



# Inclusive social behaviour change

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# Inclusive social behaviour change (SBC)

This resource explains the concepts behind inclusive SBC, the benefits of mainstreaming inclusion and how you can effectively integrate inclusive SBC into your projects and programmes.

Within the **WISH2 WACA programme**, inclusive SBC is not just a technical add-on but a core strategy for reaching those who are most often left behind. This guidance is designed to help partners ensure that activities centred around reproductive health and rights speak to and involve people with different types of disabilities, with particular attention to women, girls, and young people who face intersecting barriers. By grounding SBC work in principles of accessibility and inclusion, partners can expand the reach and impact of their interventions, strengthen rights-based approaches, and build demand for services in ways that are **equitable and sustainable**. Using this resource consistently across WISH2 output 1 activities will help ensure that messaging, community engagement, and service uptake are not only effective but are also genuinely inclusive.

## What is inclusive SBC?

Social behaviour change (SBC) is an evidence-based approach that enables people to practise behaviours that positively influence their lives. Programmes often use social and behavioural science to understand why people make certain decisions, so we can use that understanding to encourage and support them to make healthy, inclusive choices.

At Sightsavers we use SBC to promote behaviours and social norms that help prevent neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), protect eye health, and enable people with disabilities, especially women and girls, to access and engage in healthcare, education, work, decision-making and society in a fair and equitable way.

**Inclusive SBC** means placing inclusion at the heart of SBC to help ensure that a diverse range of people, including people with disabilities, are able to practise behaviours that positively influence their lives.

**Inclusive SBC** helps us to consider the range and diversity of people who experience disability, such as those who experience both visible and hidden impairments. However, it also considers other identities based on a person's gender, age, ethnicity, displacement status, income level, whether they live in contexts of extreme poverty or humanitarian crisis, and other factors. This is called intersectionality.

## Women participating in a family planning session in Kaduna, Nigeria



A behaviour is anything a person does – it is an action – while social norms are the perceived informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community. Inclusive behaviours and social norms help protect the rights of people with disabilities, especially women and girls, and enable their participation in society.

### **The benefits of promoting positivity around disability – stigma reduction**

Disability stigma and discrimination can often mean people with disabilities are excluded or denied their basic rights in society.

Inclusive SBC improves our understanding of the language, negative stereotyping, and the disability and gender norms that exist in communities, workplaces, schools or healthcare settings. This helps us to design better activities and materials aimed at reducing the negative behaviours experienced by people with disabilities in all their diversity.

Some positive examples could include:

- Journalists producing positive stories and images around disability and mental health.
- Community leaders appointing youths with disabilities as leaders and promoting their voices within community conversations.

## The benefits of inclusive SBC

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We know that people with disabilities across the world, especially women and girls, continue to experience significant discrimination and exclusion based on stigma, negative stereotyping, and other societal and systemic barriers.

By mainstreaming inclusion in SBC, especially including people with disabilities, we can **strengthen our impact by reaching those society has left behind the furthest**. This particularly includes people who are marginalised by disability, gender, age, language and educational background by centring SBC activities, materials and messages around them.

Providing organisations and institutions with a deeper understanding of the complex societal and behavioural barriers faced by people who are furthest left behind is also a priority. This helps us to facilitate a diversity of ideas and enables more creative solutions that could help change their situation.

This inclusion can result in more impactful activities and outcomes for people who are furthest left behind, including people with disabilities in all their diversity and other marginalised groups. This can be achieved by:



**Using inclusive education, health services and products.**



**Making those services welcoming, disability friendly and gender sensitive.**



**Practising healthy behaviours - such as handwashing, family planning, attending eye health checks and wearing glasses.**



**Creating livelihood and political opportunities, including people with disabilities meaningfully participating within community structures and social forums.**



**Ensuring inclusive social norms and policies are in place to protect the rights of people with disabilities – especially women and girls – and enable their participation.**

## How should I integrate inclusion into my SBC approach?

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There are three main components that should be considered to successfully integrate inclusive SBC into your project or programme. These are shown in this visual diagram:



**The three main components of inclusive SBC**

## 1. Prioritise people with disabilities in all their diversity



Inclusive SBC prioritises people with disabilities in all their diversity and other marginalised groups. This helps you to consider the range and diversity of people who experience disability, including both visible and hidden impairments that people with disabilities may experience. However, it also considers other identities based on gender, age, ethnicity, income and other factors.

We prioritise people with disabilities and other marginalised groups when we:

**Choose behaviours and audiences** for our projects and programmes: we want to ensure a diverse range of people are able to practise behaviours that positively influence their lives. Therefore, we need to include people with disabilities and other marginalised groups in our behaviours and target audience.

