DISABILITY INCLUSION COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

EQUAL VOICES, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES, LASTING CHANGE

PREPARED BY:

EAST ACTION ORGANIZATION (EAO) – ACTION FOR BETTERMENT

JIGJIGA, SOMALI REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA | ADDIS ABABA LIAISON OFFICE






Narrative Report

Headline:

Digital Inclusion Matters: Equal Voices Online through SAFE-MIT, Wheelchair Support, Training, Food and Cash Assistance for Inclusive Communities 2024–2025

Subtitle:

From 2024 to September 2025, East Action Organization (EAO) advanced disability inclusion, digital empowerment, humanitarian assistance, and dignity-based support for persons with disabilities and vulnerable households in Jigjiga, Degehabur City, and surrounding communities. Through the SAFE-MIT initiative, targeted food and cash assistance, wheelchair and mobility support, training, and inclusive community services, EAO strengthened equal participation, reduced barriers, and promoted inclusive communities where persons with disabilities are seen, heard, supported, and empowered.

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17. Executive Summary


Between 2024 and September 2025, East Action Organization (EAO) advanced disability inclusion, digital empowerment, food security, and dignity-based humanitarian assistance for vulnerable groups in Ethiopia’s Somali Regional State. Through SAFE-MIT, Targeted Food Assistance for Inclusive Communities, wheelchair and mobility support, disability inclusion training, and community-based support services, EAO reached vulnerable households and persons with disabilities in Jigjiga, Degehabur City, and surrounding communities.

EAO supported 420 individuals with food and cash assistance, trained 11 changemakers with disabilities in digital storytelling and online advocacy, and expanded disability-focused support to 120 persons with disabilities through wheelchair needs identification, mobility support, training, awareness, and related inclusive services. These efforts demonstrated the importance of combining humanitarian relief with disability inclusion, leadership, and practical accessibility support.

The initiatives also revealed urgent gaps, including limited access to wheelchairs, crutches, walking aids, adapted transport, accessible training venues, ramps, safe seating, and disability-friendly infrastructure. Donor investment in assistive devices, inclusive training, accessible transport, food assistance, cash support, and community-based services is critical to ensuring dignity, equality, and lasting participation for persons with disabilities.

2. Introduction

Somali Regional State continues to face drought, inflation, fragile livelihoods, displacement pressures, and limited access to basic services. These challenges affect vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities, elderly people, women, children, and households with limited income. Persons with disabilities often face additional barriers, including lack of wheelchairs, inaccessible public spaces, limited transport, stigma, low digital access, and reduced participation in training, livelihoods, education, and community decision-making.

In Jigjiga and Degehabur City, EAO observed that many persons with disabilities required practical support to participate safely and meaningfully in community programs. Some participants could not access training venues without being physically carried because of the absence of wheelchairs and adapted transport. Others faced difficulty attending food distribution points, community meetings, and awareness sessions due to mobility limitations.

EAO responded by embedding disability inclusion into its humanitarian and development programming. The organization combined food and cash assistance with digital inclusion, wheelchair and mobility needs identification, training, social protection support, referral assistance, and community awareness. This approach reflects EAO’s commitment to inclusion as a right, not charity.

3. Program Objectives

The main objectives of the program were to:

Support inclusive humanitarian relief through food assistance, cash support, and targeted services for vulnerable households.

Strengthen the voices of persons with disabilities through digital storytelling, online advocacy, and leadership training.

Promote dignity and accessibility by addressing barriers related to wheelchairs, mobility aids, adapted transport, and inclusive service delivery.

Provide disability inclusion training to improve awareness, confidence, participation, and community acceptance.

Support persons with disabilities in Jigjiga and Degehabur City through practical assistance, referral pathways, and community-based follow-up.

Strengthen EAO's institutional commitment to disability inclusion by involving persons with disabilities in staff roles, leadership, and program implementation.

4. Target Households and Population

The program reached and prioritized the following groups:

70 vulnerable households, representing approximately 420 individuals, supported through food and cash assistance.

11 persons with disabilities trained in digital storytelling and online advocacy in September 2025.

120 persons with disabilities reached through wheelchair and mobility needs assessment, disability inclusion training, awareness, community support, and related disability services in Jigjiga and Degehabur City.

