

The case for including persons with disabilities in social protection in Pacific Island Countries

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Key Messages

- 1. Persons with disabilities should be included in social protection systems because it is their right.**
- 2. The benefits of inclusion outweigh the costs of exclusion** because:
 - Facilitating access to services enables people to fulfil their basic needs and contributes to better educational and health outcomes.
 - It supports peoples' economic inclusion, autonomy, and capacity to take up livelihood opportunities;
 - It increases household resilience to shocks.
 - In the longer term, it can help the economy to grow by increasing overall productivity and labour participation.^{1,2}
- 3. The COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the importance for all countries to develop inclusive and well-resourced social protection systems.** Today, countries that have a disability registry, universal disability allowance, and support services are in a better position to provide fast relief to children, working-age adults, and older persons with disabilities.
- 4. There are several tried and tested actions that contribute to robust inclusive social protection systems,** including:
 - Involving persons with disabilities in planning and design.
 - Engaging in more effective outreach, information, and awareness-raising.
 - Basing access to benefits on an assessment that considers functioning and social factors.
 - Guarantee income security by considering the extra costs of living with a disability.
 - Committing to the development of a robust evidence base with standardised, comparative, disaggregated data.

¹ UNPRPD et al., February 2019, [Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities](#)

² Schneider, M., Waliuya, W., Munsanje, J. and Swartz, L. (2011) [Reflections on Including Disability in Social Protection Programmes](#), Oxford, 2011, p. 2, viewed 29 October 2014, cited in DFAT, May 2015, Development for All 2015-2020: [Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program](#) (extended to 2021).

Introduction

This paper has been developed specifically for organisations of persons with disabilities in Pacific Island Countries, to support their advocacy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social protection programmes. It responds to the increased focus on social protection in the region in response to the social and economic effects of COVID-19 and reflects the global conversation on disability and social protection.

Given the lived experience of persons with disabilities, this paper does not include an in-depth reflection on the barriers to inclusion, diversity of disability, and challenges faced. Rather it considers persons with disabilities primarily as rights holders and describes how regular and predictable transfers can increase access for persons with disabilities to appropriate education, healthcare, and livelihoods opportunities, as well as how it can increase their resilience to shocks and improve labour participation for both the person with a disability and their family members and caregivers.

Social protection is broadly understood to cover a variety of interventions designed to guarantee basic income security and access to essential social services.³ It can be considered a network of responses, that takes a coordinated approach to the multiple, compounding, and dynamic vulnerabilities faced by persons with disabilities throughout the life course. Thus, the rationale for an inclusive social protection system is to reduce multi-dimensional poverty, related to both monetary poverty and other vulnerabilities.

Much of the discourse on persons with disabilities focuses on their disadvantage, rather than on the achievement of wellbeing. As a result, outcomes and impacts of social protection on this population group have not been extensively studied. Nevertheless, all around the world, social protection is widely established as a vital government intervention to reduce poverty.^{4,5} In the absence of an explicit evidence base, conclusions on the positive impact of social protection on the wellbeing of the general population are therefore hypothesised to extend to persons with disabilities.

The correlation between poverty and disability is well established. It is also increasingly acknowledged that specific policy action, compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), is necessary to break the poverty cycle.^{6,7} The inclusion of persons with disabilities in non-contributory social protection programmes is a key mechanism to achieve this, and is fundamental to an equitable social protection approach, the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities, and to achieve progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.⁸

Partnerships between disabled persons organisations, government, and development actors are fundamental to the effective design of social protection programmes that provide an adequate level of support for persons with disabilities. This means making sure that persons with disabilities have equal access to essential services and can “*afford both ordinary and disability-related goods and services necessary to escape poverty and participate equally in society.*”⁹ As such, there is general agreement that people with disabilities should benefit from both adapted mainstream social protection and disability-specific programmes so that both their basic economic and disability-related care and support needs are met (Figure 1.).^{10,11}

³ UN General Assembly A/70/297, 7th August 2015, [Rights of persons with disabilities](#). Note by the Secretary General. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.

