

DÓCHAS DISABILITY & INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE – 2017

Background

One billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability, and disability prevalence is higher for middle and low income countries and fragile states/humanitarian settings. One-fifth of the estimated global total, or between 110 million and 190 million people, experience significant disabilities.

Persons with disabilities, on average as a group, are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities, such as less education, poorer health outcomes, lower levels of employment, and higher poverty rates.

2007 marked a huge step forward in international awareness on disability. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) opened for signatures in March 2007; as of April 2017, 173 countries have ratified the Convention with a further 14 countries (including Ireland) having only signed the Convention.

The UNCRPD pays particular attention to the link between poverty and disability; it is the first international human rights treaty to have a stand-alone article - article 32 - addressing International Cooperation. States Parties recognise the importance of international cooperation and its promotion, in support of national efforts for the realisation of the purpose and objectives of the present Convention, and will undertake appropriate and effective measures in this regard, between and among States and, as appropriate, in partnership with relevant international and regional organisations and civil society, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities.

Ireland is among the 14 countries to have signed the treaty so far but has yet to make it legally binding through ratification. This has implications for people with disabilities and their families in Ireland, but also influences how the Irish government should approach development cooperation and humanitarian aid. It effectively means that from now on, a greater emphasis will need to be placed on ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities are promoted through development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

During the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20, Member States agreed to launch a process to develop a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose achievement period concluded in 2015. The SDGs address all three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social) and are coherent with and integrated into the United Nations global development agenda beyond 2015. The envisaged SDGs have a time horizon of 2015 to 2030.

Disability is referenced in various parts of the SDGs and specifically in parts related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs,

One striking feature of the international discourse on disability and development is the lack of good quality research on this topic; this includes quality information on disability, rehabilitation and inclusion, the most effective ways of ensuring the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in development programmes, how best to develop capacity within the disability sector, or how to include disability as a cross-cutting theme in sector policies.

Mission

The Dóchas Disability and International Development Working Group (DIDWG) promotes the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in middle and low income countries and fragile states/humanitarian settings countries by raising awareness, sharing expertise and promoting action on Disability Inclusive Development (DID) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DIDRR), including lobbying for change.

Principal Objectives

- ✓ To influence Irish Aid and other state organisations, decision makers and policy makers to take action to integrate disability as a key issue for future development interventions and funding. Achieving this influence through the provision to Irish Aid of DID/DIDRR leadership, technical expertise and robustly advocating for mainstreaming of disability across Ireland's Overseas Development and Humanitarian Aid Policies and Programmes.
- ✓ To raise awareness among Irish development organisations on the position of persons with disabilities in low and middle income countries with the aim of said organisation mainstreaming disability into their development and humanitarian programmes.
- ✓ To share best practice and knowledge between disability organisations with a national remit and international development NGOs, with other Dóchas Working Groups and relevant national actors, in order to build capacity for disability inclusive development and humanitarian programming.

Scope of this group

The scope of DIDWG (the Group) will be as determined by the Board of Dóchas (the Board), and in accordance with the annual plan drawn up by the working group and agreed with the Board.

Responsibility

The DIDWG is established by and responsible to the Board of Dóchas and, in between meetings, to the Director of Dóchas, but is encouraged to take initiatives and to make proposals as it sees fit. It should be clear that any proposal or project emanating from the Group is undertaken in the name of Dóchas in general rather than of the Group.

While working group projects and programmes require the overall approval of the Board or the Director, nevertheless once Board approval has been given, the Group is encouraged to go ahead and use its initiative to carry out the project, while keeping the secretariat and the Board informed, consulting with them where necessary.

Annual Plan / Budget

The DIDWG is required to submit an annual plan and timetables to the Board for discussion and approval, and to cost any proposals, which are likely to involve expenditure.

As it is the intention of Dóchas to support the work of the Group, Dóchas will make some funds available annually for specific projects of the group. In addition, funding may also be made available for research projects.

Membership of Organisations

Membership of the Group is open to each Dóchas member agency. Member agencies are simply asked to notify Dóchas in writing of the name (or names) of those they wish to represent them in the Working Group. The email of notification should include reasons for wanting to join the Group and should state what the organisation believes that it can bring to the Group. Dóchas will notify the Group's Chair of new members to join the Group.

Membership of the Group is also open to Dóchas member agencies and academic and research institutions. Requests for the membership of the group from non-Dóchas member agencies is at the discretion of Dóchas and may be subject to terms and conditions.,

Representation from agencies need not be confined to staff or Board Directors of the agency.

Membership Renewal

A Mailing List Membership is also available to those who wish to keep in touch with the activities of the Group. Each year, the Chair of the Group will write to each member organisation (of the Group) and will request confirmation of continued participation on behalf of that organisation. In the case of individual members, the Chair will, similarly write to the individuals.