Priority groups included disability-headed households, elderly-headed households, women, children, youth with disabilities, persons with physical impairments, and households facing food insecurity.

5. SAFE-MIT: Digital Inclusion and Advocacy

5.1 Digital Storytelling Training

On September 11, 2025, EAO trained 11 changemakers with disabilities in digital storytelling and online advocacy. The training helped participants understand how to use digital tools, personal stories, social media, and advocacy messages to raise awareness about disability inclusion, migration, protection, dignity, and equal participation.

The training created a safe space for persons with disabilities to share their experiences, build confidence, and communicate their needs directly. It also strengthened their ability to participate in public discussions and influence community attitudes.

5.2 Equal Voices Online Campaign

The Equal Voices Online campaign amplified the voices of persons with disabilities through social media, community platforms, and advocacy messages. The campaign promoted the idea that persons with disabilities are not passive beneficiaries but leaders, advocates, workers, community members, and changemakers.

Through this campaign, EAO encouraged communities to recognize the rights, capacities, and contributions of persons with disabilities. It also challenged stigma, exclusion, and silence around disability.

### 5.3 Migration, Inclusion and Transformation Awareness

SAFE-MIT promoted awareness on migration, inclusion, and transformation from a rights-based and disability-inclusive perspective. Persons with disabilities are often exposed to increased risk during displacement, migration, drought, conflict, and humanitarian crises. The initiative encouraged safer, more inclusive approaches that recognize the specific protection and mobility needs of persons with disabilities.

### 5.4 Wheelchair Needs and Accessibility Barriers

A recurring barrier identified during implementation was the lack of wheelchairs and accessible transport. Some participants had to be physically carried to training venues or community spaces because they had no wheelchair or safe mobility support. This created emotional, physical, and social barriers to participation.

The main accessibility gaps identified included:

Lack of wheelchairs for persons with severe mobility limitations.

Limited access to crutches, walkers, prosthetics, and adaptive seating.

Absence of adapted transport services to reach training venues and distribution points.

Lack of ramps, handrails, accessible toilets, and disability-friendly seating arrangements.

Limited awareness among families and communities on disability rights and inclusion.

## 6. Disability Inclusion Comprehensive Support

### 6.1 Wheelchair and Mobility Support in Jigjiga and Degehabur City

EAO expanded its disability inclusion work by identifying and supporting wheelchair and mobility needs in Jigjiga and Degehabur City. A total of 120 persons with disabilities were reached through needs identification, awareness, training, community support, and related disability inclusion services.

The wheelchair and mobility support component focused on persons with physical disabilities who faced difficulty accessing services, trainings, food distributions, schools, health facilities, and community meetings. EAO documented urgent needs for wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, prosthetic support, and adapted seating.

The program highlighted that a wheelchair is not only a mobility device. It is a pathway to education, training, dignity, social participation, employment, and independent living. For many persons with disabilities, access to a wheelchair means access to community life.

6.2 Disability Inclusion Training and Awareness

EAO provided disability inclusion training and awareness sessions to persons with disabilities, caregivers, youth, community volunteers, and local stakeholders. The training focused on:

Disability rights and dignity.

Reducing stigma and discrimination.

Inclusive communication and respectful language.

Community support for persons with disabilities.

Digital advocacy and storytelling.

Access to services and referral pathways.

Participation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian and development programs.

The training strengthened confidence among persons with disabilities and improved community understanding of inclusion. It also helped caregivers and volunteers understand how to support persons with disabilities respectfully and safely.

6.3 Referral, Protection and Community-Based Support

In addition to training and mobility needs identification, EAO supported persons with disabilities through referral and community-based follow-up. This included linking vulnerable individuals with available services, identifying protection risks, supporting participation in assistance programs, and encouraging families and communities to remove barriers.

EAO also promoted inclusion in food assistance, cash support, training participation, community dialogue, and leadership opportunities. These efforts helped ensure that persons with disabilities were not left behind in humanitarian response and development programming.

7. Targeted Food Assistance for Inclusive Communities

7.1 Food Package Distribution

EAO provided food assistance to vulnerable households, prioritizing households affected by poverty, disability, old age, food insecurity, and livelihood challenges. Each household received food support including:

25kg rice.

