

# Disability Inclusion in Climate-Smart Agriculture

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Disability-inclusive development means that all stages of development processes are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities.<sup>i</sup> When thinking about disability inclusion in climate-smart agriculture (CSA<sup>ii</sup>) it is important to remember that people with disabilities are the experts in issues of inclusion and accessibility and they are also key actors and beneficiaries in CSA. This includes their participation as workers and the fact that a high proportion of people with disabilities live in rural communities and are highly reliant on agriculture and subsistence activities for survival.<sup>iii</sup> Their access to food security and nutrition, to livelihoods and to rights are consequently impacted by their degree of inclusion in CSA and by contributing factors such as climate change.

## DISABILITY INCLUSION KEY MESSAGES

- The proportion of people with disabilities engaged in agriculture in developing countries is increasing, especially women with disabilities and in rural economies.<sup>iv</sup> Many are disadvantaged in terms of lack of access to education, land ownership, food security and livelihoods. Consequently, people with disabilities remain some of the most excluded and marginalised groups when it comes to agricultural activity.<sup>v</sup>
- Disability inclusion in CSA is best practice because it ensures that all members of the community, regardless of their abilities, can actively participate in and benefit from sustainable practices. This in turn leads to unlocking economic potential, reducing economic inequalities, increasing community well-being, contributing to community resilience and social equity.
- By integrating the diverse perspectives of people with disabilities, we foster innovative solutions to often complex agricultural and environmental issues, promoting better access to resources and opportunities.
- Disability inclusion in CSA doesn't just happen on its own. It requires commitment, intention and planning. This can mean additional effort and considerations. But the payoff is more inclusive programs that benefit the whole community, leading to greater overall wellbeing and economic growth - both for people with disabilities, their organisations and the community as a whole.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

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- Disability inclusion in agriculture does not require separate strategies but rather a more considered approach that integrates disability into existing strategies and activities.
- Disability is diverse – it is not one thing and varies greatly from person to person in terms of sensory, physical, psychosocial and cognitive dimensions of their disability, and in terms of individual differences in and experience of disability.
- Also consider the impacts of cross-cutting issues for people with disabilities including gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, location and income.
  - ▶ What, for example, are different factors for single mothers with disabilities in a remote Pacific community, versus if she were male, or if the setting was urban? What cultural factors need consideration?
  - ▶ What are the differences in adaptations needed on CSA for different physical disabilities, versus someone who is blind or who has a cognitive impairment?
- People with disabilities and organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs) should be regularly consulted and involved in the design and implementation of CSA with appropriate remuneration.
- Agricultural activities have high risk of accidents causing disability. These newly acquired disabilities bring many challenges in terms of exclusion from the workforce, loss of livelihoods and the need for adaptations to allow people to work again.
  - ▶ Considering linking these people to OPDs and other community supports to promote their participation.

# Ways to Ensure Disability Inclusion in Climate-Smart Agriculture

## IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS BARRIERS

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- Disability inclusive agriculture should create an enabling environment by: (1) identifying the barriers people with disabilities face as community members, workers and beneficiaries of agriculture programs; and (2) by devising adaptations and solutions to address these barriers and promote inclusion.
- Barriers to disability inclusion in CSA can include:
  - ▶ Inaccessible local landscapes, buildings, communications and practices in agricultural settings and activities.
  - ▶ Lack of awareness among the community and CSA planners about why disability inclusion matters and how best to do it.
  - ▶ Stigma, disinterest and discriminatory attitudes towards people with disabilities as participants and beneficiaries in CSA.
- Identify and address environmental and physical barriers, such as lack of roads, and inaccessible buildings, infrastructure and transport.
- Ensure all communication materials, locations and practices are accessible for people with disabilities. Use digital platforms and media to facilitate inclusion.

## NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US – ENSURING PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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- Ensure that disability is included and people with disabilities are involved in the design of climate-smart agriculture activities and programs. Involve them in community consultations as staff and consult with disability organisations and groups.
- Involve and remunerate people with disabilities as valuable resources and key voices in strengthening the design of inclusive and effective climate-smart agriculture. They offer valuable expertise and lived experience on issues of inclusion, accessibility, and adaptive solutions.

- Draw on OPDs to conduct disability inclusion audits of climate-smart agriculture programs.
- Partner with people with disabilities to ensure all CSA consultations, venues, activities and approaches are accessible and inclusive.
- Consider affirmative action through recruitment of people with disabilities into the agriculture sector.
- Establish disability self-help groups within climate smart agriculture programs and support these self-help groups with knowledge, skills and resources so they can be a resource.

## USING PARTICIPATORY DESIGN APPROACHES

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- Involve people with disabilities from the outset in co-designing CSA interventions to ensure their needs and preferences are directly reflected in program designs.
- Establish feedback mechanisms to continuously refine CSA practices based on their experiences.