⁴ IPC-IG and UNICEF (2019) [Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific: Inventory of non-contributory programmes](#). Brasilia: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

⁵ Slatter, C., 20th March 2020, [Social Protection and Ending Poverty in Pacific Island States: a new fad or a real solution?](#)

⁶ Banks, L.M., Kuper, H., Polack, S. (2018) [Poverty and disability in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review](#). PLOS ONE 13(9): e0204881.

⁷ Personal communication with representative of Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

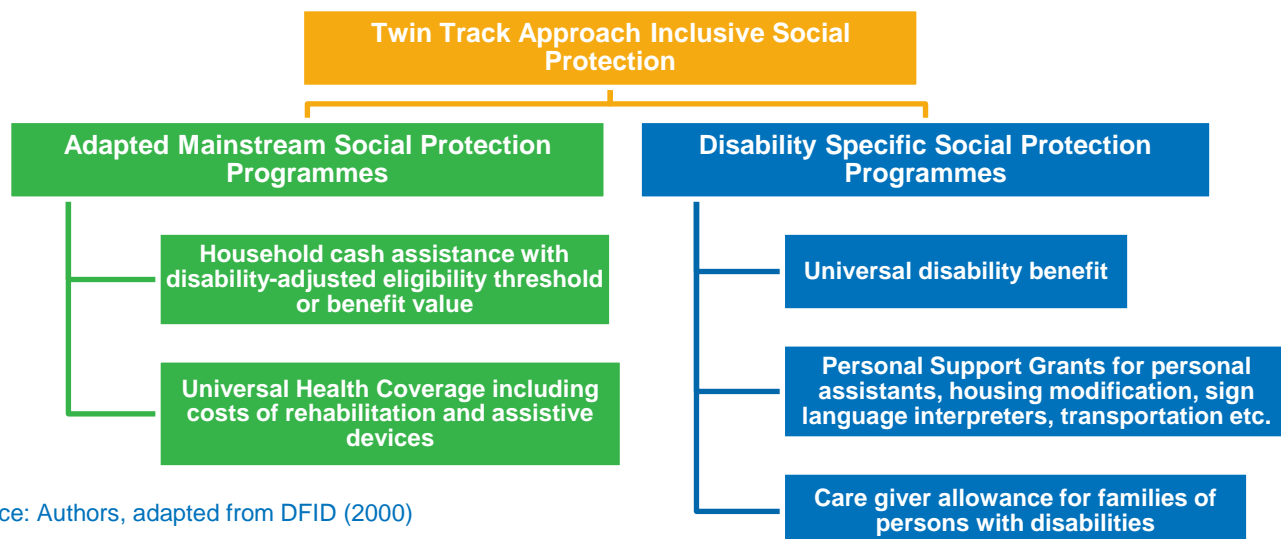
⁸ [Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities](#), February 2019

⁹ [Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities](#), February 2019

¹⁰ World Health Organisation (2011) World Report on Disability, https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf

¹¹ [Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities](#), February 2019