Membership Criteria

- Member organisations should be ethical, non-profit making, humanitarian and non-partisan in its aims.
- A significant part of the members' work should be concerned with development and / or disability.
- Members should be headquartered or resident in Ireland or, if not, should have substantial powers of decision-making in its own right.
- In the case of member organisations, copies of governing documents and audited accounts for the two most recent years and any other relevant documentation should be furnished on request.
- Where the Group agrees that members should pay a financial contribution to further the workings of the Group, members must pay the contribution within 30 days from the date on which it is agreed and requested by the Group. Members failing to pay their contribution within 30 days shall have their membership of the group reviewed by the Group and a collective decision will be made as to whether or not to revoke their membership.
- Members failing to attend three successive meetings, without sending an apology beforehand, will forfeit membership and will have to re-apply.

Membership Responsibilities

Members of the Group are expected to:

- Comply with the Terms of Reference of the Group.
- Participate, where possible and applicable, in the Group's organised events.
- Contribute appropriate expertise and information to the Group.
- Actively participate, where possible and applicable, in the Group's meetings.
- Act as representatives of their organisations, where applicable, representing the views, aims and objectives of the member organisations.
- Feedback to their organisations on the work of the Group, where applicable.
- Act at all times in an ethical, respectful manner.

Membership Voting

Where a vote is needed, decision shall be by the Group's members on the basis of one vote per member (organisation representative or individual member) with the exception of Mailing List Members, who shall not be entitled to vote.

If an initiative is proposed which requires members to identify individually as signatories, this shall operate on an opt-in basis, such that only those who explicitly consent shall be individually identified.

Membership Contribution(s)

From time to time, the Group may decide to seek a financial contribution from its members in order to further the workings of the Group. Such a contribution will be determined by the Group and may be in the form of a monetary payment or a payment-in-kind (such as resources, etc.). Contributions will be made to, and administered by, the Dóchas office.

Term

The Group is, in principle, established for three years, and this may be renewable subject to review by the Board.

Officers

The Group shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair annually, and will also appoint a recording secretary at each meeting. Elections shall be by the Group's members on the basis of one vote for each agency / individual participating in the Group, with the exception of Mailing List Members, who shall not be entitled to vote. Elections shall be notified to and subject to ratification by the Dóchas Board, (for example, in case the same person or agency was elected to several offices).

Officers will rotate annually, with the Chair resigning (and being available for re-election) in January and the Vice-Chair resigning in July (and being available for re-election).

No one person or organisation will serve in any officer role for more than three consecutive terms. On completion of a third consecutive term in any officer role, a member may not serve in any other officer role for a period of two years.

Reporting

The Group will report orally to the Director who will keep the Board up to date on activities. Written reports on activities and outcomes will be submitted by the Chair in advance of the Dóchas Annual General Meeting and these will be incorporated into the overall Dóchas Annual Report, which will be circulated to all Dóchas members in advance of the AGM.

Communications

In the interests of good communications, the Group will submit regular reports to the Dóchas secretariat for inclusion in the Dóchas member updates and website. Any external communications in the form of media releases, articles, opinion letters will be pre-approved by the Director and submitted/published under the name of Dóchas.

Sub-Committees, ad hoc groups

The Group is free to appoint sub-committees and ad hoc groups as it sees fit, subject to consultation and approval by the Director of Dóchas (to ensure they can be properly serviced and that any expenditure implications are known, approved and incorporated in the overall workplan / budget of the Group).

Working Group Chair

- Represents the group to the Dóchas Director and Dóchas Board
- Sets the tone for the group's work
- Ensures that members have the information needed to fulfil the aims of the group
- Oversees, plans and monitors the work of the group
- Serves as external contact point for the group
- Reports to the Board through the Director
- Works closely with the Director and other Dóchas staff
- Assigns work to the committee members, sets the agenda and runs the meetings, and ensures distribution of meeting minutes
- Initiates and leads the group's annual evaluation.

Working Group Vice-Chair

- Performs group Chair responsibilities when the Chair is not available.
- Performs other responsibilities as assigned by the group members.

Role of Dóchas

Dóchas is the umbrella organisation for Irish non-governmental development organisations.

Dóchas provides a budget to the group to support approved projects. Dóchas may also provide meeting space and some secretarial support. The Head of Programme & Policy may attend meetings, and be an active participant in planning. She or he may also be involved in monitoring the activities of the group, and supporting the group in its submissions to the Board of Management of Dóchas and engagement with other Dóchas Working Groups. Further details are described in the Dóchas Guidelines for Working Groups.

Membership Database

A database with details of the group's membership is held and maintained by Dóchas.