25kg wheat flour.

This support contributed to household food security, reduced immediate hunger, and helped families meet basic needs during difficult periods.

7.2 Cash Assistance

EAO also provided cash assistance of 1,500 ETB per household to help cover non-food essentials. The cash support helped households address urgent needs such as transport, hygiene items, household materials, medication, and other daily necessities.

Although the cash amount was limited due to funding constraints, it provided important flexible support for vulnerable households, especially those with persons with disabilities.

7.3 Inclusivity Measures in Distribution

EAO applied inclusive measures during food and cash assistance activities. These included:

Prioritizing disability-headed and elderly-headed households.

Ensuring persons with disabilities were identified during beneficiary selection.

Supporting mobility-limited participants at distribution points.

Using volunteers to assist elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

Promoting dignity, safety, and fairness during distribution.

Recognizing the specific needs of women, children, and persons with disabilities.

8. Humanitarian Response Plan Indicators

Households assisted: 35 households annually.

Total beneficiaries supported through food and cash assistance: 420 individuals over two years.

Persons with disabilities reached through disability inclusion, wheelchair needs identification, training, and related services: 120 individuals.

Persons with disabilities trained in digital storytelling and advocacy: 11 changemakers.

Inclusion focus: Gender, age, disability, vulnerability, and community participation.

Geographic focus: Jigjiga, Degehabur City, and surrounding communities in Somali Regional State.

9. Achievements and Outcomes

EAO achieved the following key results:

11 persons with disabilities trained as digital inclusion and online advocacy changemakers.

120 persons with disabilities reached through disability inclusion support, wheelchair needs identification, training, awareness, and community-based services in Jigjiga and Degehabur City.

420 individuals supported through food and cash assistance.

Disability voices amplified through the Equal Voices Online campaign.

Policy and community dialogue initiated on migration, disability, dignity, and accessibility.

Three persons with disabilities hired by EAO in long-term roles, including Disability Inclusion and Social Protection Officer, Community Mobilization Officer, and Gender and Special Needs Officer.

Mr. Ahmed Guray selected as EAO's focal person for disability inclusion, strengthening representation and leadership.

Improved organizational commitment to disability inclusion across humanitarian, youth, gender, migration, food security, and community development programs.

Increased community trust and visibility of disability inclusion as a core development priority.

10. Additional Impact – 2025 Update

In 2025, EAO strengthened its disability inclusion work by expanding internal staffing, community engagement, and advocacy. The organization moved beyond short-term assistance and began embedding disability inclusion into its institutional structure.

Key updates include:

Expansion of EAO's disability inclusion team.

Integration of SAFE-MIT into broader youth, migration, protection, and community empowerment programs.

Increased identification of wheelchair and mobility needs in Jigjiga and Degehabur City.

Strengthened engagement with persons with disabilities as advocates and leaders.

Improved donor visibility and community recognition of EAO's inclusion work.

11. Challenges and Lessons Learned

The program faced several challenges:

Cash support was below full humanitarian standards due to limited funds.

The number of wheelchairs and mobility aids available was not sufficient compared to the identified need.

Lack of adapted transport limited participation in training and distribution activities.

Some venues lacked ramps, handrails, accessible toilets, and safe seating.

Stigma and limited awareness continued to affect the participation of persons with disabilities.

Key lessons learned include:

Disability inclusion must be planned and budgeted from the beginning of every project.

Food and cash assistance should be combined with accessibility support for persons with disabilities.

Wheelchairs, crutches, transport, ramps, and assistive devices are essential tools for dignity and participation.

Persons with disabilities should be included not only as beneficiaries but also as staff, leaders, trainers, and decision-makers.

Community awareness is essential to reduce stigma and promote long-term inclusion.

12. Sustainability and Next Steps

EAO will continue strengthening disability inclusion through the following actions:

Institutional Inclusion: Continue employing and empowering persons with disabilities within EAO's staff structure and leadership.

Scaling Food Security: Expand food and cash assistance to reach more vulnerable households, including disability-headed households.

Assistive Devices and Mobility Support: Mobilize resources for wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, prosthetics, adaptive seating, and other mobility aids.