Figure 1. Examples of social protection benefits under the twin-track approach¹²

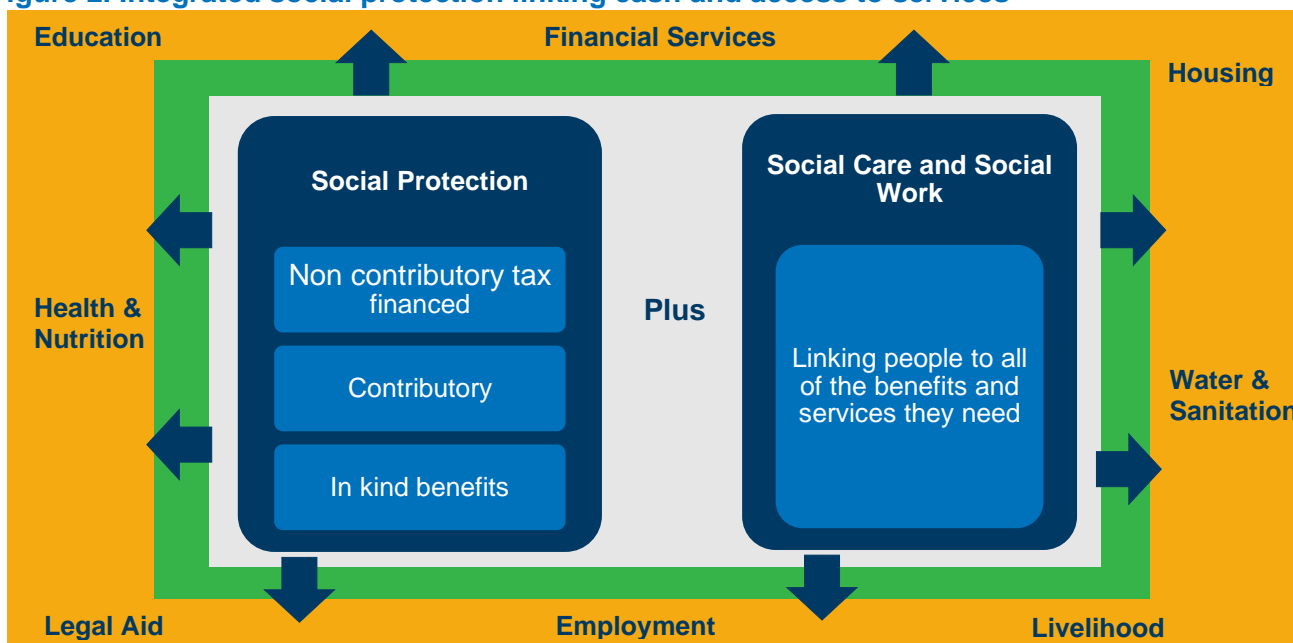


Source: Authors, adapted from DFID (2000)

During the last ten years, social protection has become an integral part of policy discussions for governments of Pacific Island Countries, with implementation at various stages of development. Several countries have adopted an inclusive twin-track approach. For example, in the Cook Islands the older persons pension (for all permanent residents over 60) can be supplemented by a caregiver’s allowance which helps provide substantial day-to-day care to those with high care needs, such as older persons and persons with severe disabilities, and also includes a housing subsidy to help improve accessibility and mobility in their home; whilst in Fiji, a transport subsidy is available for persons with disabilities which do not affect their eligibility for other social protection programmes.¹³

Evidence shows that direct payments of cash, or cash transfers, help people to meet their basic needs and create a wide range of benefits. But cash alone cannot end poverty. New research shows that when cash is combined with other services like health insurance or livelihood training, the benefits of cash transfers are boosted and their impacts increase.¹⁴ This combination of cash transfers and complementary programs is called “Cash Plus”, or integrated social protection (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Integrated social protection linking cash and access to services



Source: Authors

¹² DFID (2000) Disability, Poverty and Development. Department for International Development: London

¹³ IPC-IG and UNICEF (2019) Social Protection in Asia and the Pacific: Inventory of non-contributory programmes. Brasilia: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.

¹⁴ See UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Inclusive social protection – A human rights perspective

The right to social protection is undisputed – governments have legal commitments and obligations to provide social protection for persons with disabilities because they have signed up to international conventions and strategies (Table 1).¹⁵ It also makes sense for governments to design their social protection programs from a human rights perspective because they are more likely to be sustainable and to effectively contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty.¹⁶ This call for access to rights-based, gender-sensitive, and inclusive national social protection programs is gaining worldwide traction, as evidenced by the growing number of global coalitions.¹⁷

Table 1. International treaties and conventions on the rights to social protection

