11 Session plan: Accessibility

Learning objectives
By the end of the session participants shall be able to: • Define accessibility in relation to persons with disabilities. • Explain the concept of universal design. • Discuss reasonable accommodation. • Explain some of the accessibility standards. • Discuss strategies that will remove barriers to accessibility. • Explain how to carry out an accessibility audit.

Time allocated
• 120 minutes.

Resources needed
• PPT presentation • Participant Manual • Video on Universal Design • Whiteboard or flipchart • Flipchart paper and markers • Speakers.

Preparation
Familiarise with: • relevant content of the Participant Manual • PPT slides • video on Universal Design • accessibility audit checklist. Check: • video works in PPT. Plan: • which areas of the building or surrounding areas participants can use for the accessibility activity in the session.

11.1 Introduction and definition of accessibility (20 minutes)

	National / Regional / District	

Accessibility

Learning objectives
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• Define accessibility in relation to persons with disabilities.
• Explain the concept of universal design.
• Discuss reasonable accommodation.
• Explain some of the accessibility standards.
• Discuss strategies that will remove barriers to accessibility.
• Explain how to carry out an accessibility audit.

Accessibility: 2

Introduce the learning objectives of the session.

Explain: Accessibility is a term that is often used when talking about persons with disabilities. It is seen as being a good thing, but what exactly does it mean?

This session looks at what accessibility is; its benefits and how best we can make services, systems, the environment etc. user friendly for persons with disabilities through CBID.

Ask: Can someone explain what we mean by *accessibility?*
Acknowledge responses.

What is accessibility?

Accessibility is:
• the "ability to use" the functionality, and possible benefit, of some system or entity.

It describes the degree to which an object, service, system, or environment is accessible by as many people as possible.

Accessibility: 3

Explain:
• Accessibility can be defined as the "ability to use" the functionality, and possible benefit, of some system or entity.
• It is used to describe the degree to which an object, service, system, or environment is accessible by as many people as possible.

What is accessibility?

Focusses on five key areas:
• Environment
• Information & communication
• Attitudes and behaviour
• Systems
• Economic.

Accessibility: 4

Explain: Accessibility focuses on five key areas.

Summarise the areas shown on the slide, as follows:

Environment:
• **Man made environment -** This relates to physical access to buildings, external infrastructure (such as pavements, roads and footpaths). Although often seen only as an issue for persons with physical impairments, good environmental access benefits everyone.
• **Natural environment -** This relates to natural factors that can hinder accessibility for persons with disabilities such as rivers, mountains and other rough terrain and high winds.

• **Information & communication:** Including sign language interpretation, printed materials (such as large prints for partially sighted persons and braille for persons who are blind, Legal and Policy documents), good lighting, signage, websites and technology (Including phones, computers, computer software). The more accessible and diverse the communication, the more people will be able to use it and benefit from it.

• **Attitudes and behaviour:** This is one of the main elements of exclusion. Current traditional and cultural beliefs and practices lead to stigma and discrimination which include pity, hostility, fear

and being patronizing, with negative messages being reinforced at times by arts and media images and representation. A lack of encouraging openness to communication with persons with disabilities restrict the access of persons with disabilities to creating friendships and relationships, and accessing family and community activities.

- **Systems:** Social services such as, the education system, local government, legal system, health, and politics, all of which can control (promote) the level of opportunity for persons with disabilities to participate in society.

- **Economic**: Economic accessibility, or affordability relates to people's ability to pay for services without financial hardship, this is largely due to high unemployment levels among persons with disabilities. The close relationship of disability and poverty means that persons with disabilities frequently lack economic access to services they require for example access to loans from financial institutions.

Refer participants to the headings on the slide, and the more detailed descriptions of each area on the first page of the accessibility chapter in their Participant Manual.

Ask them to take a few minutes to look at the areas covered and discuss them with the person sitting next to them.

Emphasize that accessibility covers a wide range of issues within any environment, but people often only relate accessibility to physical access.

11.2   Accessibility within the UN CRPD (10 minutes)

	National / Regional / District	

Explain that the concept of accessibility is enshrined in the UN CRPD. Article 9 of the convention provides a guideline to review, develop, or advocate for policies to improve accessibility.

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Accessibility and the UN CRPD

Article 9 states:
[Countries] must ensure access for persons with disabilities to:
- *the physical environment*
- *transportation*
- *information and communications*
….. on an equal basis with others, to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

Accessibility: 5

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In summary, Article 9 states:
[Countries] must ensure access for persons with disabilities to:
- the physical environment
- transportation
- information and communications
…..*on an equal basis with others,* to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

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Accessibility and the UN CRPD

This must include the elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility and apply to:
- *a) buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing medical facilities and workplaces;*
- *b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.*

Accessibility: 6

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Continue: This must include the elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility and apply to:
a) buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing medical facilities and workplaces;
b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

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Explain: It thus becomes a legal requirement for those countries that have signed and ratified the convention that all persons with disabilities have access to services, the built environment and information.

