



Bridging the Gap

Final event

Beyond Bridging the Gap: from inclusive policies to community inclusion

Side event at COSP14

Online event
14 June 2021

04:00 pm – 5:15 pm CET (Madrid/Rome/Vienna/Brussels)
10:00 am – 11:15 am GMT-5 (New York/Quito)

Registration link: <http://bit.ly/BtG-COSP14>



Summary

Beyond Bridging the Gap: from inclusive policies to community inclusion

Under the theme

Living Independently, being included in the community

Organisers: European Disability Forum, EU project Bridging the Gap

Co-sponsors: European Union Delegation to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN, Permanent Mission of Spain to the UN International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), International and Ibero-American Foundation of Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Spanish Agency for International and Development Cooperation (AECID), Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).

Format: Online panel event

Platform: Virtual via Zoom

Accessibility: There will be simultaneous ISL interpretation and CART in English, French, and Spanish, as well as Arabic, English, French, and Spanish interpretation

Date and time: [tbd] (75 min)

Overview & Objective

Under the theme 'Building back better: COVID-19 response and recovery; Meeting the needs, Realizing the rights and addressing the socio-economic impacts on persons with disabilities', the 14th session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD will be held from 15 to 17 June 2021. The COSP will gather the international community to explore how to make COVID-19 response and recovery inclusive ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities.

COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the significant discrimination that the 1.5 billion people living with disabilities around the world still face and the need for all post-pandemic recovery plans to be disability-inclusive to leave no one behind and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Furthermore, the European Union's [Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#) stresses the need to strengthen disability inclusion in its external action to comply with article 32 of the CRPD.

In this context, the European project Bridging the Gap, launched in 2017 as a flagship initiative of the EU on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in international cooperation, comes to an end achieving results that can be replicated in future



initiatives for inclusion. The side event “Beyond Bridging the Gap: from inclusive policies to community inclusion” proposes a dialogue on the contribution of Bridging the Gap and its consortium to the translation of inclusive policies to “real-life impacts” aiming at supporting the independent living of persons with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries. The dialogue will be based on the results obtained both at global and national levels after four years of work.

Different project's stakeholders, from the United Nations and the European Union to organizations of persons with disabilities and final beneficiaries from the five partner countries of the project (Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Paraguay and Sudan), will gather around a virtual table to share their views and testimonies on the impact of the inclusive policies promoted by Bridging the Gap, and on ways to capitalize upon the experience and ensure its sustainability.

Introduced by institutional representatives of the project consortium, the main panel will present real-life impacts of Bridging the Gap on the improvement of independent living and community inclusion of persons with disabilities in each partner country. Thus, five persons with disabilities, representing a diversity of disabilities, gender, age, ethnicity, etc., will present how the joint work between governments, international cooperation agencies and organizations of persons with disabilities carried out in the framework of Bridging the Gap has improved their daily lives.

This multi-stakeholder event is sponsored by EDF and supported by the European Union, Austria, Spain, the International Disability and Development Consortium, OHCHR, FIIAPP, ADA, AECID, and AICS as co-sponsors.

The event will last 75 minutes (date and time slot TBC) and will be held in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. Interpretation in international sign and CART in English, French, and Spanish will be arranged for.

In sum, the event will:

1. Highlight the project's contribution to the independent living of persons with disabilities in low and middle-income countries in line with the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda.
2. Share personal stories of final beneficiaries of the project on how the project has contributed to improving their independent living and inclusion in their communities.
3. Discuss how Bridging the Gap's experience can serve as a reference for future development initiatives of the European external action according to the new European Disability Strategy.
4. Raise awareness on the efforts of the EU and its Member States to support disability-inclusive development.
5. Identify opportunities for the consolidation of BtG's results.



Panel layout

00:00 **Introduction and moderation:** **Federico Martire**, FIIAPP, Bridging the Gap Director

00:04 **Opening remarks –**

- **Anna Terrón**, FIIAPP – Spanish Cooperation, Director
- **Martin Seychell**, European Commission, DG INTPA, Deputy Director General
- **Ana Peláez Narváez**, European Disability Forum (EDF), Vice President, and member UN CEDAW (via video message)
(5 minutes each)

00:19 **Presentation of the final project video**

00:26 **Bridging the Gap stories from the field: Live testimonies of persons with disabilities beneficiaries of the project**

- **Maimouna Dene**, UNAFEHB Burkina Faso
- **Xavier Mantilla**, AECADI Ecuador
- **Abayneh Gujo**, President for the FEAPD, Ethiopia
- **Paola Duarte**, President of the Paraguayan Centre for the Deaf
- **Siham Ahmed**, Physical Disability Challengers Organization Sudan
(8 minutes each)

01:06 **Conclusions and closing remarks**

- **Facundo Chavez Penillas**, Human Rights and Disability Advisor, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- **Katarina Ivanković-Knežević**, Director, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission
(4 minutes each)

01:15 **End of the event**

Practical information

Registration link: <http://bit.ly/BtG-COSP14>

Interpretation: Arabic, English, French, Spanish, International Sign

Captioning: English, French and Spanish