Accessible Transport: Support adapted vehicles, transport allowances, and safe transport solutions for persons with disabilities.

Infrastructure Adaptation: Promote ramps, handrails, accessible toilets, safe seating, and disability-friendly community facilities.

Digital Advocacy Hubs: Establish inclusive ICT spaces equipped with screen readers, captioning tools, accessible devices, and sign language support.

Training and Awareness: Continue disability inclusion training for communities, volunteers, caregivers, youth, and local stakeholders.

Policy and Partnerships: Work with disability-led organizations, local government, donors, and community structures to include disability accessibility standards in humanitarian and development programs.

13. Conclusion

EAO's disability inclusion work demonstrates that humanitarian relief, digital empowerment, food assistance, cash support, wheelchair access, training, and community-based services can work together to create meaningful change. The program shows that inclusion is not only about providing support; it is about removing barriers, creating access, strengthening confidence, and ensuring that persons with disabilities participate fully in community life.

By hiring persons with disabilities, appointing Mr. Ahmed Guray as disability inclusion focal person, supporting 120 persons with disabilities in Jigjiga and Degehabur City, training 11 digital changemakers, and assisting 420 individuals with food and cash support, EAO has shown that disability inclusion is sustainable empowerment, not charity.

## 14. Donor Call-to-Action

### How You Can Support

Your partnership can make immediate and lasting impact.

Provide Assistive Devices: Fund wheelchairs, crutches, walkers, prosthetics, adaptive seating, and other mobility aids.

Support Accessible Transport: Finance adapted vehicles, fuel support, or transport stipends so persons with disabilities can reach training venues, food distribution sites, health services, and community meetings.

Invest in Inclusive Infrastructure: Support ramps, accessible toilets, handrails, safe seating, and disability-friendly entryways at community centers and distribution points.

Expand Food and Cash Assistance: Help EAO scale support from 70 households to 100 or more households annually, with priority for disability-headed and vulnerable households.

Support Disability Inclusion Training: Fund training for persons with disabilities, caregivers, volunteers, youth leaders, and local stakeholders.

Back Digital Advocacy Hubs: Equip inclusive ICT centers with accessible technology so persons with disabilities can lead digital campaigns and participate in online learning.

Champion Policy Change: Support EAO's advocacy to integrate assistive devices, accessible transport, disability data, and inclusive standards into humanitarian and development frameworks.

With your support, materials, transport, mobility, food, cash assistance, and training will no longer be barriers. They will become pathways to dignity, participation, resilience, and lasting change.

## 15. Contact Information

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16. Evidence and Documentation

All photos attached to this report are submitted as supporting evidence for East Action Organization's disability inclusion activities, wheelchair and mobility needs identification, training sessions, food assistance, cash support, digital advocacy, community engagement, and related services provided to persons with disabilities in Jigjiga, Degehabur City, and other target communities.

The photos serve as visual documentation of EAO's field implementation, beneficiary participation, inclusive humanitarian response, community-based support, and continued commitment to equal voices, inclusive communities, and lasting change




Voices of Inclusion: Digital Storytelling
for Persons with Disabilities














Photo of our staff member with a disability serving as the Disability Inclusion & Social Protection Officer at East Action Organization. He holds two Bachelor's degrees.








UNITY VOTE




“EAO staff supporting persons with disabilities to access training venues — highlighting the urgent need for wheelchairs and inclusive mobility support in the Somali Regional State.”
















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Call to Action

1. Our voices matter, and they have the power to transform our lives.
2. Together, we can build a united, safe, and inspiring campaign for inclusion.
3. Join the movement: Voices of Inclusion, Safe and Inclusive Migration.
4. Thank you for being part of this journey of hope, dignity, and change.
5. Your voice can help prevent risks, protect lives, and promote safer communities.
6. Your participation helps create a community where everyone has equal opportunities.
7. Every person matters, and no one should be left behind.
8. Our strength lies in our unity, and our success depends on our togetherness.
9. We urgently call upon partners, donors, government stakeholders, and humanitarian actors to support persons with disabilities by providing wheelchairs, mobility aids, assistive devices, accessible transport, training materials, and other essential support to ensure inclusion, dignity, protection, and equal participation.