

#40

Resilient and Inclusive Cities

Peer learning

2025

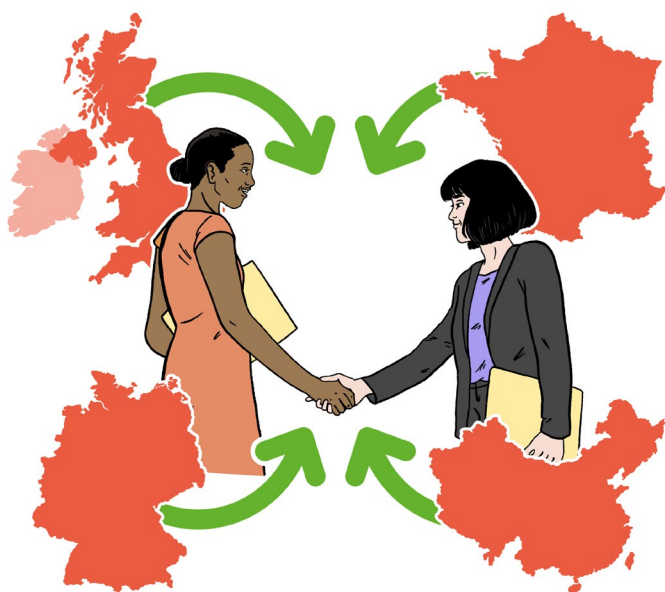


easy read

About this booklet



UCLG is a worldwide organisation. UCLG stands for **U**nited **C**ities and **L**ocal **G**overnments.



UCLG is made up of lots of different cities and local governments around the world working together to improve the way we live.



Peer learning is when a group of people meet, in person or online, to share information and talk about an important subject and find answers to shared problems.



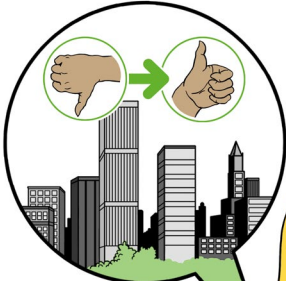
We organised peer learning for UCLG members to share information and talk about **resilient** and **inclusive** cities.



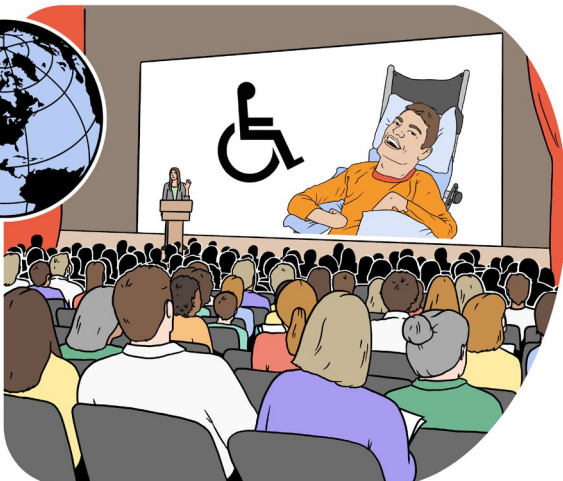
A **resilient** city means a city that can handle disasters and recover well after them. This could be things like keeping people safe in a flood and fixing any damage after.



An **inclusive** city is a city that works for everyone. This means people having equal opportunity to use services, have jobs and to be part of their community.

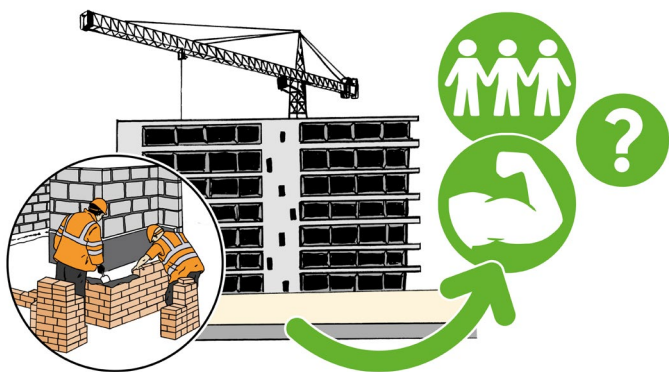


This booklet is about the work we have done with our peer learning to improve how cities are built, and to make sure they are resilient and inclusive.



This work was done in the lead up to the **2025 Global Disability Summit**. This is a world wide meeting to talk about disability inclusion.

Challenges for resilient and inclusive cities



As cities are built, and made bigger, there are challenges and opportunities for cities to become more resilient and inclusive.



By the year 2050, we believe most people in the world will live in cities.



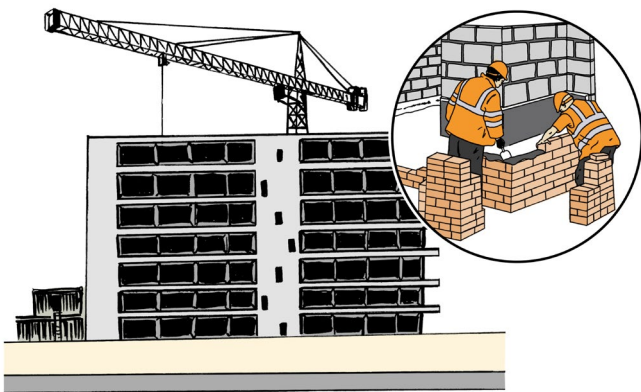
Today, 16% of people in the world have disabilities. This is around 1 in every 7 people.