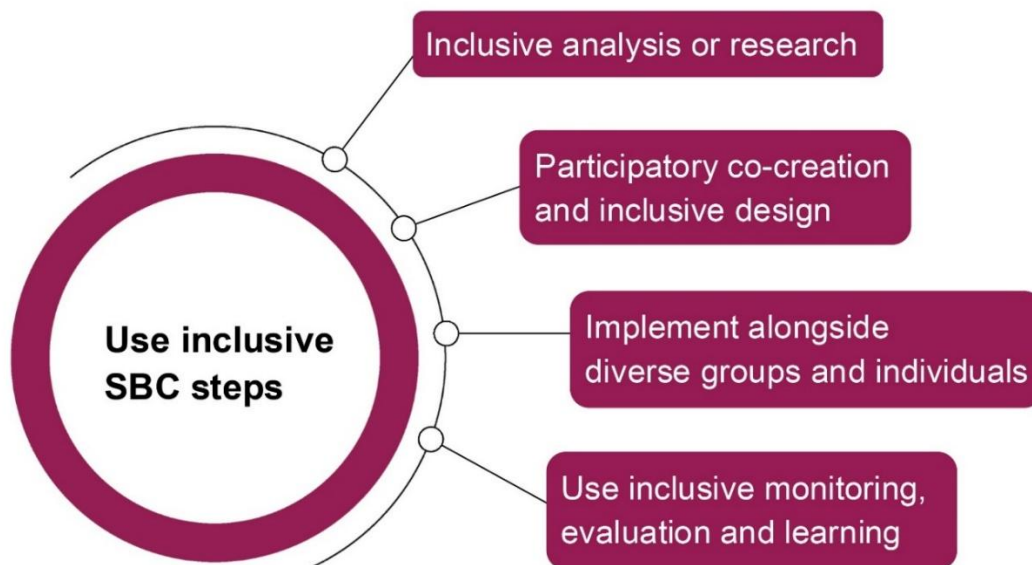
For example: When we look to prioritise mothers of children under five in a project, have we considered that some mothers might experience disability or that their children might have disabilities. When we are choosing behaviours, we can either mainstream mothers or children with disabilities in our priority behaviours and audiences or choose specific behaviours that support them directly.

**Understand and address the unique behavioural and social barriers faced by people with disabilities** in all their diversity, as well as other marginalised groups. What do those barriers sound and feel like, and what impact do they have on people with disabilities trying to carry out new behaviours?

For example: Young women with disabilities who are trying to access family planning services in a conservative area of Mali might experience barriers from society based on their age, their gender and their disability. Stereotypes, prejudice and societal norms might all combine together to prevent access.

**Influence people in communities and organisations** to encourage inclusive social norms that support people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Influencing social and cultural norms can allow for more inclusive practices that support people with disabilities.

## 2. Use inclusive SBC steps



An inclusive SBC approach requires the use of inclusive steps:

- **Inclusive analysis or research** approaches should include the voices and perspectives of people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. This will help to identify the unique behavioural and societal barriers they regularly face in everyday life.
- **Participatory co-creation and inclusive design** involves working with a diverse range of people, including people with disabilities, to help create solutions and a change in behaviours. This ensures that activities are more creative, accessible and relevant to all audiences.
- **Implementation alongside diverse groups**, such as people with disabilities and/or their representative organisations (organisations of people with disabilities - OPDs). This step should also consider people in positions of power and influence in communities and decision making.
- **Inclusive monitoring, evaluation and learning** requires a diverse range of participants in the monitoring of SBC implementation and its results. This includes continually adapting and learning, based on feedback from a diverse range of participants.



**Project participants participating in a monitoring and learning exercise**

### 3. Apply inclusive design principles



In order to design activities, materials and messages that are accessible and inclusive you need to apply the following inclusive design principles:

- Include a diverse audience in the design process so that you can capture a range of perspectives and lived experiences, help prevent unintended stereotypes or exclusion, and enhance trust in the final materials and activities.
- Consider cultural relevance and the local context in order to improve the message resonance, aid credibility and increase the effectiveness of the communication.



#### Illustrations of primary and secondary target audiences in Uganda

- Deliver diverse communication by offering multiple ways for a wide variety of people to receive and engage with information that's specially tailored to their needs, ability and

preferences. This should be complemented with consistent and clear messages across all platforms and touchpoints to help reinforce the messages.

- Ensure diverse and positive representation, including people with disabilities in all their diversity, to provide visibility, increase relevance and help to challenge negative stereotypes.
- Promote innovation and creativity by incorporating a diverse range of perspectives, which helps with the creation of fresh ideas and reducing negative assumptions.

These principles help ensure that design and communication is effective and impactful by building trust, participation and accessibility for disability in all its diversity.

## Inclusive SBC in action: Family planning in Nigeria

Sightsavers' inclusive family planning project in Kaduna, Nigeria, is a great example of inclusive SBC in action:

1. The project's priority behaviours directly target young people with disabilities, their families, communities, health care providers and decision-makers. The main priority behaviour is for young people with disabilities to use modern contraceptive methods through free and informed choice. However, there are also activities targeting community members, religious leaders and other community influencers.



**Women at a family planning session in Kaduna, Nigeria**

2. Formative research was conducted to aid understanding of the perspectives of young people with disabilities in all their diversity, but also to help understand the norms and

culture that surrounds them when they are making decisions. We know that their community, religion and family is very important.

What's more, people with disabilities have led on the design and pre-testing of accessible SBC activities and materials. They are also heavily involved in delivering engaging and accessible activities aimed at shifting social norms, reducing stigma and increasing uptake of family planning services - including access to modern contraceptives.

3. The activities are being delivered alongside other stakeholders who hold power and influence in communities - including husbands, wives and families, and policy-makers. The ultimate aim is to increase free and informed choice, with an increased uptake of family planning services.



**Men in Kaduna, Nigeria playing the La Famille Ideale boardgame, originally produced by MSI Reproductive Choices and adapted by Sightsavers for disability inclusion**

This approach is also being mainstreamed into the Health Promotion Unit in Kaduna, so that the messages, materials and approaches can be replicated and integrated into the state's approach to family planning.

## Support and advice

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If you'd like support and advice on how to integrate inclusion into your SBC approach you can contact us at [sbc@sightsavers.org.uk](mailto:sbc@sightsavers.org.uk) or if you have a specific query, you can also contact:

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We work with partners in low and middle income countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

[www.sightsavers.org](http://www.sightsavers.org)

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