



RIGHTS, RESPECT, AND INCLUSION: ADVANCING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR) FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEAFBLINDNESS IN ASIA

A DISCUSSION FORUM IN LINE WITH THE FIRST DEAFBLIND INTERNATIONAL ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE | FEB. 28, 2025 | POKHARA, NEPAL

CALL TO ACTION

PREAMBLE

We, the participants of the Pre-Conference on Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for Individuals with Deafblindness, convened on February 28, 2025, as part of the First Deafblind International Asia Regional Conference, recognize that individuals with deafblindness have the right to access inclusive and accessible Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). However, systemic barriers, stigma, and lack of accessible information and services continue to deny them these fundamental rights.

We acknowledge that individuals with deafblindness are diverse, with unique communication needs and lived experiences. Many face multiple and intersecting barriers at home and in their communities, where parents and caregivers often lack awareness, accessible communication methods, and the skills to provide adequate support. The SRHR issues of individuals with deafblindness are frequently overlooked, limiting their ability to ensure bodily autonomy, express their needs and desires, and make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

We reaffirm the commitments made under:



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), particularly Articles 6, 7, 16, 22, 23, 24, and 25, ensuring access to education, health, and SRHR.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequality).



The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

The UNESCO International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, which advocates for comprehensive, evidence-based, and disability-inclusive education.



Despite these global commitments, individuals with deafblindness continue to face significant barriers in accessing CSE and SRHR services. We must act now to ensure their dignity, autonomy, and informed decision-making in matters of sexuality, health, and relationships.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

We call upon governments, policymakers, educators, healthcare providers, civil society organizations, and international agencies to take urgent action in the following areas:

POLICY & LEGAL REFORMS

1

- Ensure disability-inclusive CSE policies within national education frameworks, integrating accessible learning methods for individuals with deafblindness.
- Strengthen SRHR laws and policies to guarantee equitable access to health services, including reproductive health care, for individuals with deafblindness.
- Recognize the specific needs of individuals with deafblindness in education and health policies, ensuring the full implementation of UNCPRD and SDG commitments.

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION (CSE)

2

- Develop and implement CSE curricula tailored for individuals with deafblindness, including tactile graphics, accessible digital content, haptic and tactile communication strategies, and sign language adaptations.
- Provide individualized support to individuals with deafblindness to have access to CSE and SRHR.
- Train educators, caregivers, parents, and peer educators on inclusive teaching methodologies for CSE and effective communication techniques.
- Ensure that individuals with deafblindness have access to SRHR-related information through multiple accessible formats, including braille, large print, audio, and tactile sign language.
- Invest in developing tactile communications and materials in order to address the diverse communication requirements of individuals with deafblindness.

STRENGTHENING SRHR SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEAFBLINDNESS

3

- Ensure SRHR services, including contraception, maternal health, and sexual health counseling, are accessible, inclusive, and adapted for individuals with deafblindness.
- Develop disability-sensitive healthcare training programs to equip professionals with skills to communicate with and support individuals with deafblindness.
- Establish safe spaces and support networks where individuals with deafblindness can discuss SRHR issues freely and confidentially.
- Support parents and caregivers with knowledge, tools, and training to enable them to facilitate SRHR discussions and provide required support to the individuals with deafblindness.
- Develop community-based support services that provide individuals with deafblindness the necessary guidance, peer support, and mentorship on SRHR matters.

ADVOCACY & AWARENESS-RAISING

4

- Conduct awareness campaigns to challenge societal stigma and misconceptions regarding the sexuality of individuals with deafblindness.
- Engage youth-led organizations, CSOs, and OPDs (Organizations of Persons with Disabilities) to amplify the voices of individuals with deafblindness in SRHR advocacy.
- Promote international and regional cooperation to share best practices and strengthen advocacy efforts.
- Encourage the active participation of individuals with deafblindness in SRHR advocacy and awareness raising processes.

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5

- Establish mechanisms to track progress on disability-inclusive CSE and SRHR commitments at national and regional levels.
- Ensure meaningful participation of individuals with deafblindness in decision-making processes related to CSE and SRHR.
- Strengthen research and studies on the needs, challenges, and access to SRHR services for individuals with deafblindness to inform evidence-based policy and program development.
- Increase investment to develop and replicate innovative and accessible approaches to educate, capacitate, and empower individuals with deafblindness in enjoying their sexual and reproductive health and rights and living dignified lives.
- Develop participatory monitoring systems where individuals with deafblindness can contribute to assessing the effectiveness of SRHR programs and services.
- Ensure that governments and relevant stakeholders allocate sufficient funding for the implementation of disability-inclusive SRHR policies and programs.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

This Call to Action will serve as a guiding document for advocacy at subnational, national, and international levels.

The core concern of this Call to Action is also reflected in the Conference Resolution of Deafblind International's 1st Regional Conference in Asia, signed on March 3, 2025 in Pokhara, Nepal.

We urge governments, civil society organizations, educators, healthcare providers, and the international community to take immediate steps to ensure the full realization of SRHR and CSE for individuals with deafblindness.

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND – FULL INCLUSION, FULL ACCESS, FULL RIGHTS!