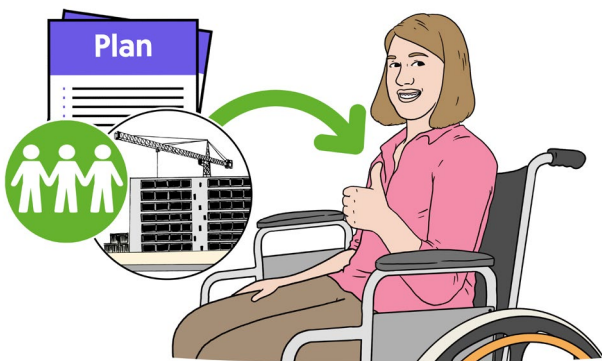
Over half of all people with disabilities live in cities. By 2050 over 1 billion people with disabilities will live in cities



Urban development has a big effect on the way people live and on their **environment**. The **environment** means the surroundings and nature where you live.



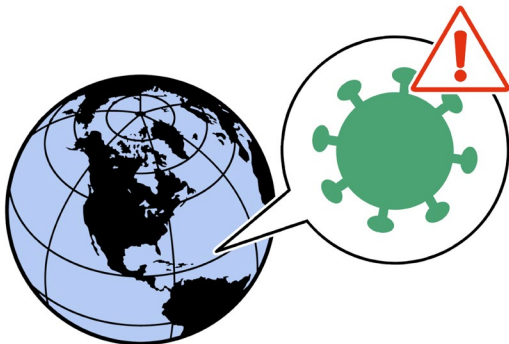
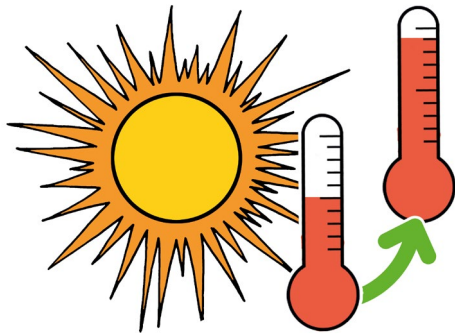
Urban development and planning means making changes or adding new things to a city.



It is important that urban planning is inclusive because it makes sure that everyone has access to services, opportunities, and can take part equally in the community.



But right now there are problems in cities that can make people with disabilities and older people **vulnerable** in disasters and emergencies. This means they are more likely to get hurt.



People with disabilities and older people are more affected by:

- **climate change**

This means how weather patterns change over time. Like some places becoming hotter than they used to in the past.

- **disasters**

This could be things like floods, earthquakes, and more.

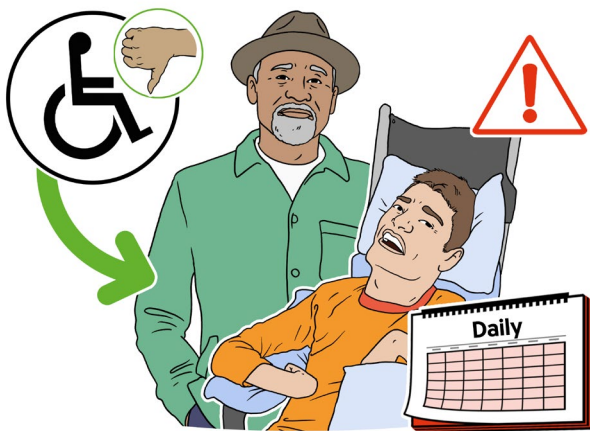
- **pandemics**

This is when an illness spreads across the world, like Covid 19.

This is because of things not being accessible, like the environment, how things work, or digital things like websites. These are called **inaccessible spaces**.



Examples of inaccessible spaces could be inaccessible streets, websites, housing, public buildings, healthcare, education, or **employment**. This means having a job.



Inaccessible spaces cause problems for older people and people with disabilities in their daily lives, and in emergencies and disasters.



The countries in the United Nations make agreements called **treaties**.



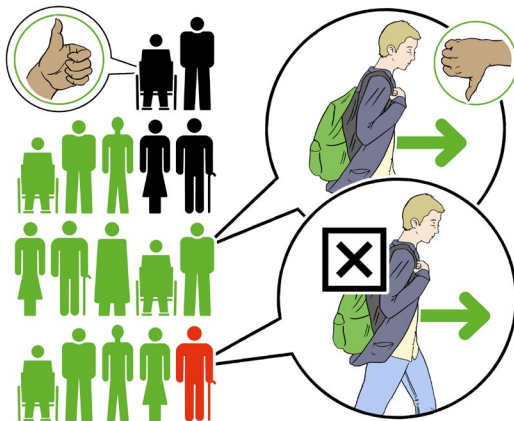
One of these treaties is called **The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)**. It says that accessibility and inclusive design are human rights.



