

I-ACT's Gender Equality, Disability, & Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Checklist

FOR SAFE, INCLUSIVE, &
ACCESSIBLE IN-PERSON
EVENTS

About I-ACT's GEDSI Checklist

The Initiative for Advancing Community Transformation (I-ACT) project created this checklist to promote Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) accessibility and inclusivity across its activities.

I-ACT is committed to mainstreaming GEDSI through our partner coalitions and organizations in the human rights sector by supporting efficient policy implementation, integrating GEDSI in social behavior change (SBC) campaigns with GEDSI inclusions, and accessible and inclusive activity rollout.

While this checklist is by no means exhaustive and mostly covers face-to-face events, we hope it serves as a helpful guide for our partners to build on and expand depending on the nature of their work.

This checklist was developed in January 2024. In case there are broken links to the external resources we shared, or if you have suggestions to help us improve this checklist, feel free to email us at humanrightsp@asiafoundation.org.

About I-ACT

I-ACT is a five-year project pioneering SBC with the Philippine human rights sector to increase public support for human rights.

Learn more by visiting www.humanrights.ph.

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Table of Contents

PRE-EVENT	04
<u>Sending Invitations & Scheduling</u>	
<u>Selecting a Venue</u>	
<u>Designing the Program</u>	
DURING THE EVENT	07
<u>Promoting Health and Safety</u>	
<u>Developing Program Materials</u>	
<u>Other Considerations</u>	
POST-EVENT	10
<u>Wrapping Up</u>	
RESOURCES	11
<u>Additional References</u>	
<u>Annex A: I-ACT's GEDSI Principles</u>	

SENDING INVITATIONS & SCHEDULING

- **Give ample time for RSVPs.** If possible, send out invites at least one month before the event so that the organizer and attendees have enough time to prepare. This will be helpful as well for primary caregivers so that they can make arrangements for their children or other family members in their households.

Remember to diversify channels for RSVPs and allow attendees to respond outside of email and online platforms.

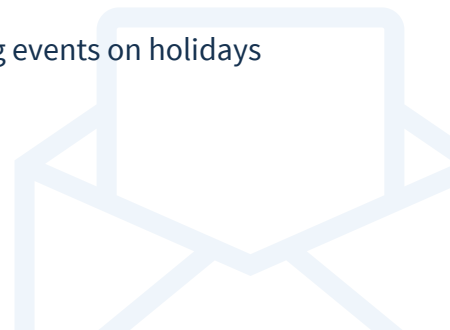
- **Encourage voicing of needs and plan ahead.** In your invites, and updates leading to the event, circulate and ensure all attendees fill out a pre-event assessment form to know their profiles and identify expectations. Give them ample opportunity to flag their accessibility needs, dietary restrictions, requested assistance, and care work requirements.

This reminder can also be included as an integral part in the program or agenda that you might circulate to your participants. By doing this, you can tailor the event to meet your attendees needs and design the program depending on their capacities and skill set.

Here are some examples in case there are persons with disabilities on your attendee list:

- *To accommodate persons with poor vision, print materials in braille.*
- *To accommodate Deaf persons or those hard of hearing, ensure the availability of sign language interpreters and captions accompanying visual materials.*

- **Respect rest days.** Refrain from scheduling events on holidays and weekends.



SELECTING A VENUE

- **Find safe, accessible, and inclusive physical spaces.** Give priority to venues that are registered and compliant with policies protecting women, children, persons with disability, and the environment.

Here are some considerations:

- *Ensure there are clear and accessible pathways toward building entrances and within the building itself. These include the availability of wheelchair ramps, well-lit and flat sidewalks, ample nearby parking spaces, etc.*
- *Check with the venue if they can designate lactation rooms, reflection rooms, washrooms for women (especially persons with disability or who are pregnant), and gender-neutral restrooms.*
- *Ensure that there are available working elevators with accessible buttons (e.g., accessible to wheelchair users) and ideally with braille.*
- *In your function halls, ensure that accessible seating is integrated in the room set-up. These include wheelchair-accessible tables. Do not separate accessible seating from the group.*



DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

- **Develop a program that is GEDSI-inclusive.** Design the activity with the stakeholders in mind (e.g., persons with disability, women, the elderly, children, indigenous groups). Consult with or seek guidance from them.
- **Ensure that the design of all program activities are accessible to and inclusive for all participants.** Keep this in mind when designing the format of your activities. Below are some examples:
 - *Distances between breakout session rooms and the main plenary venue should be kept to a minimum.*
 - *Avoid physically strenuous energizer exercises.*
- **Avoid offensive and discriminatory simulations.** Carefully design sessions without having to simulate harmful scenarios which could potentially trigger attendees.

For example, avoid disability simulations in which participants without disability will attempt to experience and show what it is like to have a disability. (e.g., using blindfolds or hearing aids). Instead, invite a panel of persons with disabilities to share or record videos of them sharing their experiences.
- **Set shared norms and principles at the start of the session.** This is essential to starting any activity. Ask your participants to co-create and agree with the norms and principles to promote inclusivity, accountability, and shared responsibility. Facilitators will be more confident in moderating the discussion and attendees will feel more comfortable participating because of the agreed-upon norms.

See Annex A for sample norms and principles.

DURING THE EVENT

PROMOTING HEALTH & SAFETY

- **Ensure that the health and safety of all attendees are a top priority.** Encourage attendees who exhibit flu-like symptoms to report to the event organizers. If they are unable to attend, set up alternative ways to attend (e.g., livestreaming).
- **Provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disability.** These include allowing persons with disability to be accompanied by their caregiver or service pets.
- **Be prepared for emergencies.** Develop a plan outlining protocols and procedures in case of emergencies. Request attendees to nominate emergency contacts during the event registration.