11.3 Accessible by design (10 minutes)

	National / Regional / District	

Explain: Despite the UN CRPD and other supportive legislations and policies, ensuring all five areas (above) are as accessible as possible is not easy. It doesn't just happen. It takes initiation and sustenance of:
- awareness
- planning
- resources
- political will.

It should be approached, like all things, from an inclusive perspective – the inclusion of persons with disabilities is the best way to ensure that the environment is as accessible as possible.

The provision of services and infrastructure through CBID provides a great opportunity to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities from the start.

Accessibility is linked to *universal design*.
Ask: Who knows what we mean by *universal design?*
Acknowledge responses.

Universal design is the process of providing products and services that can be used by people with the widest possible range of abilities, operating within the widest possible range of situations.

It is about making things accessible to **all** people (whether they have a disability or not).

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Universal design

Universal design is:

- the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Accessibility: 7

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Explain: *Universal design* means:
- the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be accessible and usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Universal design does <u>not</u> exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where they are needed.

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11.4   Seven principles of universal design (10 minutes)

Seven principles of universal design

1. equitable use.
2. flexibility in use.
3. simple and intuitive to use.
4. perceptible information.
5. tolerance for error.
6. low physical effort.
7. size and space for approach and use.

Accessibility: 8

Explain: There are seven commonly recognized principles of universal design. These were originally developed in 1997 by a working group of architects, product designers, engineers and environmental design researchers in the University of North Carolina, USA. The designs promote access for all.

Summarise the principles, as below:

Principle 1: Equitable use
* Design that is useful and marketable to persons with diverse abilities.

Principle 2: Flexibility in use
Design that accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Principle 3: Simple and intuitive use
* Design that is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or concentration level.

Principle 4: Perceptible information
* Design that communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of varying conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Principle 5: Tolerance for error
* Design that minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
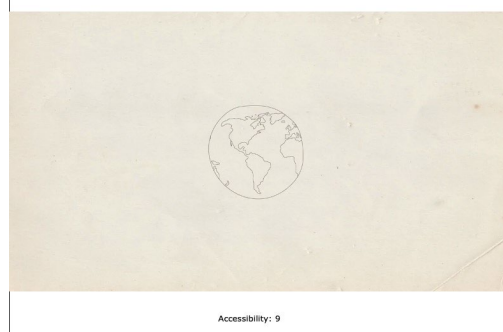
Principle 6: Low physical effort
* Design that can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Principle 7: Size and space for approach and use:
* Design that provides appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture or mobility.

Universal design

Accessibility: 9

Show the video on Universal design and/or direct participants to the example pictures in the Participant Manual.

Note: If you have participants with visual impairments, describe the visuals immediately after showing the film as below. These notes can also be used to reinforce the seven principles for all participants.

The film shows:

Principle 1: Equitable use: We see a child who can't reach a light switch, and then we see another image where a light switch is in easy reach of him.

Principle 2: Flexibility in use: We see a bus that has a high step to board it, making it inaccessible to a pregnant woman and an older man using a walking stick. A second bus has a flat entrance way that they can access easily.

Principle 3: Simple and intuitive use: We see a glass building where it is not clear where the doors are located, and then we see the same building where there are signs on the doors and leading to the doors to make it very clear to see the entrance.

Principle 4: Perceptible information: We see a family at an airport where the direction signs are only written in chinese. We then see the signs including pictures of buses and currency to make them accessible for people of any nationality.

Principle 5: Tolerance for error: We see a mistake made on a computer and the 'undo' button being used to reverse this.

Principle 6: Low physical effort: We see an elderly woman and a child struggling to open a door which has a round handle. We then see them easily open a door with a lever handle.

Principle 7: Size and space for approach and use: we see a wheelchair user struggle to get back into his car because there is no extra space next to the disabled parking bay. In the next scene space is added either side and he can easily access his car.

11.5   Universal design and reasonable accommodation (10 minutes)

	National / Regional / District	

Ask if anyone can give any examples of good universal design?
Acknowledge responses.

Describe examples of universal design products, including ramps, spoons, drinking straws, Velcro (an easy to use fabric fastening system), automatic doors, phones with text and voice message facilities, and audio books.

Explain that in an ideal world, universal design would enable access for persons with disabilities. But the world is far from ideal, and we have to start with what we've got in terms of accessibility. Hence the concept of *reasonable accommodation.*

Ask if anyone can explain what is meant by *reasonable accommodation.*
Acknowledge responses.

> **Reasonable accommodation**
>
> is defined as:
> *necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.*
>
> Accessibility: 10

Explain: Reasonable accommodation is defined as:
- *necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

In simple terms, this means making simple, affordable changes (to the environment, practice or behaviour) so that persons with disabilities have better access to services and facilities (as is their right) and can participate on a more equal and inclusive basis along with everyone else.