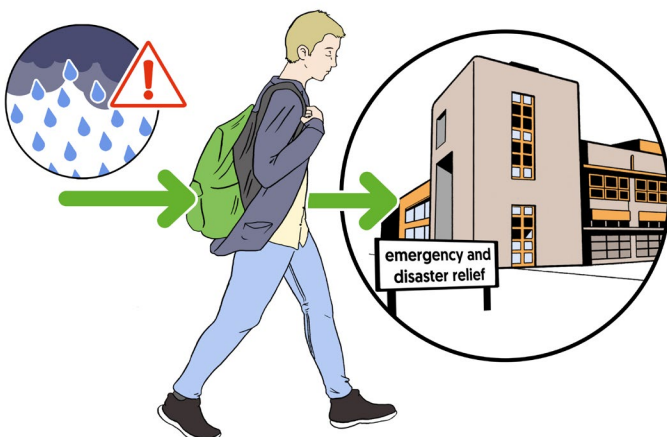
There are many treaties and guidelines that support accessibility and inclusive design. But often disability inclusion is overlooked.



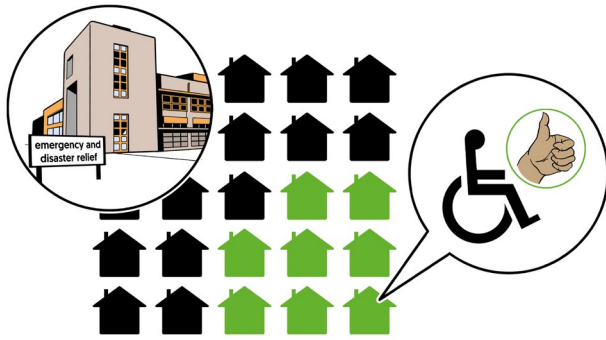
This increases the risks for people with disabilities to be left behind in disasters and emergencies.



Right now, most people with disabilities would have trouble **evacuating** and 6% would not be able to **evacuate** at all, this is around 1 in every 17 disabled people.



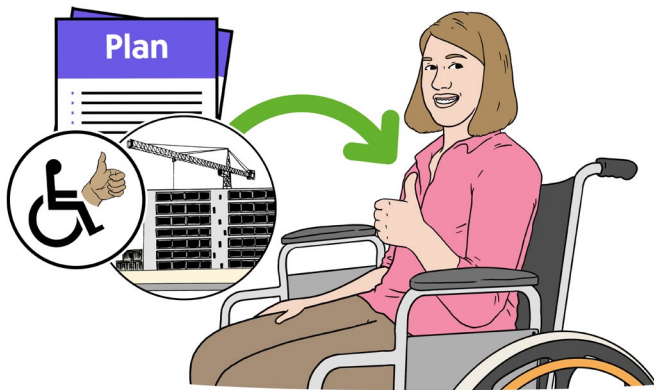
Evacuate means to leave a dangerous area and go to a safe place. This may mean going to a place called an emergency and disaster relief location.



Less than half of emergency and disaster relief locations are accessible.



Many people with disabilities say they do not know the local plans for disasters and emergencies and that they are not really a part of the planning or decision making.

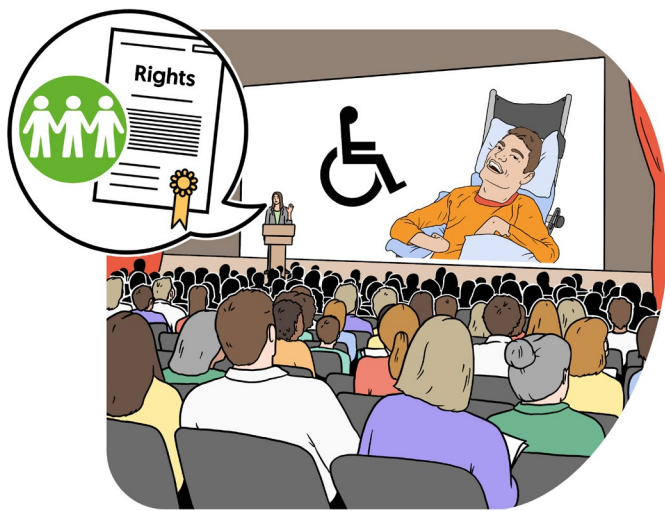


To build resilient and inclusive cities we need to make accessibility an important part of urban planning to make sure people with disabilities are not left behind in disasters and emergencies.

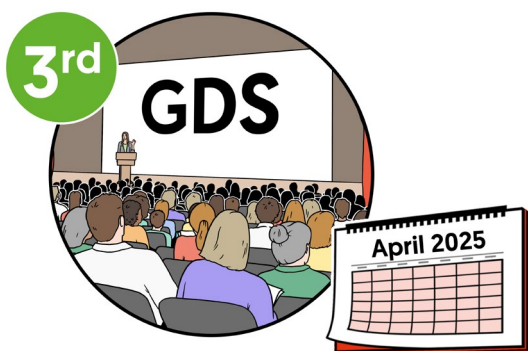
2025 Global Disability Summit



A **global summit** is a meeting of leaders and experts from around the world to talk about an important subject.



The 2025 **Global Disability Summit** [**GDS**] aimed to improve the way countries work to protect the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities.



This is the third GDS and was held in April 2025.

