiss Cooperation and then **extend it** to other strategic sectors.

For their part, DPOs should reflect on issues related to the **commitment** of their members and the concepts of **public and personal interest**.

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Background and context



Full project report: [Rights in Action – Good Practices for Local Inclusive Governance in West Africa \(Handicap International 2010\)](#)

Criteria for the good practices: see pages 50 – 51.

Recommendations from the good practices: see pages 98 – 111.

Links to further resources:

[Full text on CRPD article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community](#)

[Full text on CRPD article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion and better access to information](#)

[Full text on CRPD article 27 – Work and Employment](#)

[Full text on CRPD article 29 – Participation in political and public life](#)