Treaty	Content
<u>Universal Declaration on Human Rights</u> ¹⁸	Article 25, “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family...and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”
<u>UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)</u> ^{19, 20}	Article 28 “State Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families...[and] to social protection.” For the full text of Article 28 please see Annex A
<u>UN Resolution 70/1</u> ²¹ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	“All people must enjoy a basic standard of living, including through social protection systems.”
<u>UN ESCAP Resolution 67/8</u> ²²	Strengthening social protection systems in Asia and the Pacific, “To further strengthen and build effective systems of social protection to shield people better from many of the risks of daily life, including ill health and disability, unemployment and falling into poverty in old age.”
<u>Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)</u> ²³	5. c. Governments should guarantee “basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability,” 10.a. national social protection should “combine preventive, promotional and active measures, benefits and social services.”
<u>Incheon Strategy</u> ²⁴ “Make the Right Real” for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific	Goal 4 Strengthen social protection, “Persons with disabilities have access to social protection on an equal basis with others.”

¹⁵ [UN Treaty Database](#), searchable by country,

¹⁶ Sepúlveda, M. and Nyst, C. (2012) [The Human Rights Approach to Social Protection](#). Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Helsinki.

¹⁷ [The Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection 2030](#), 5th February 2019, A Call to Action.

¹⁸ [The Universal Declaration on Human Rights](#)

¹⁹ [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)

²⁰ As of 2018, 13 Pacific Island Countries have ratified the CRPD – Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

²¹ [UN Resolution A/Res/70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

²² [UN ESCAP Resolution 67/8](#)

²³ Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) was adopted virtually unanimously (one abstention) by the Governments, as well as workers’ and employers’ organisations, of the ILO’s 187 member States ([see ILO, 2017a](#))

²⁴ [Incheon Strategy and Beijing Declaration 2018](#)

Inclusive social protection – Access to appropriate education and healthcare

Across the world, people with disabilities and their families face significant challenges in terms of income security and greater costs to secure the essential goods and services they need. For example, the disability of a parent can have a significant negative effect on children's school attendance rates, if they undertake caring responsibilities or engage in economic activity outside the home.^{25, 26} At the same time, children with disabilities consistently face more problems than their non-disabled peers in getting an education – a 2016 review of 15 countries showed that more than 85% of primary-age children with disabilities have never attended school.²⁷ Those who are in school are most likely attending special schools and are not included in mainstream education.²⁸

Persons with disabilities have the same general healthcare needs as everyone else and may need additional healthcare supports because of a specific impairment. However, they face significant barriers in accessing mainstream healthcare services, including prohibitive costs – the affordability of the service and the cost of transport to access it. Just over half of people with disabilities are unable to afford healthcare, compared to about a third of people without disabilities.²⁹

However, social protection has been shown to encourage investment in education and health, because cash transfers can alleviate opportunity costs and out-of-pocket expenses, including transport, medicines, textbooks, and uniforms.^{30, 31} Cash transfers can contribute to improved health outcomes by stimulating the use of health services and improving nutrition,³² and have been shown to consistently improve school attendance and have a positive effect on cognitive development test scores.^{33, 34, 35, 36} There is limited but emerging evidence that the household's specific investments in the health and education of children with disabilities increase significantly with targeted cash assistance.³⁷

²⁵ Mont, D. and Nguyen, C. (2013) "[Does Parental Disability Matter to Child Education? Evidence from Vietnam](#)," *World Development*, Elsevier, vol. 48(C), pages 88-107.

²⁶ Mizunoya, S., Mitra, S. and Yamasaki, I. (2016). Towards Inclusive Education: The impact of disability on school attendance in developing countries, *Innocenti Working Papers* no. 2016-03, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence

²⁷ The 15 countries are: Albania, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Malawi, Maldives, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, and West Bank and Gaza. Mizunoya, S. Mitra, S. and Yamasaki, I. (2016). Towards Inclusive Education: The impact of disability on school attendance in developing countries, *Innocenti Working Papers* no. 2016-03, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, Florence

²⁸ Personal communication with representative of the Fiji Disabled Persons Federation

²⁹ World Health Organisation (2015) WHO global disability action plan 2014-2021. Better health for all people with disability. WHO: Geneva <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/199544>