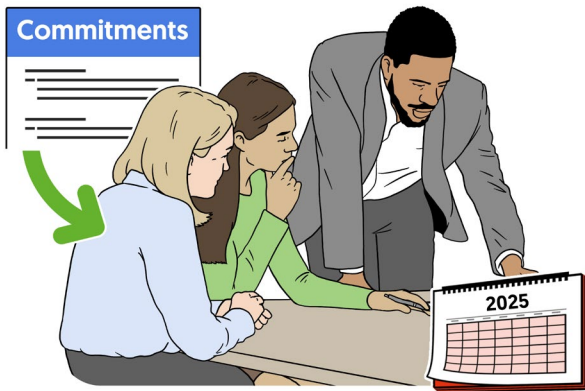


The GDS is a place where people and governments from around the world can share plans and goals for disability inclusion, called **Commitments**.



GDS Commitments are important to make sure disability rights are protected around the world.

Resilient and inclusive cities hub (RICH)



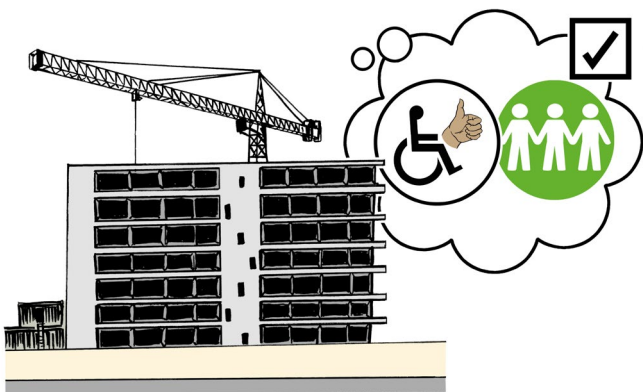
To support the GDS commitments, the **Resilient and Inclusive Cities Hub (RICH)** was started at the 2025 GDS.



RICH is a group of people and organisations around the world coming together to make sure cities are accessible and inclusive.

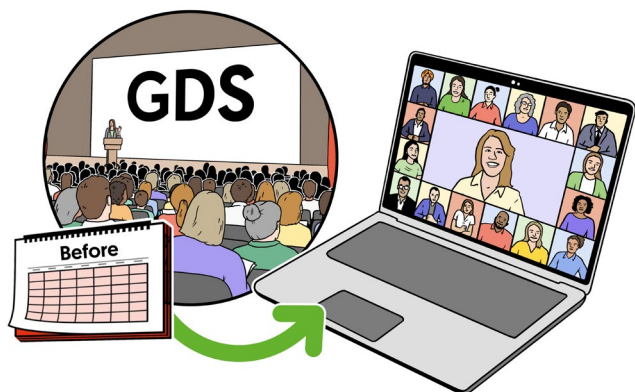


RICH will support cities with their disability inclusion work.

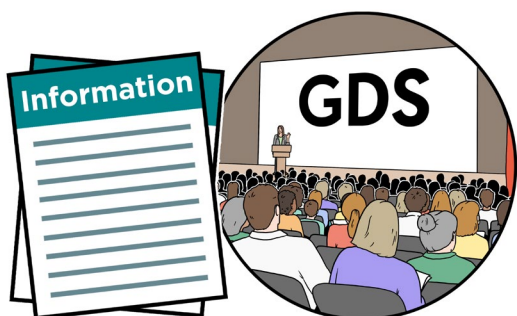


And they will make sure that accessibility and inclusion for everyone is thought about when making changes or adding new things to a city.

Peer learning

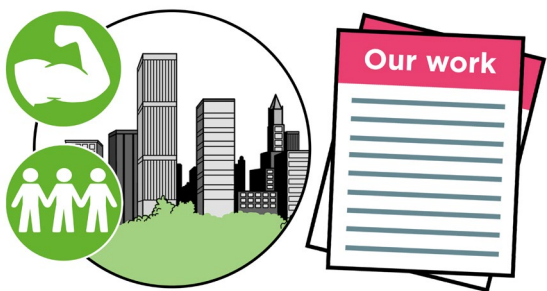


Before the Global Disability Summit (GDS), UCLG held online peer learning sessions on Resilient and Inclusive Cities.

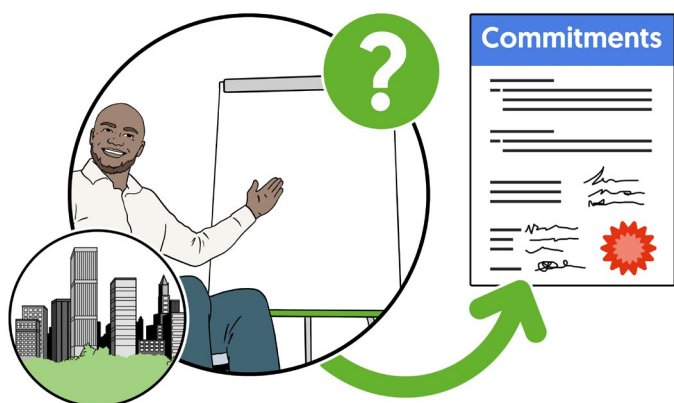


The goals of the peer learning sessions were:

- to share information on the upcoming GDS

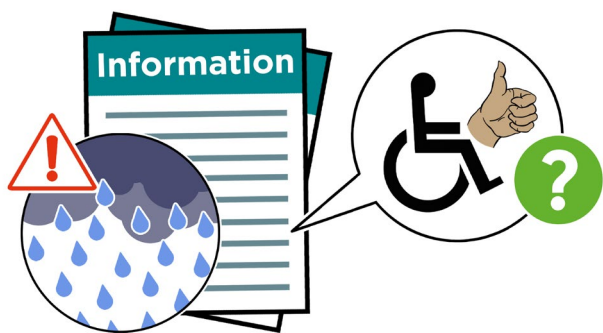


- to share ways that city governments are working to make their city resilient and disability inclusive.

