

Press Release

More need to be done to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in local governance: new UNDP study

Ha Noi, 7 December 2022 – Persons with disabilities (PWDs) have a low level of engagement in social organizations and elections at the grassroots level; disparity in gender, form, and degree of disabilities exists.

These are some of the key findings of the "**Assessment of disability inclusion in local governance in 2022**" released today. With the support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Viet Nam and the Mekong Development Research Institute (MDRI) have carried out this study to provide evidence for accelerating the achievement of disability inclusion, thus ensuring the right of people with disabilities to live in dignity and independently.

To learn about the status of disability inclusion in local governance, the study surveyed over 1,600 PWDs, covering all forms of disabilities from various localities across the country. This is a pilot activity in preparation for expanding the research scope in the following years.

"The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to benefit all people and commits to leave no one behind by reaching out to all people in need and deprivation. To fulfill this pledge, we need more granular data to understand the needs and experiences of the most marginalized in society, including persons with disabilities," said **Patrick Haverman**, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Viet Nam. *"More evidence, deeper understanding, and concrete actions will continue to demonstrate Viet Nam's commitment to upholding human rights and moving the country towards a more inclusive and just society."*

According to the study, there are still significant impediments to public administrative procedures for PWDs, particularly in the areas of disability certification and compensation. In addition, hospitals and public transportation require significant improvements to be more accessible to people with disabilities. Persons with sensory, cognitive, mental and psychiatric impairments continue to experience significant challenges in social engagement, administrative procedures, and public services.

The degree of engagement of PWDs at the grassroots level is still low, just 34.4% of respondents participate in associations/groups/social organizations; there is a gender and disability-form disparity. The percentage of respondents who did not attend in the most recent elections for People's Councils and National Assembly representatives remains relatively high, at 47.1%. The most significant hinders to PWDs from participating in elections

are the ability to move to the polling place (27.7%) and access to information (24.3%). Persons with sensory, cognitive, mental and psychiatric impairments continue to confront enormous barriers to information access.

In terms of public administrative procedures, 21% of respondents, particularly those with sensory impairments, reported difficulties in carrying out the process. Nearly 1/5 of respondents haven't got a disability certificate, and the procedure of issuing/revoking disability certificates remains unclear in some circumstances. Furthermore, 86.1% of interviewees believe that disability compensation is insufficient to cover PWD's basic living needs. More than half of respondents do not have their names in their family's land use right certificates, indicating a low number of PWDs who practice property ownership.

Public services and facilities are still inaccessible to many PWDs, only 1/3 of interviewees say local public transportation is easy to use. PWDs' assessment of the district-level hospital system is pretty high. Nevertheless, the infrastructure need improving to be more PWD-friendly (eg. installation of elevators, ramps, and standard toilets for wheelchair users). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 40% of respondents are interested in mental health treatments.

The study offers some policy recommendations as follows:

- Transparency is required on the criteria and procedure for providing disability certification and compensation.
- Appropriate support is needed so that PWDs can exercise their right to vote and carry out public administrative procedures more conveniently (for example, providing at-home support for those who have mobility difficulties).
- More investment in accessible public infrastructure/facilities is required so that PWDs can access public services and engage more in cultural, social, and recreational activities, particularly for those with sensory, cognitive, mental and psychiatric impairments.
- In addition to accessible infrastructure/facilities, PWDs should be given PWD-friendly instructions on how to use such facilities.
- PWD integration policies must pay close attention to the features and needs of various groups of PWDs to ensure that no group falls behind, particularly in terms of access to information.

For more information, follow the URL: <https://bit.ly/3iGLu22>

Or scan the QR Code.

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