³⁰ Mitra, S. and Kruse, D. (2016) Are workers with disabilities more likely to be displaced? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27:14, 1550-1579, DOI: [10.1080/09585192.2015.1137616](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1137616)

³¹ Mitra, S., Palmer, M., Kim, H., Mont, D., & Groce, N. (2017). Extra costs of living with a disability: A review and agenda for research. *Disability and health journal*, 10(4), 475–484. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2017.04.007>

³² Bastagli, F., Hagen-Zanker, J., Harman, L., Barca, V., Sturge, G., & Schmidt, T. (2019). The Impact of Cash Transfers: A Review of the Evidence from Low- and Middle-income Countries. *Journal of Social Policy*, 48(3), 569-594. doi: 10.1017/S0047279418000715

³³ Kumara, A. and Pfau, W. (2011). IMPACT of Cash Transfer Programs on School Attendance and Child Poverty: An Ex-ante Simulation for Sri Lanka. *Journal of Development Studies - J DEVELOP STUD.* 47.

[10.1080/00220388.2010.536223](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220388.2010.536223). <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220388.2010.536223>

³⁴ García, S., and Saavedra, J. E. (2017). Educational Impacts and Cost-Effectiveness of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in Developing Countries: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(5), 921–965. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317723008>

³⁵ Baird, S., Ferreira, F.H.G., Özler B. and Woolcock, M. (2014) Conditional, unconditional and everything in between: a systematic review of the effects of cash transfer programmes on schooling outcomes, *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 6:1, 1-43, DOI: [10.1080/19439342.2014.890362](https://doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2014.890362)

³⁶ Bastagli, F., Hagen-Zanker, J., Harman, L., Barca, V., Sturge, G., & Schmidt, T. (2019). The Impact of Cash Transfers: A Review of the Evidence from Low- and Middle-income Countries. *Journal of Social Policy*, 48(3), 569-594. doi:10.1017/S0047279418000715

³⁷ UNICEF (2019) UNICEF Syria Cash Transfer Programme for Children with Disabilities Monitoring Report. UNICEF: Damascus

This is seen too in Pacific Island Countries – a 2020 evaluation of the Cook Islands cash transfer showed that *“the benefits facilitate household’s access to basic services – specifically in education and health,”* and have supported improved food security and nutrition.³⁸ The Pacific Disability Forum has also pointed out that financial support for families and school transport is a fundamental requirement for inclusive education for children with disabilities,³⁹ and cash can also be *“to some extent life-saving by helping people to access assistive devices, medical subsidies and food.”*⁴⁰

This suggests that governments should invest in social protection that directly supports the education and health of children and adults with disabilities, through direct targeting of cash transfers and referral mechanisms for appropriate social care and support. This type of support should also be extended to all children who live in households with a person with a disability. Social protection policies should also support adults with disabilities, including through cash transfers and social services such as home care, so that children do not have to engage in caring and economic activity, but can instead attend school.

Inclusive social protection – Access to livelihoods opportunities

The goal of inclusive development is for people with disabilities to secure the necessities of life and lead independent lives. For people with disabilities, livelihoods extend beyond income, work, and meeting basic needs, to encompass “the dignity of people’s lives”.⁴¹ Making sure that persons with disabilities have income security, that their disability-related needs and extra costs are met, and that they have effective access to healthcare services, can significantly promote their participation in the open labour market and their communities. The 2020 Global Economics of Disability Report also notes that businesses that are looking for new ways to create value for stakeholders have a strong interest in attracting the spending of this increasingly powerful cohort of persons with disabilities, and increasingly recognise that disability can be a material contributor to company profitability.⁴² Cash transfer recipients, including some persons with disabilities, report that gaining some economic security has afforded them a higher degree of financial independence and control over their lives.^{43, 44} For example, in Fiji, the transport subsidy enables persons with disabilities to build their financial management capacity and attend training.