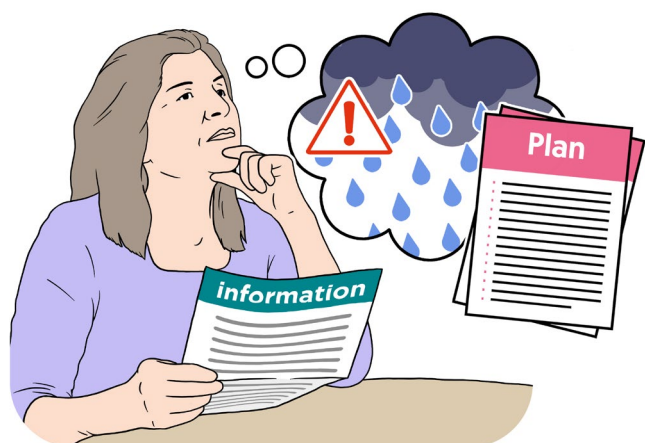


- to explore how cities can work to support the GDS commitments.

Peer learning - Information in emergencies



At the peer learning session accessible information in emergencies and disasters was talked about.



Access to life saving information is important before and during emergencies. This is so people can plan for emergencies, and get through them safely.



Early warning systems are ways a government warns people of an emergency. This can be things like everyone getting a text warning them, or a loud siren going off.



But right now many early warning systems are not accessible. For example a deaf person may not be able to hear a warning siren.



When warning systems are not accessible, it makes emergencies more dangerous for people with disabilities.

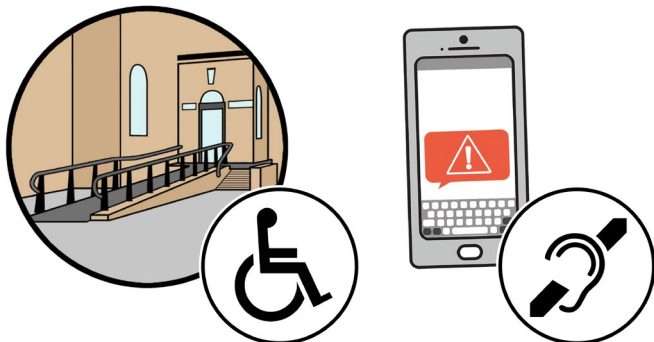


We decided that there are some important things to think of when making or improving emergency plans and information.

These are:

- To think about different needs

It is important to think of the different accessibility needs for different types of disabilities.



People with disabilities may need support to develop their own emergency and disaster plans.



- To let everyone have a say

Lots of different kinds of people can work together to make emergency plans and rules more inclusive.



It is important to let organisations that are led by people with disabilities (OPDs) have their say.



OPDs can help to point out gaps in plans and can give advice on how to be inclusive of people with disabilities and older people.

Peer learning - Challenges



In the peer learning session people from governments around the world shared their main challenges for making their cities inclusive and resilient.



The main challenges shared were:

- **Data and research**

Data is information that is collected about people or things. This could be things like the results of a survey.



It is hard to get data that includes disabilities, or that shows which data came from people with disabilities.



- **Mainstreaming accessibility**

This means having accessibility be thought about whenever new plans or rules are made.



This is hard because many people do not have a good knowledge of accessibility and inclusive design.



- **Money problems**

Not having enough money can limit how much disability inclusion work can be done.

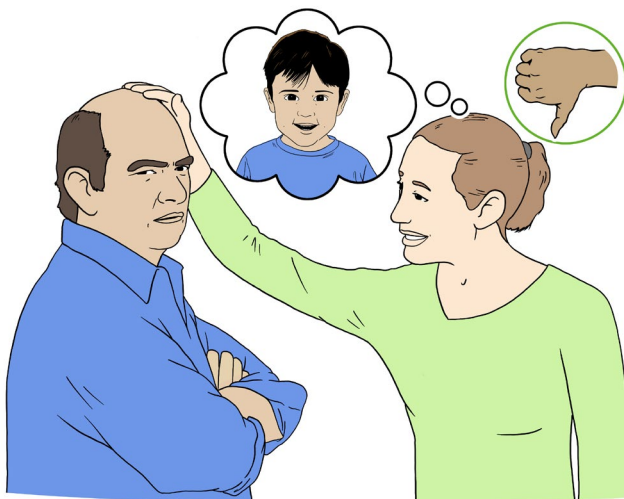


- **Low knowledge**

In some communities there is not enough knowledge about the rights of people with disabilities.