Refer participants to the detailed information in their Participant Manual.

Ask if anyone has an example of reasonable accommodation they are aware of?
Acknowledge responses.

11.6   Promoting an accessible environment (50 minutes)

	National / Regional / District	

Promoting an accessible environment

1. Information, awareness-raising and advocacy work.
2. Stakeholder training.
3. Sharing good practices.
4. Improving / implementing laws and technical standards.
5. Carrying out work to create examples of improved accessibility.
6. Carrying out local diagnosis.
7. Developing local plans to improve the accessibility of existing structures.

Accessibility: 11

Explain that Humanity and Inclusion (formerly Handicap International) has identified a set of components, with desired outcomes, which help achieve a better level of accessibility.

Briefly mention the seven components on the slide.

Trainer's notes: Designing and promoting an environment accessible to all

1. Information, awareness-raising and advocacy work - The different international, national and/or local partners, and in particular the decision-makers, institutions and organizations responsible for defining development strategies and implementing them in operational terms, recognize accessibility as a theme which must be taken into account in any project related to area planning. Organizations working in the field of disability have improved capacities in designing and managing advocacy projects on accessibility. There is a network of organizations of persons with disabilities who jointly organize awareness-raising and advocacy actions.

2. Stakeholder training - The national and/or local construction and area planning stakeholders are trained in accessibility techniques.

3. Sharing good practices - Local, national and international good practices on accessibility are identified, compiled and published so they can be reproduced as widely as possible.

4. Improving / implementing laws and technical standards - The various local and national legal texts (laws, decrees, technical standards) have been improved and a policy drawn up to ensure the effective application of these texts.

5. Carrying out work to create examples of improved accessibility - Work to improve accessibility is undertaken to create models which can be reproduced on a larger scale by local stakeholders.

6. Carrying out local diagnosis - The accessibility diagnosis (audit) is used to assess the barriers to mobility in a given space.

7. Developing local plans to improve the accessibility of existing structures - The local authorities, the disabled people's organizations and other representatives of civil society define and implement in a concerted manner, a local plan for work to improve accessibility in the existing environment.

Explain that participants will now carry out an audit of the building and its surroundings where the training is taking place. The activity only looks at the **physical** accessibility of the building and its immediate vicinity.

State that the audit must consider the requirements of people with a range of disabilities, not just those with mobility impairments or those who use a wheelchair.

Trainer's notes: Accessibility audit

The following activity gives participants the opportunity to consider the building where the training is taking place (and its surroundings) to see how accessible it is for persons with disabilities. This is not a formal test, but it does give participants the chance to look critically at their surroundings and discuss the good and bad points of the building in terms accessibility.

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Activity

With your colleague, explore the
building and its surroundings to note
good and bad points of access.
Use the list in the Participant Manual
to consider different areas and make
notes to discuss with the whole
group.

Accessibility: 12
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Show the activity slide.

Show the instructions throughout the activity.

Activity: Accessibility auditing	
Groups	**Divide** participants into pairs.
Instructions	**Ask** each pair to explore the building and its surroundings to note good and bad points of access. **Direct** participants to the table and information in their Participant Manual and ask them to make notes as they explore to discuss with the whole group.
Monitor	**Check** that pairs are working from the correct list of prompts from the Participant Manual. **Make sure** that other users of the building and surrounding facilities are not inconvenienced by the activity; participants should be mindful of the needs of others. **Give** time markers.
Time	**Allow** 30 minutes for the audit practice; 15 minutes for whole group feedback. (Total time: 45 minutes).
Feedback	**Gather** pairs together again as a whole group and **facilitate** a discussion of the good and bad points of the building, following the list of prompts. **Take** one observation from each pair in turn, so that all are included. **Refer** participants to the Accessibility chapter in the Participant Manual that gives information on accessibility standards. **Highlight** for example, the recommendation that ramps should have a gradient of 1 in 12. **Agree** who will give the feedback to the venue on ways they can improve their premises.

11.7   Networking for change (10 minutes)

	National / Regional / District	

Explain:

- Perhaps the most important way for us to improve accessibility is in our own attitudes, and those we encourage in everyone we meet. Persons with disabilities are disabled firstly by the attitudes of others and by encouraging communication with persons with disabilities, and encouraging others to address accessibility issues, we can make significant differences to all areas of accessibility.

CBID Networking for change

- How can we as CBID stakeholders network to achieve improved accessibility?

Accessibility: 13

Ask participants to speak to the person next to them for a few minutes to reflect on how we as CBID stakeholders can network to improve accessibility in the country.

Allow a few minutes.

Ask 2-3 pairs to give an example of something they have noted.

Summarise:

An accessible environment leads to:

- greater participation and social inclusion of persons with disabilities
- benefits for all - for example, older persons, people with children or carrying heavy loads, and people in a temporary situation of reduced mobility.

Close the session.