## CAPACITY BUILDING IN DISABILITY INCLUSION

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- Draw on people with disabilities and other inclusion experts to develop and provide training and technical guidance on disability inclusive CSA.
  - ▶ Make attendance at these trainings compulsory and regular for all CSA staff and stakeholders, explaining the benefits of disability inclusion (For example, ensuring that programs reach and benefit all of the community, not just those with greatest privilege and access).
- Provide learning resources (including from the list below) to inform disability inclusive climate-smart agriculture learning programs.
- Draw lessons on inclusive agriculture from other diversity areas, including gender, age, ethnicity and develop cross-cutting approaches on GEDSI (Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion) in CSA.

## LEVERAGING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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- Introduce assistive technologies to support agricultural activities, such as adaptive tools for planting, harvesting, and irrigation that cater to different disabilities.
- Promote digital tools for accessible communication and remote monitoring of CSA practices.
- Draw on disability-inclusive agricultural adaptations such as 'survival yards', keyhole gardens and raised garden beds. Adapt tools and machinery for different disabilities.<sup>vi</sup>



## INCORPORATING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANS

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- Develop specific climate resilience measures tailored to the needs of people with disabilities, such as creating accessible shelters and evacuation routes in case of climate-related emergencies.
- Include people with disabilities in risk assessments and early warning systems to address their unique vulnerabilities.

## INCORPORATING INCLUSIVE RISK MITIGATION MEASURES

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- Ensure disaster risk reduction plans and mitigation strategies explicitly address the needs of people with disabilities in the agricultural sector.
- Provide accessible insurance schemes to safeguard livelihoods and assets of people with disabilities against climate impacts.

## FACILITATING INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO LAND AND RESOURCES

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- Ensure equitable access to land ownership, credit, and other agricultural resources for people with disabilities.
- Consider non-agriculture specific initiatives to support disability inclusion in agriculture, such as finance, income generation and micro-credit schemes.
- Advocate for policy reforms that address structural barriers to land rights and ownership for people with disabilities.

## IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

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- Integrate people with disabilities into agricultural value chains, ensuring their involvement in processing, marketing, and distribution.
- Provide training and resources to enable entrepreneurship opportunities in agriculture for people with disabilities.

## ADDRESSING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS

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- Raise awareness in the community about the importance of disability inclusion in agricultural activities and identify roles and responsibilities for people with disabilities in any community committees.
- Create a welcoming environment by raising awareness among CSA program staff and the broader community about the importance and many benefits of involving people with disabilities.

- Engage community leaders, elders, and influencers to challenge stigma and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in agricultural roles.
- Use storytelling and local narratives to highlight success stories of disability-inclusive CSA.

## PROMOTING INCLUSIVE FINANCING MODELS

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- Develop financial products tailored for people with disabilities, such as low-interest loans, subsidies, or grants for agricultural activities.
- Collaborate with microfinance institutions to ensure accessibility and inclusivity in loan applications and repayment systems.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATING DISABILITY INCLUSION

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- Establish disability-inclusive indicators for tracking progress in CSA programs, such as participation rates, improved livelihood outcomes, and satisfaction levels among people with disabilities.
- Ensure that monitoring tools and reports are accessible and involve people with disabilities in the evaluation process.

## ADVOCACY ON RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

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- Draw on the UNCRPD<sup>vii</sup> (Article 28 the Right to Work) and SDGs (3 Wellbeing and Health; 8 Work; 12 Consumption and Production and 13 Climate Action<sup>viii</sup>) to inform advocacy on disability-inclusive CSA.
- Promote research into accessible agriculture for people with diverse disabilities, addressing their rights, adaptive technologies and models for inclusion.
- Capture, celebrate and share achievements in disability-inclusive CSA. Demonstrate that it can be done and the many benefits.

## RESOURCES

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Growing Disability Inclusiveness in Agriculture - <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/World%20Vision%20Growing%20Disability-Inclusiveness%20in%20Agriculture.pdf>

Accessibility Guidelines in Agriculture - <https://agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/media/file/PRISMA%20Case%20Study.pdf>

Inclusive Pathways: Enhancing Participation of Farmers With Disability Inc Agriculture - <https://www.nepad.org/blog/inclusive-pathways-enhancing-participation-of-farmers-disability-agriculture>

Disability and Climate Change, CBM DID4ALL Disability Inclusion Resource - [https://did4all.com.au/resources?id=762&tax=resource\\_sectors&taxgroup=sectors](https://did4all.com.au/resources?id=762&tax=resource_sectors&taxgroup=sectors)

Disability and Climate Change in the Pacific - <https://pacificdisability.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/PDF-Final-Report-on-Climate-Change-and-Persons-with-Disabilities.pdf>

