



**The Disability and
Inclusive Development Series**

Preview

Poverty and Disability

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Disability**



Poverty and Disability

Excerpts from a review by Professor Lawrence Haddad

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I have been a development researcher for the past 26 years. And yet not until 2009 did I think about disability and development all that much.

There is much familiar about disability. We know that most of the poor are excluded, marginalised, disempowered. So we can guess that the disabled – defined in this way – are more likely to be poor. But I did not know that so many of the poor were disabled. The book quotes some statistics from the World Bank to suggest that one in five of the poor are affected by disability. That is staggering.

It is doubly staggering that the international development community has, for the most part, ignored this issue. This is shocking because several of the papers in the volume note that when it is assessed, disability is a greater excluder of participation than gender and ethnicity.

Despite being one of the more visible manifestations of exclusion, stigma and lack of power, disability is hidden from sight, most of the time, in development research discourses. And yet its study offers the potential of so much learning for everyone working in development. This book has raised the profile of this set of issues in a context that sadly is new to many development researchers. I hope IDS can work with others in the disability and development fields, to form new alliances to co-construct new knowledge to deconstruct disability as we know it.

In short, this book deserves to be the benchmark by which all future books on disability and development are assessed.



Foreword

By Professor Nora Ellen Groce

Worldwide, poverty is the single most pressing issue for millions of people with disabilities. While the United Nations estimates that 10 per cent of the world's population lives with a disability, the World Bank estimates that one in five of the world's poorest people are disabled or live in a household with a disabled member. Not only are persons with disabilities therefore twice as likely to live in poverty, but they will often also be among the poorest of the poor. Go into any impoverished urban slum area or walk into any poor rural village and ask the people who live there 'who is the poorest person in your community' – you will more than likely be directed to the door of a disabled person.

Despite these clear links, we are only beginning to understand *how* poverty and disability interact. It is an area that continues to be inadequately understood and significantly under-researched. Without an accurate understanding of the links between poverty and disability, our capacity to know when, where and how to intervene to break these links will be significantly limited.

This is all the more problematic because research increasingly shows that poverty and disability are not inevitably linked. Most often, it is not people's disabilities that block their ability to support themselves and their families adequately. Rather, it is the stigma, discrimination and lack of knowledge or awareness about disability in the surrounding environment that limits their abilities and talents. Access to education and employment, an accessible physical environment and changes in legal, social and cultural norms to ensure social inclusion mean that persons with disabilities can be full, participating members of the surrounding community. Such findings are coming from a small but growing body of work on disability and poverty that has begun to broaden our understanding of what can be done – of what works.



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Until quite recently most of the research on disability and poverty has taken place 'in house' among disability researchers and advocates. Comparable research within the ranks of the international development community has been significantly less common. In fact, there has been a serious lack of extended conversations between the two groups that has hindered the inclusion of disability issues within larger theoretical constructs and major data collection efforts. However, the fact that so many disabled people in low- and middle-income countries face grinding poverty should come as little surprise to international development experts. The risk factors for living with a disability in much of the world today are virtually identical to those risk factors for living in poverty: social marginalisation, lack of access to education and employment, limited political clout and the restricted right to self-determination.

Things are beginning to change. Growing attention to disability has been fostered by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Coming into force in May 2008, the UNCRPD approaches disability, access and poverty from a rights perspective, broadly confirming that people with disabilities have the same claim to full participation in society as every other citizen. Certainly the UNCRPD has also brought a number of international development organisations and experts to the table, with global disability advocates making a clear and coherent case for why inclusion of disability is a human right.

A small but growing body of data on poverty and disability is now becoming both clear and compelling – more than 90 per cent of disabled children still do not attend school; the health and well-being of persons with disabilities are still significantly less than those of their non-disabled peers; and they have far less access to clean water, adequate housing, enough food, equal work or equal pay. Unless persons with disabilities are included in general international development programmes and policies, none of the Millennium Development Goals will be met, and no society will be able to significantly reduce poverty.



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For these reasons, UN agencies, governments and civil society are asking for facts and figures regarding disabled populations and requesting evidence of ‘best practices’ for effectively reaching disabled persons – through both disability-specific and general programmes. And disability issues must be set in a wider matrix of current theoretical thinking and practice in development economics, social justice, political science and human rights.

From the outset, international development efforts must be undertaken with full inclusion of and consultation with disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) – groups that are run for and by persons with disabilities. The slogan *Nothing About Us Without Us* is nowhere more important than in international development circles, where organisations that often work at national, regional and global levels need to ensure that groups representing disabled persons are part of the dialogue at all stages.

