



# **Disability, Development and Inclusion in International Development Cooperation:**

**Analysis of Disability-Related Policies and Research at  
Selected Multilateral and Bilateral Institutions**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite international investments in development initiatives targeted at people with disabilities, investments by domestic governments in supports to people who have a disability, and commitments by governments to international and domestic human rights conventions, little progress has been made in the actual economic, political or social status of people with disabilities and their families.

In part this limited progress is due to the narrow way in which issues affecting people with disabilities have been defined. By focusing exclusively on the disability, policies, investments and legal frameworks have failed to address key sources of exclusion from community living, from education, etc. The lack of progress is compounded by the fact that disability policies and programmes tend to focus on accommodation alone and not on inclusion. The difference between accommodation and inclusion is that accommodation assumes that if you provide something (an adaptation, an aid or device) to an individual they will be able to participate in and benefit from existing systems (economic, social, political etc.). Inclusion, on the other hand, requires that we rethink existing systems in order to make them inclusive of everyone. This distinction is important to the analysis of development agency policies because it requires that agencies and governments do more than create a disability specific policy or focus area, to be effective in achieving the human rights and improved standard of living for people with disabilities, governments must develop strategies to ensure that they are reaching people who have a disability throughout their development programming.

To better understand how disability is being incorporated in development programming, Inclusion International recently conducted a limited scan of disability policies and research at selected donor agencies and international institutions to begin a process of evaluating how many institutions include disability into their development efforts and to what extent those policies ensure that development policy in key areas such as poverty reduction, education, health, etc. are inclusive of people with disabilities. The limited scan is part of an overall strategy to both review written policies and research and to analyze their implementation. To date, II has completed the first stage of this scan, by conducting a literature review of existing policies and research posted online. The second stage will expand the number of agencies and institutions evaluated as well as provide a deeper analysis of those already considered by drawing on our network to discuss their experiences with the implementation of such policies.

The following document is the culmination of the literature review of disability and development policies. This scan has three objectives: 1) to begin a process of indexing disability and development policies (whether formal or informal); 2) to begin a process which will consolidate a body of knowledge and analysis by various stakeholders about the impact of those policies where they exist; and, 3) to provide an overarching analysis of the current trends in disability and development policy as well as development agency capacity to institute inclusive policy.

Making the policies visible and easily accessible will enable disability organizations in both donor and recipient countries to use the policies, where they exist, to strengthen the quality and quantity of disability and development initiatives. Through Inclusion International's network of member societies, the networks of other disability organizations and our various partners, there

exists an enormous amount of knowledge about the impact (intended or otherwise) of existing development policy on the lives of people with disabilities. Inclusion International will provide a vehicle through which this knowledge can be shared and used to build more effective approaches to policy.

## 1.1 Building Strategies to Support Inclusive Policies and Programming

Recognizing that the exclusion faced by people with intellectual disabilities is the result of systemic barriers such as the design of policies and programmes, Inclusion International is developing strategies and resources for civil society, governments and international institutions to support efforts to develop inclusive policy and programming.

A first step in building the capacity of governments and international agencies to develop and implement inclusive approaches has been the adoption by Inclusion International of its own set of goals for the Millennium, which mirror the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The II MDGS indicate both how the inclusion of people with disabilities in each MDG will contribute substantively to the achievement of that goal (*to view the II MDGs and the background document produced by Inclusion International, please visit our website at [www.inclusion-international.org](http://www.inclusion-international.org)*).

## 2. THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

As is often the case, issues affecting some of the most marginalized people tend to be subsumed under a larger banner of ‘vulnerable groups’ and get lost or ignored in efforts to address the enormous scope of need. For people with intellectual disabilities and their families this is a constantly reoccurring trend, often resulting in extremely limited, if any, action aimed at realizing their human rights and promoting their inclusion into all aspects of community life.