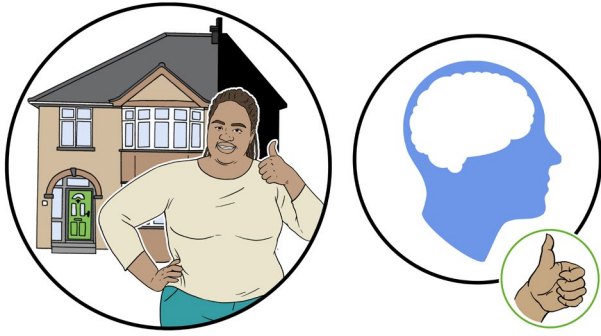


People who run cities, or work for them, do not always know how to plan and make accessible spaces. This can be physical places like buildings, or digital places like websites.

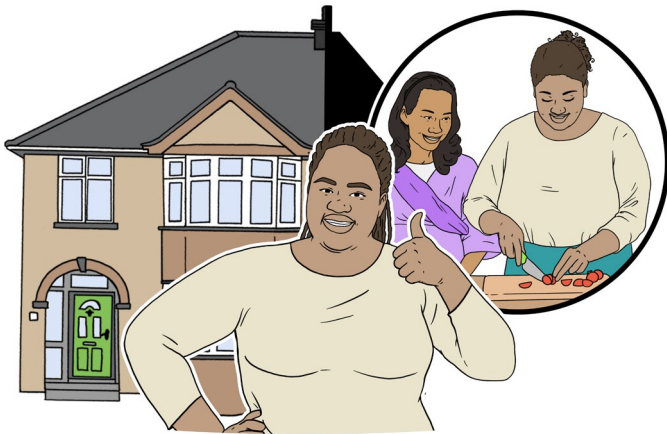


- **Attitudes and health**

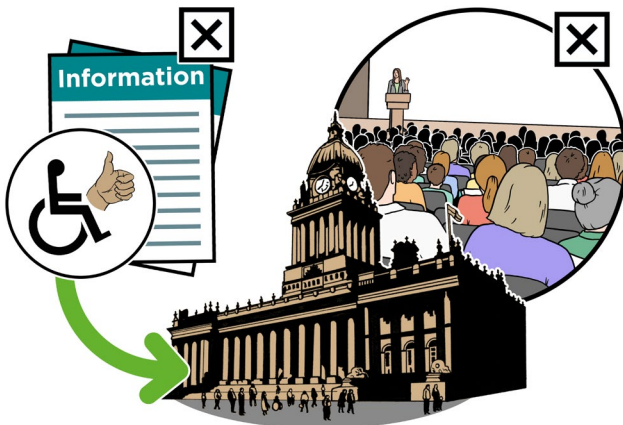
The way a community thinks about people with disabilities and the way they treat them can sometimes lead to disabled people being treated unfairly.



Cities need to stop this by supporting **independent living** and mental health support.



Independent living is when people with disabilities can decide where they live, who they live with, and what support they would like. This may mean living alone or with other people.

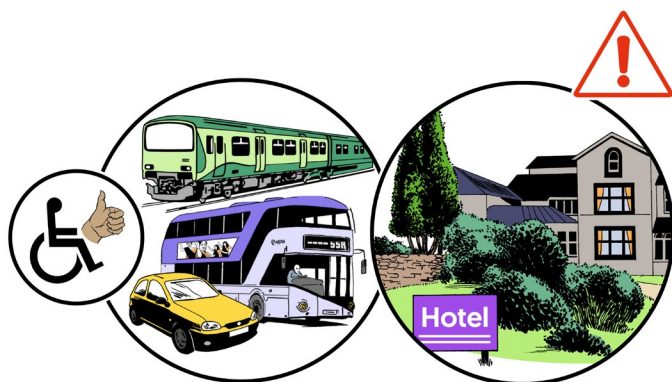


- **Accessible communication**

Without accessible ways to get information, many people with disabilities can not take part in city council meetings.



City governments should make sure that public information is given in different ways so that everyone can access them.



- **Cost to people with disabilities**

There is not enough accessible transport or places to stay.



Because of this many people with disabilities spend more time and money finding transport and support that works for them.

Peer learning - GDS commitments



In the peer learning session, city government workers talked about the GDS commitments. These are plans or goals for disability inclusion.