“As a result of social protection components such as bus fare concessions, persons with disabilities have the support and assistance to come more regularly for training opportunities. This assistance has made it more affordable and viable for them to participate and come together. It also does not put a strain on the organisations of disabled persons to find resources to support attendance.”

Source: Personal communication with representative of the Fiji Disabled Persons Federation

When designing and implementing social protection systems, governments should consider a flexible and complementary combination of income security and disability-related support to

<https://www.unicef.org/syria/media/5316/file/Cash%20transfer%20programme%20for%20children%20with%20disabilities%202019.pdf>

³⁸ UNICEF Pacific, [Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs, Economic Policy Research Institute](#), Final Report: Evaluation of the social cash transfers programmes in Cook Islands. UNICEF, Suva, 2020.

³⁹ Pacific Disability Forum SDG-CRPD Monitoring Report 2018. [From Recognition to Realisation of Rights: Furthering Effective Partnership for an Inclusive Pacific 2030](#).

⁴⁰ Personal communication with representative of Fiji National Disabled Peoples Federation

⁴¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). [Securing Livelihoods for All: Foresight for Action](#); OECD Publishing: Paris, France, 2015; p. 32, ISBN 978-92-64-23189-4. (PDF) *Disabilities and Livelihoods: Rethinking a Conceptual Framework*. Available from:

⁴² Return on Disability, (2020) [Design Delight form Disability](#). The Global Economics of Disability.

⁴³ Molyneux, M. with Nicola Jones & Fiona Samuels (2016) [Can Cash Transfer Programmes Have ‘Transformative’ Effects?](#) The Journal of Development Studies, 52:8, 1087-1098, DOI:

⁴⁴ ACTED (n.d.) [Husseins story, a story of restored hope and dignity](#).

promote the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities.⁴⁵ In practice this could mean, for example, enrolling a person in a poverty targeted cash transfer program and at the same time providing an access grant to purchase assistive devices necessary to promote inclusion and independence.

Inclusive social protection – Increasing household resilience to shocks

Measures such as cash benefits, old-age pensions, in-kind transfers, and disability benefits were instrumental in cushioning the impact of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis among the most vulnerable, in both developed and developing countries.⁴⁶ There is also emerging evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic that inclusion of persons with disabilities in targeting mechanisms, even where they were not yet enrolled in a specific social protection program, facilitated rapid roll-out of emergency cash transfers.⁴⁷ Countries that had developed a comprehensive disability registry, universal disability allowance, and support services were in a position to provide fast and reliable relief to children, working-age adults, and older persons with disabilities.⁴⁸ Social protection, which at any point in time is critical for persons with disabilities, has proven to be a crucial vector of relief post-disaster and pandemic in several countries in the Pacific. This was evident in the use of cash transfers to vulnerable communities (including persons with disabilities) in Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu, and demonstrated that the stronger the national support system for persons with disabilities is, the more responsive and effective the post-disaster relief will be. Evaluation has determined that households that benefitted from the top-up transfers recovered more quickly from the disaster shocks.⁴⁹ For example, beneficiaries of the Tongan Disability Welfare Scheme received a one-time top-up payment, in addition to their regular monthly payment, to help them meet their most pressing needs.

Governments should collect essential information on the situation and needs of persons with disabilities, even where social protection programs do not yet exist. Strengthening social registries to include persons with disabilities will contribute to the design and costing of specific schemes and benefits. It will also support the rapid distribution of social protection benefits to persons with disabilities in case of shocks. Systems for assessment of persons with disabilities for inclusion in social protection systems should consider the diversity of disability as well as intersectionality (disability and gender, ethnicity etc.). It should therefore be based on the support required to participate, rather than on impairment, as highlighted by the CRPD committee.