The reality is that disability has an enormous impact:

### 2.1 Demographic Statistics

- 10-20% of the world’s population has a disability; or 600 million people<sup>1</sup>
- Of the 600 million people who have a disability, 43% live on less than \$1 per day, resulting in at least **1 in 5** of the world’s poorest of the poor having a disability (these estimates do not include the poverty of their families)
- 70% of people with disabilities live in a developing or transition economy
- 87% of the world’s disabled children live in a developing or transition economy
- Over 25% of any community in a country with an average family size of 6 people is directly affected by disability (even if only 5% of the population has a disability). Given the role of extended families, this means that *half the population will have a disabled person within their extended family*
- According to population growth forecasts for the next 30 years, the instance of disability will increase by over 120% in the South and over 40% in the North

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<sup>1</sup> E. Helander, Prejudice and Dignity: an introduction to community based rehabilitation, UNDP, 1992.

- Mortality for children with disabilities may be high as 80% in countries where under-five mortality as a whole has decreased to below 20%. In certain cases there seems to be a ‘weeding out’ process where the lives of infants with disabilities are so severely undervalued<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Social Statistics

- 98% of children with disabilities in developing countries **do not** receive an education. Boys with disabilities attend school more frequently than do girls<sup>3</sup>
- Only 2% of people with disabilities in developing countries have access to rehabilitation and appropriate basic services<sup>4</sup>
- A recent report for the ILO notes that approximately 80% of people with disabilities are unemployed<sup>5</sup>

## 3. DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT: SUMMARY OF INITIAL FINDINGS

Inclusion International is contributing to discussions about disability and development by engaging actors at all levels (from local to global) to participate in policy processes and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and their families in all development efforts. One of the research-based activities Inclusion International is in the process of leading is a global scan of existing disability and development policies to gain a broader understanding of how disability issues are being included in development policy and planning. This process began in April 2003 with a limited scan of policies and research on disability and development at selected bilateral and multilateral institutions<sup>6</sup> to gauge whether and how leading these institutions were incorporating disability into their international development cooperation.

The initial phase of this process required a review of disability policies at select international donor agencies and institutions to answer the questions: Does policy or research on disability exist at the institution and, if so, how is it being addressed (is it supporting inclusive policy and programming or is it promising to include disability in policy and programming?).

### 3.1 Outcomes of Literature Review

The outcomes of this ground-laying research was threefold: 1) where there is a commitment to social inclusion in general, people with disabilities are often mentioned as part of the list of vulnerable groups without detailed actions for addressing the particular needs of people with

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<sup>2</sup> World Disability Report, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> C. Lewis and S. Sygall (eds.), *Loud, Proud and Passionate; Including Women with Disabilities in International Development Programmes*, MIUSA 1997

<sup>4</sup> Leandro Despouy, 1993, *Human Rights and Disabled Persons* (Study Series 6), Centre for Human Rights Geneva and UN New York

<sup>5</sup> The International Labor Organization (ILO), “Time for Equality in Work”

<sup>6</sup> Agencies surveyed: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), STAKES’ review Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (GDCC), Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), Department for International Development (DfID), European Commission (EC), World Bank (WB), International Labour Organization (ILO)

disabilities and their families provided; 2) some international institutions have developed holistic policies on disability and inclusion demonstrating a real move towards recognizing disability and inclusion as a cross-cutting, human rights issue; and, 3) regardless of whether or not an institution has a specific policy on disability they have all conducted some form of research on disability and development of which the vast majority of this research discusses inclusion as a viable and rationale model (*see Disability, Development and Inclusion in International Development Cooperation*).

This stage of the scan has highlighted a series of current challenges that need to be address in order to strengthen the capacity of development agencies, governments and civil society organizations to strengthen and implement effective policies for people with disabilities.

#### **A. Imbalance between Investments in Rehabilitation and Inclusion**

Increasingly, organizations of people with disabilities and governments have recognized the need for a two-track approach; one which focuses on disability related needs and the other which focuses on inclusion (treating disability as a cross cutting issue in development programming). One good example of this approach is the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation policy that explicitly recognizes the need to support people with disabilities to be included in their communities and the need to include disability in all aspects of NORAD programming. Despite the conceptual understanding of the need for both strategies, there are currently very few examples of effective strategies for inclusion of disability in development programming.