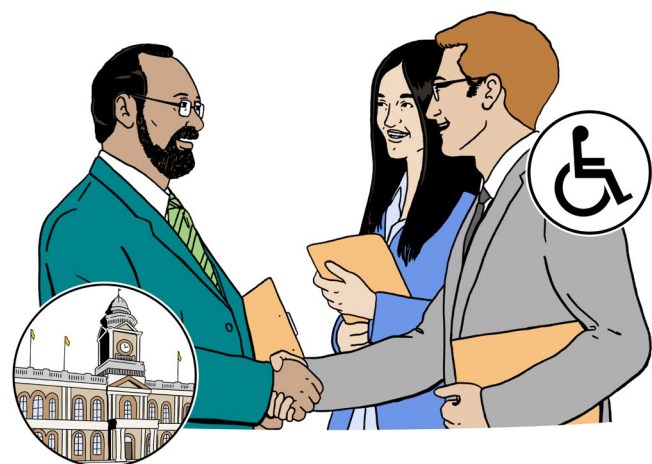
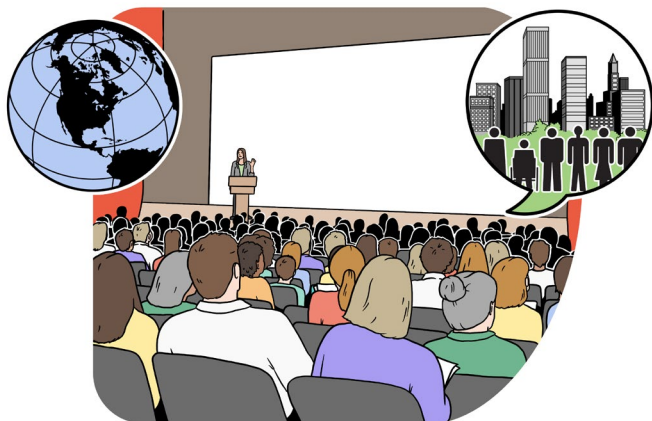
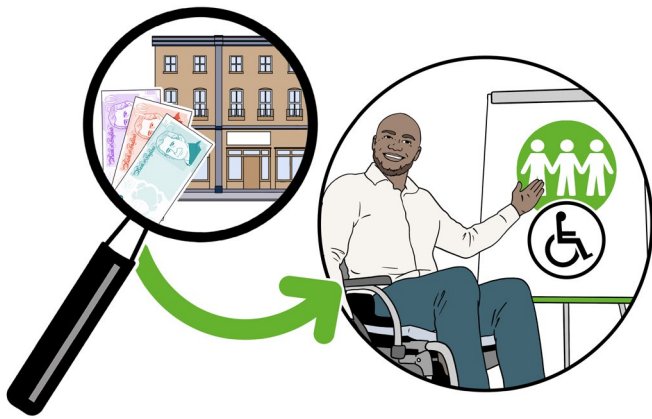


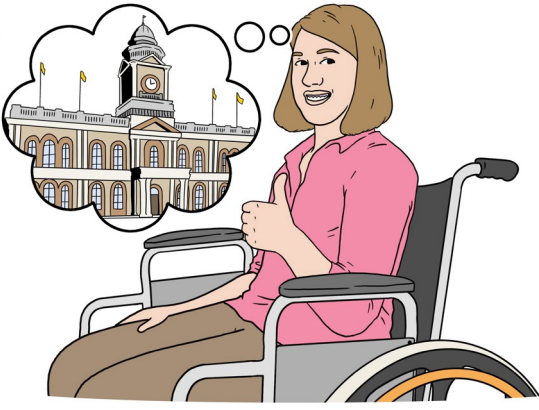
They talked about the challenges for making their cities more accessible, and how the GDS commitments could help cities be more inclusive of people with disabilities.



These are the reasons they believed it would be good for cities to make GDS commitments:

- Making GDS commitments shows that disability inclusion is important to city governments.
- It can help cities to find support for their work on disability inclusion from other people or organisations.
- It allows governments to have their local community's needs heard in global talks on inclusion.
- City governments work closely with the people in their community. So they are in a good position to work with local people with disabilities to improve disability inclusion in their city.





- When a city makes GDS commitments it shows their community that they want to improve disability inclusion. This can help the community to feel trust in their city's government.



- GDS Commitments are a way for cities to work with organisations led by people with disabilities (OPDs), and build **lasting partnerships**. This means they may work together many times in the future as well.



Next, the people at the peer learning session talked about what their GDS commitments could be.



These are some of their ideas:

- Work with OPDs to make sure disability inclusion and accessibility is thought about in all city planning.



- Try to involve the local community in all city planning, to hear their ideas and opinions.



- When the city plans how to spend their money they will make sure to include paying for accessible communication and accessibility at city meetings with the community.



- Do a research study on the accessibility of public spaces. Find out what works, and what is not accessible and needs to improve.

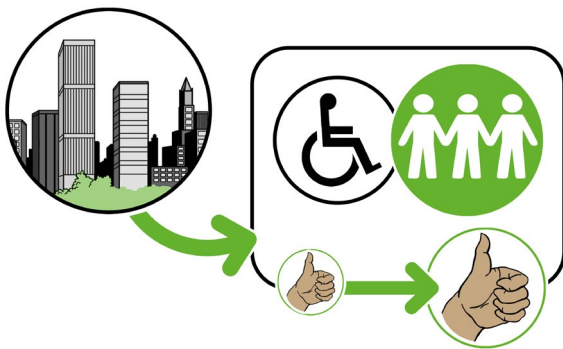


- Train city staff on disability inclusion and accessibility.

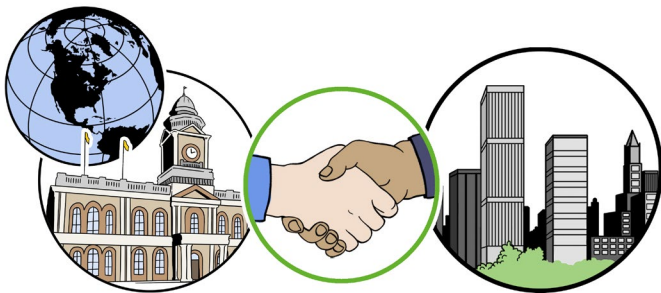


- Do research and talk to people with disabilities in the city to help make city rules and services better.