Inclusive social protection – Increasing overall productivity and labour participation

Social protection systems can play a critical role in laying the foundation for persons with disabilities to enter and/or remain in formal and informal employment. Social protection supports persons with disabilities to become part of the workforce and is often considered the first step towards poverty reduction.⁵⁰ *“All individuals, including those with disabilities, add real monetary value to society when they work in gainful and fair-paying employment.”*⁵¹ In addition to tax revenue, a multiplier effect of the increased income can be increased local spending. In Australia, *“increased incomes generated by increased employment produces*

⁴⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018) [Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities](#). United Nations: New York

⁴⁶ OECD (2019), [Can Social Protection Be an Engine for Inclusive Growth?](#), Development Centre Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁴⁷ Sammon E., Carraro L., Cote A. Zevenbergen S., and Holmes R. (2021) [How targeting mechanisms can identify persons with disabilities for inclusion in social protection programmes](#). SPACE.

⁴⁸ UNPRPD and others (2020) [Disability inclusive social protection response to covid-19 crisis](#)

⁴⁹ Pacific Disability Forum SDG-CRPD Monitoring Report 2018. [From Recognition to Realisation of Rights: Furthering Effective Partnership for an Inclusive Pacific 2030](#).

⁵⁰ Groce, N., Kett, M., Lang, R. and Trani, J-F. (2011) [Disability and Poverty: the need for a more nuanced understanding of implications for development policy and practice](#), Third World Quarterly, 32(8), 1493-1513. p. 1499, available at

⁵¹ Thomas, M. (2019) [The Induced Economic Impact of Melwood Wages on State and Regional Economies](#). Melwood: Upper Marlboro

flow-on benefits to the economy through natural ‘multiplier’ effects to other sectors.”⁵² An Access for Work grant can pay for special equipment, adaptations, support worker services, or the help needed to get to work. The benefits of workforce participation for persons with disabilities include better mental health, increased individual choice, and improved financial security for persons who are very often significantly disadvantaged economically. *“Inclusion will outweigh the costs of exclusion.”*⁵³ Social protection can also contribute to costs of personal support workers, which can reduce the burden of unpaid care, which in turn, because of its gendered inequality, means that female carers can return to the labour market and contribute to overall household economic wellbeing. For example, an ADB funded social protection program in the Pacific Islands resulted in the employment of additional home caregivers in the Cook Islands and Tonga, benefitting older people and persons with a disability.⁵⁴

There are several strong benefits of including persons with disabilities in the workforce, and social protection should not, therefore, be based solely on incapacity for work. Social protection should focus on support for participation and unbundle poverty and disability support.

Enablers – What needs to happen to make social protection inclusive?

- **Include persons with disabilities in determining the inclusive social protection landscape** - *“we know best what our needs are, what support is needed and what support should look like”*.⁵⁵ Organisations of persons with disabilities should be involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of mainstream and disability-specific social protection systems. For example, this could mean establishing and financing (for assistive technologies, meeting/consultation and transport costs, and stipend for members etc.) an advisory group of organisations of persons with disabilities to work with the government throughout the social protection planning process.⁵⁶
- **Promote take-up of social protection by persons with disabilities, by designing and implementing more effective outreach** to inform people about their rights and to build awareness about social protection, to encourage people to engage and apply, and to raise grievances and seek redress in cases where they perceive they have been unfairly treated.^{57, 58} Examples might include:
 - Developing an outreach strategy with organisations of persons with disabilities to reach people with disabilities who may not otherwise participate (due to lack of accessible information, infrastructure and mobility, higher costs, concerns about stigma, or other dimensions of exclusion);
 - Diversifying communication methods and using technology such as automated voice messages as well as text to ensure inclusion of people with visual and/or hearing impairment, and use of video and easy read-format for people with intellectual disabilities.⁵⁹
- **Access to social protection benefits for persons with disabilities should be based on a rights-based assessment that considers both functioning and social factors that may disadvantage a person.** Holistic assessment and planning can be life-changing by identifying multiple and dynamic needs and combining cash and social supports.⁶⁰ Although the inability to work is often used as the

⁵² DWP/Office for Disability Issues, [150 job or training placements for disabled people every working day](#), July 2014

⁵³ Personal communication with representative of Pacific Disability Forum

⁵⁴ Asian Development Bank, July 2019, [Implementation Completion Memorandum. Social Protection of the Vulnerable in the Pacific](#) (Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, and Tonga).