There are a significant number of disability specific initiatives being funded by development agencies and governments however they are most often focused on rehabilitation or methods of accommodation. While these initiatives are important to support individuals, there is a lack of corresponding programming and investment in transforming systems to be inclusive.

In addition to the imbalance in investments, where there are good examples of inclusive practices being demonstrated governments and development agencies have no vehicles for translating those experiences into systemic approaches to disability and inclusion.

#### **B. Lack of Capacity to Develop and Implement Inclusive Approaches to Policy**

While many agencies have established clear policies on how disability should be included in all aspects of their programming, most lack the capacity and knowledge to implement this approach in practice. For example, understanding that children with disabilities should be included in programmes that support education is very different from knowing how to develop education investments that support that inclusion. There is an increasing need to develop a global capacity for shared knowledge and experience of how to include people with disabilities across policy issue areas.

#### **C. Need for Baseline Data and Results Based Monitoring Mechanisms**

While a positive change in the understanding of the human rights approach to disability is occurring in policy and programming more effort is needed to ensure that people with

disabilities, their families and DPOs are being included in consultation, financing implementation, and monitoring of policies. Governments have little or no statistical basis for developing strategies focused on inclusion. In addition, international initiatives tend not to establish monitoring mechanisms or develop indicators to gauge the impact on people with disabilities and their families. For example, among the current MDG targets there are no indicators that require a disaggregation of data to be able to evaluate the inclusion of and benefit for people with disabilities. Without reliable data on the status of people with disabilities it is not only difficult to draw attention to their needs but also impossible to determine whether strategies for inclusion are effective.

#### **D. Need for Strategies to Build the Capacity of Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs)**

To support the participation and input of DPOs and human rights organizations in general, a global capacity to engage and dialogue with local, national and international DPOs is essential. This is reinforced by the European Commission's (DG Development) Guidance Note on Disability and Development for EU Delegations and Services, which suggests that in order to assess and monitor the inclusion of disability in EU funded development efforts and how successful these efforts are requires a real emphasis on capacity building of disability organizations and communication between governments, disability organizations and other stakeholders.

International Disability Organizations are both the vehicle for the articulation of the voices of people with disabilities at the global level and a vehicle for capturing the vast knowledge of people who have a disability and their families about their own needs and what strategies are effective in improving their lives. With the scope and reach of these international organizations and their member societies, there is a need to invest in and tap the resources of these organizations.

In addition, disability organizations at the national and community level have often been the delivery agents for disability specific initiatives of development agencies. This role can often result in a change in the structure and mandate of those organizations. There is a need to shift the focus of investments in disability organizations from filling gaps in service delivery to supporting these organizations to work with governments to develop inclusive systemic approaches to policy.

#### **E. Lack of Global Capacity for Multilateral, Multi-stakeholder Collaboration & Dialogue**

A lack of global forums for knowledge exchange and learning severely limits our progress towards inclusion. Mechanisms are needed to enable cross-sectoral and multilateral discussions about disability, development and inclusive policies and programming. The World Bank is currently undergoing an international initiative aiming to bring multiple stakeholders around a common table and potentially form a consultative group or a Global Partnership for Disability and Development. As a knowledge sharing body, this is a good beginning to improve cross-sectoral and multilateral dialogue about disability, human rights and inclusion.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

The literature review has exposed a number of key challenges and opportunities to forward a global agenda of inclusive policy and programming in international development efforts. This preliminary analysis points to the need for multiple strategies at the global level to support donor and recipient countries, organizations of people with disabilities and other stakeholders in the development of effective disability and development policy and programming.

This paper and the review of disability and development policies which informed it, are not intended to be an evaluation of disability and development policy, there is a need for increased focus and critical attention to these policies. The next step is to develop a broad based analysis of how each donor agency is implementing the various commitments to disability and development that each have made. As a follow-up step to Inclusion International's initial analysis, II is drawing on its member societies, networks and other partners to develop a participatory analysis of existing policies from a "hands-on" perspective. Details on the methodology and process for participation in this exercise will be available soon on the Inclusion International website ([www.inclusion-international.org](http://www.inclusion-international.org)).