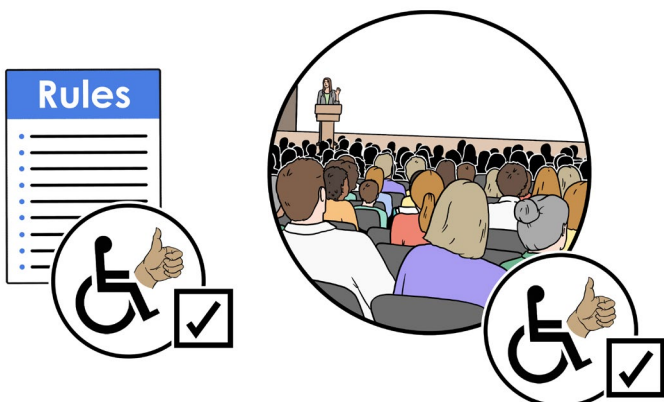
Way forward



Cities can make changes that can improve disability inclusion.



It is important for governments around the world to work with cities to find answers to the challenges each city has for disability inclusion.



It is important that cities make rules and activities accessible and make sure people with disabilities can take part and have their voices heard.



City governments should share their work and talk with other cities.



They should work with organisations led by people with disabilities (OPDs) to make inclusive rules and projects together.



By thinking about disability rights and listening to lived experiences, we can make cities that are inclusive and resilient, and work for their community now and in the future.



The results of the peer learning are our **key recommendations**, these are what we think need to happen to make cities resilient and inclusive.

Our key recommendations are:

1.

Make sure that city governments and local communities can take part in working towards disability inclusive and resilient cities.

Cities should work towards goals and agreements made by the countries in the United Nations to lower the risk of disasters, and to protect the rights of people with disabilities.

These agreements are called the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** and the **UN CRPD**.

2.

Support people with disabilities and OPDs to take part and have their voices heard when their city is making rules and services to make the city resilient and lower the risk of problems in disasters.



Sendai framework



UN CRPD



3.

Work towards the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

These are goals agreed to by the countries in the United Nations to help end inequality and **poverty** in the world.



Poverty is when people do not have enough money to be able to afford their basic needs, like food and housing.



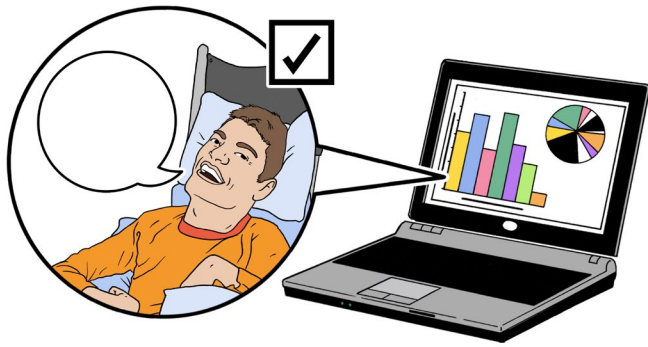
Cities can work towards the SDGs by working to make city streets and online spaces more accessible and disability inclusive.

4.

Work with governments and OPDs to make sure that city government workers know how to work on accessibility.



5.



When collecting data and doing research, make sure to include people with disabilities. Their answers can help to find and fix problems affecting disability inclusion.



This data is important when cities are looking to improve their plans and services for disasters and emergencies.

6.

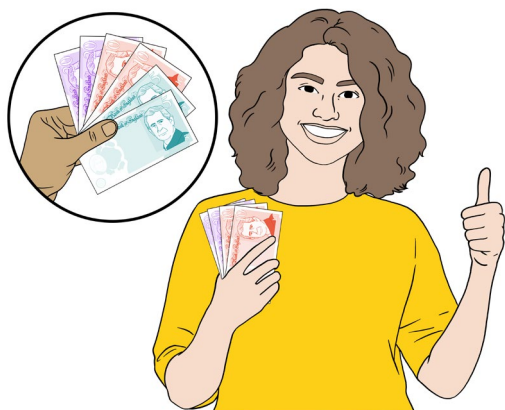
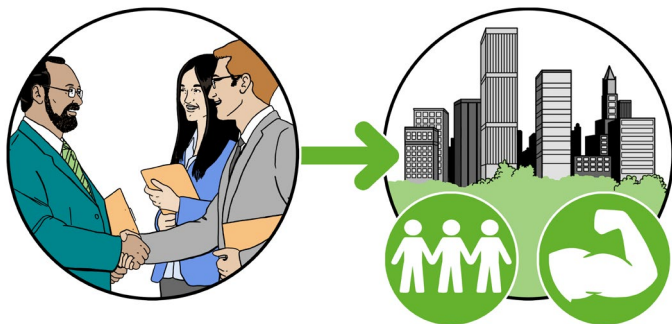


Have regular talks with people with disabilities and older people to make sure they are able to take part and have their say on how the city is changed or added to.

7.



Make accessible ways to communicate important information about emergencies to all people with disabilities.



8.

Work with different groups and **donors** to support disability inclusion and city resilience.

A **donor** is a person, group or organisation who gives money to help pay for something.



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