⁵⁵ Personal communication with representative of Fiji Disabled Persons Federation, and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

⁵⁶ See for example experience from Ghana in FCDO, November 2020, [FCDO disability update - Progress against DFID’s strategy for Disability Inclusive Development](#), page 14,

⁵⁷ Sammon E., Carraro L., Cote A. Zevenbergen S., and Holmes R. (2021) [How targeting mechanisms can identify persons with disabilities for inclusion in social protection programmes](#). SPACE.

⁵⁸ Barca, V., Hebbar M, and Cote, A. with Schoemaker, E., Enfield, S., Holmes, R. and Wylde, E. [Inclusive Information Systems for Social Protection: Intentionally Integrating Gender and Disability](#). SPACE

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Waddington, L., & Priestley, M. (2021). A human rights approach to disability assessment. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 37(1), 1-15. doi:10.1017/ics.2020.21

threshold to qualify for benefits, assessment and eligibility criteria must recognise that cash can be transformative in supporting persons with disabilities to improve their livelihoods and obtain employment.^{61, 62} As noted by the CRPD Committee, participation and inclusion, rather than an inability to work, must be the fundamental criteria for social protection assessment.

- **Disability benefits should guarantee income security by considering the increased costs of living associated with a disability.** While existing disability benefits can help individuals and households to meet their basic needs, they are far from covering the economic cost of disability-related expenses and remaining out of the labour force.^{63, 64} Some calculations suggest that on average, an adult person with a disability's extra costs are equivalent to almost half of their income.⁶⁵ Social protection systems should include a method for calculating the average additional monthly income that a person with a disability would need to enjoy the same standard of living as a non-disabled person, and apply this when considering the adequacy of benefits.
- **Build the evidence base around inclusive social protection and push for improved disaggregated data on persons with disabilities.**^{66, 67} More evidence is needed on how social protection works to improve the well-being of persons with disabilities. This should include an examination of how economic support can be embedded within a wider framework of action to support participation, including providing access to social services, transport, and housing, to tackle discrimination and change social norms. It is also important to collect essential information on the situation and needs of persons with disabilities, even where social protection programs do not yet exist, to contribute to the design and cost of specific schemes and benefits for persons with disabilities. The inclusion of disability-specific questions in population-based censuses and surveys and/or individual assessment for granting official disability status means that people with disabilities will be counted and included in management information systems and social registries, thus making access to services now and in the future more viable. This acknowledges our commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities and their specific importance and value to our communities.

⁶¹ UNDESA (2018) [Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection - Report on the World Social Situation 2018](#). United Nations: New York

⁶² [Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities February 2019](#)

⁶³ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018) [Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection - Report on the World Social Situation 2018](#). United Nations: New York

⁶⁴ [Joint Statement towards inclusive social protection systems supporting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities](#), February 2019

⁶⁵ John, E., Thomas, G. and Touchet, A., February 2019, [The Disability Price Tag 2019 Policy Report](#). Scope: London

⁶⁶ Personal communication with representatives of Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

⁶⁷ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018) [Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection Report on the World Social Situation 2018](#). United Nations: New York

Annex A: CRPD Article 28 – Adequate standard of living and social protection

1. States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realisation of this right without discrimination based on disability.
2. States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to social protection and to the enjoyment of that right without discrimination based on disability, and shall take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realisation of this right, including measures:
 - a. To ensure equal access by persons with disabilities to clean water services, and to ensure access to appropriate and affordable services, devices, and other assistance for disability-related needs.
 - b. To ensure access by persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, to social protection programmes and poverty reduction programmes.
 - c. To ensure access by persons with disabilities and their families living in situations of poverty to assistance from the State with disability-related expenses, including adequate training, counselling, financial assistance, and respite care.
 - d. To ensure access by persons with disabilities to public housing programmes.
 - e. To ensure equal access by persons with disabilities to retirement benefits and programmes.

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