In your event guidelines, provide the contact and location information of nearby emergency services (e.g., hospitals, mental health service providers, and Violence Against Women desks).

You can also designate health and safety focal persons from your team and the venue's staff and provide their contact details to attendees.



DEVELOPING PROGRAM MATERIALS

- **Use inclusive language and visual representations in all program materials.** Avoid reinforcing stereotypes and stigmas in words and graphics. Be mindful of language tools and techniques used to discuss sensitive topics (e.g., mental health, substance abuse) and make the use of trigger warnings a habit.

- **Develop and design materials with accessibility in mind.** There are several online resources listing universal standards for accessible design. Below are some sample best practices:
 - *Use closed captioning for all audio-visual materials. If possible, and if apt for your attendees, provide options to translate to other languages.*
 - *Always add image descriptions (alt text) so that they can be heard using read aloud functions.*
 - *Use a sans serif font style (e.g., Arial), line spacing of at least 1.5, and left-aligned text to facilitate ease of reading.*
 - *Use larger font sizes for people who have low vision. Instead of all caps, use bold text to emphasize,*
 - *Use darker backgrounds accompanied with brighter text colors (e.g., dark blue background with white text) to reduce eye strain. There are color contrast checkers (e.g., [Coolors](#)) to help you calculate the contrast ratio of text applied to background colors.*
 - *Check color combinations to design for specific types of colorblindness using online tools (e.g., [Coblis](#)). You can also allow users to change colors on their soft copies.*
 - *There are several best practices for each software application which you can browse for reference. For example, for Google Slides and presentations, see the accessibility tips from the University of Michigan [here](#). They have more information about digital accessibility, among others, on their website [here](#).*

DURING THE EVENT

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Serve inclusive food.** Accommodate diverse and special diets and properly label dishes (e.g., halal, vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free). Provide exact number of meals with little buffer room to avoid food waste.

Research standards for specific dietary restrictions. For example, there are halal standards and guidelines on Muslim-friendly food establishments—some of which, you can check in the resources section of this document.

- **Be mindful of room design and acoustics.** Look for soundproof, fragrance-free, and sensory-friendly accommodations.

- **Properly identify attendees and know their preferences.** Provide name tags for participants where they can indicate their nicknames and pronouns.

For persons on the autism spectrum, check if they would like to be identified with color-coded markers to show communication preferences (e.g., green for those actively seeking communication, yellow for those who prefer to talk only to people they recognize, and red for those who prefer not to socialize).



POST-EVENT

WRAPPING UP

- **Evaluate the program and overall conduct of the event.** Ask the participants to provide feedback on the program, resource persons and facilitators, materials, venue, among others. Conduct an internal debriefing as well within the organizing team and with the service providers.
- **Promote GEDSI even in post-event materials.** Highlight the collective journey that is GEDSI mainstreaming in event minutes and correspondences. Solicit suggestions from attendees to help improve inclusion and accessibility in events.



RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Below are some helpful links for further reading:

- Need a reference for your GEDSI plan? Check out South Asia and Mongolia's [GEDSI Approach And Action Plan](#).
- Review the [Disability Language Guidelines](#) by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.
- Here are some general tips on [making materials accessible](#).
- The National Council on Disability Affairs regularly releases [guidelines and resolutions](#) on its website.
- Here's a good example on making facilities and technology accessible from the University of Michigan's [Disability Navigator's Page on Accessibility](#).
- Inviting persons on the autism spectrum? View the Autistic Self Advocacy Network's [Color Communication Badges](#).
- Read the World Blind Union and CBM Global Disability Inclusion's [Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action, Delivering on 7 Accessibility Commitments](#).
- Check out MIUSA's [Simple Rapid Assessment for Development Organizations](#).
- Inviting Muslim attendees? Browse the checklist in the [Philippine Department of Tourism's guidelines on Muslim-friendly accommodation and establishments](#)
- Serving halal food? Check [Halal Development Institute of the Philippines' halal standards](#)

ANNEX A: I-ACT'S GEDSI PRINCIPLES

Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)

CLA is I-ACT's cornerstone in GEDSI ways and means. Our strategies will always be guided by the following:

- Collaborating with the appropriate partners at the appropriate time;
- Learning about the problem by asking the correct questions and achieving key answers; and
- Adapting in response to challenges and maintaining relevancy throughout implementation.

Do No Harm

I-ACT, first and foremost, will recognize the potential risk of harm we may cause to the people we aim to empower. We will always hear from stakeholders about possible negative implications of our projects and activities and work with them in mainstreaming GEDSI.

Intersectional

I-ACT's program design will integrate an intersectional lens, recognizing that multiple facets of one's identity (such as their SOGIE, age, class, and ethnicity) may cause overlapping marginalization. Our approach will then be holistic in addressing these interactions.

Responsive

I-ACT will develop programs and activities that respond directly to the GEDSI needs of the community. This is executed through rigorous and evidence-based approaches that tackle specific issues and opportunities for GEDSI mainstreaming.

ANNEX A: I-ACT'S GEDSI PRINCIPLES

Accountable

Throughout the project, all decision-makers and implementers are accordingly identified and responsible for forwarding the aims of I-ACT in mainstreaming GEDSI. Accountability will always be imposed by recognizing the contributions of key roles within the organization but even more so, with our collaborators and local stakeholders.

Accessible

I-ACT is committed to recognizing the POUR principles of accessibility where everyone can perceive, operate, understand, and (where accessibility is) robust. I-ACT will be mindful of these principles across the project activities including its partner individuals, coalitions, and organizations.

