

Supporting Disability Movement-led inclusion advisory services

The Advisory Capacity Development and Exchange (ACE) Fellowship – Southeast Asia Pilot

This document outlines how the CBM Global Inclusion Advisory Group is working to support the Disability Movement to influence through technical advice. It particularly outlines a year-long disability inclusion advisory Fellowship program for members of the Disability Movement in Southeast Asia.

[IAG](#) is committed to working in partnership with, and being accountable to, the Disability Movement, as outlined in our [statement of approach](#). We support representatives of the Disability Movement to identify which roles suit them best and seek to complement their preferred roles.

When Disability Movement representatives want to take on a direct advisory role, we support them to develop their skills and networks through a combination of targeted learning programs and on the job learning opportunities. One key approach has been the delivery of our Advisory Capacity and Exchange Fellowship (ACE).

Want to know more? Contact us at IAG@cbm-global.org

Why an advisory Fellowship?

Since the establishment of the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) in 2016, **disability inclusion has become a key pursuit of Governments and mainstream development and humanitarian organisations** across the globe. As such, the Disability Movement is increasingly being approached to provide disability inclusion advice to mainstream development and humanitarian actors.

The ACE Fellowship was designed in response to a capacity strengthening **need identified by the Disability Movement** in Asia, to develop disability inclusion advisory knowledge and skills to complement their well-developed advocacy skills. Through our partnerships with the Disability Movement, IAG and

[International Disability Alliance \(IDA\)](#) co-developed a **core curriculum and practical training program** on disability inclusion advisory work, which was then **tailored** to the learning needs of individual participants.

What did the Fellowship look like?

[Six Fellows](#) were recruited - two each from Lao PDR, Philippines and Indonesia. The Fellows were from a mixture of backgrounds and motivations, with a gender and impairment type balance across the cohort.

The Fellowship curriculum comprised of:

- A webinar series on the development sector, disability inclusion advice, and specific sectorial themes
- A face-to-face workshop focusing on CRPD aligned advice
- Group and individual assignments
- An in-depth goal setting and learning reflection process
- A mentoring program
- Online and virtual peer sharing and learning opportunities
- On-the-job learning by participating in advisory projects alongside experienced advisors
- Completion of a portfolio of work.



The six ACE fellows at the face-to-face workshop in Jakarta, August 2023.

What did we learn?

A Fellowship evaluation exercise highlighted key learning points:

1. The Fellowship approach is an effective method of Disability Movement capacity strengthening.

All respondents in an evaluative survey felt that the Fellowship had been instrumental in developing participant knowledge, skills, networks, and communication for advisory engagement. It clarified the synergies and differences in approach between advocacy and advisory work with mainstream development and humanitarian actors.

“Without the fellowship, I think it would take me another 3-5 years to be doing this kind of work.”
(Fellow, 2023).

Critically, it has created a **local cadre of advisory professionals with lived experience** of disability who are becoming equipped to engage advisory work. This is critical to the **realisation of human rights** under the CRPD and a key contribution to the [‘nothing about us without us’](#) agenda.

2. The unique mixture of core and tailored content contributes to success.

The evaluation highlighted how the unique, varied and tailored nature of the programme was a critical component in its success. The core webinar and assignment series ensured everyone had a foundational knowledge and understanding of CRPD-compliant advisory work, whilst the mentoring programme and on-the-job learning opportunities allowed each Fellow to hone their knowledge and skills in their own priority areas, and at their own pace, guided by a personal goal setting and monitoring process.

“Connecting [learning] to their own goals was something that really encouraged them.”
(Evaluation participant, 2024)

3. The Fellowship approach benefits the wider Disability Movement, increasing impact.

The evaluation highlighted a ripple effect of ACE learning, with Fellows sharing their knowledge and skills with their OPDs and networks and increasing the capacity of their organisations to deliver inclusion advice. Improved negotiation skills have resulted in more and greater funding opportunities for OPDs, broadening the scope and influence of their work.

“The ACE program introduced me to wider networks and, as a result, there is more demand starting to come to [my OPD] from, for example, INGOs...to help advise on their HR inclusion policies. This is the sort of work that my OPD wants to do.” (Fellow, 2024)

Participation in the Fellowship led to a perceived increase in credibility for individual fellows and their OPDs. Fellows felt being connected to the Fellowship increased trust in relationships, built connections, and opened new and greater possibilities for future collaboration with mainstream organisations.

“The things I learnt, I will apply to that group [my OPD] immediately... Before it was really hard for us to secure funding... last year we got less than 500,000 budget for our project. This year we have got more than 2 million.”
(Fellow, 2024)

4. Learning from the pilot can enhance future approaches to Disability Movement capacity strengthening on advisory work.

This pilot Fellowship programme was developed iteratively and in response to Fellows’ feedback throughout, which was identified as a key strength. In the future, the approach could be further strengthened by:

- a. More face-to-face time
- b. A longer timeframe and/or reduced content
- c. Considering a thematic focus

What next?

The successes of the Pilot Fellowship have **inspired further thinking** on how best to meet the needs of the Disability Movement in enhancing their capacity to engage in advisory work. IAG intends to **engage alumni from the Pilot** as associate advisors and/or partners in delivery of advisory contracts and future iterations of the Fellowship.

To further increase and enhance localised, Disability Movement led, advisory capacity, IAG is now exploring partnership opportunities to further develop and deliver:

- **A virtual community of practice** to continue supporting alumni in their advisory knowledge and skill development and sharing
- **A Fellowship** in a different geographical area (country or region specific), co-delivered by the alumni
- A specific **sector focused Fellowship** programme (for example, disaster risk reduction)
- An **‘advanced’ alumni programme** to allow continuous development of alumni knowledge and skills
- A wider Inclusion Academy which may include a selection of knowledge exchange/capacity building approaches, responsive to the needs of the Disability Movement.