Because all of the issues cited above are raised in its chapters, this book represents a substantial contribution to the literature. It provides a valuable summary of much of what we know and, even more importantly, clearly identifies areas that need further exploration and pinpoints important ‘next steps’ that need to be addressed. The information, observations and thoughtful analysis of many of the authors raise as many questions as they answer and, in sum, provide an insightful overview of current work and a potential road map for future work.

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Summary

The purpose of this book

The purpose of this book is to promote change: to help move policy and practice towards real inclusion and participation of disabled people. This is the second book in the *Disability and Inclusive Development* series. In the introduction to our first book, *Disability and Inclusive Development* (Barron and Amerena, 2007), the editors expressed frustration with the pace of change, and the persisting absence of the meaningful participation of disabled people in development programmes. Since that publication we have seen the introduction and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This is an extraordinary treaty, which was motivated by, and to a great extent built through, the efforts and participation of people with disabilities. Full implementation will require a genuine paradigm shift of attitudes, policy and practice, and it is therefore accepted that the UNCRPD is not only ambitious but also to some extent aspirational.

This book is for you if you:

- are an international development policy maker, planner, implementer or practitioner
- work at international, national, regional or community level
- work for government, a civil society organisation or an international development organisation
- are a trainer in international development or the disability sector
- are a trainee or student in international development or the disability sector – you represent the new generation of practitioners and we hope the drawing together here of current thinking on inclusive development issues will be particularly relevant to you



Putting inclusive development into practice: the chapters

When we planned the text we aimed to inform, provoke debate and increase understanding of the range of interacting issues that operate in this complex area. More than this we wanted to provide practical ideas for improving inclusive practice in development without being prescriptive. The book includes authors who are people with disabilities and non-disabled people, women and men, academics and practitioners, and writers from Africa, Asia, South America, North America and Europe.

The chapters all discuss aspects of poverty and disability, and the contributors have interpreted the commissioning guidelines in ways that are meaningful for them and the sectors in which they operate. The result is ten chapters that are individual, with differing perspectives. There are, however, two common threads. The first is that whether the authors are discussing income, consumption, access to services, rights or social solidarity and inclusion, there is an underlying consensus that poverty is multifaceted, and that although access to resources is of enormous importance, the experience of poverty stretches far beyond being cash-poor. The second is that each chapter proposes, however discretely, that the goal of development is social justice. Although the terminology and the way social justice might be achieved for disabled people differ for each topic, there is a united call for empowerment as a right.

This book, then, links the aspirational to the practical; it taps into what motivates development and disability workers at all levels and offers ideas on how to begin to translate guiding principles into effective action. Not everyone will agree with what they find in this book, but we hope it provokes critical reflection and renewed urgency in each reader's contribution to including disabled people in development.

Poverty and Disability and Aid: International Development Co-operation

Roger C. Riddell

The theme of this chapter is poverty, disability and aid – or international development cooperation, as aid is frequently and more formally referred to today. Increasingly over the last decades, the purpose of providing aid has narrowed to focus ever more sharply on reducing the numbers of people living in extreme poverty. The purpose of this chapter is to look closely at the relationship between aid, poverty and disability, examining the ways in which aid has contributed to the reduction in poverty of people with disabilities living in extreme poverty or vulnerable to it, especially in poor, low-income countries.

The chapter is divided into three parts: an introduction, a section on aid and poverty, which provides an overview of the contribution that aid makes to poverty reduction, and a section that looks specifically at the issues of aid, poverty and disability. This discussion helps us to understand better which of the problems faced by poor people with disabilities are likely to be resolved by providing more and better aid, and which are likely to require us to address issues outside the more narrow relationship between aid, disability and poverty.

The last and final subsection sketches the way that the non-governmental (NGO) sector, including disabled people's organisations (DPOs), have approached disability and poverty issues, discusses the different ways they have used aid funds and summarises what we know – and still do not know – about the impact of their different activities.

The chapter ends with four sets of recommendations for improving the role, contribution and impact that aid could have in addressing the problems of poverty for those with disabilities.



Mainstreaming and Inclusive Development

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo

Simply prohibiting disability discrimination through legal redress is not sufficient to achieve equality in practice, as has been acknowledged by many development workers, governments and policy makers. Furthermore, implementing and enforcing policy that seeks to mainstream people with disabilities is not enough to tackle the multifaceted and deep-rooted patterns of inequality experienced by people with disabilities.

Policies that mainstream disability into generic, publicly funded development initiatives need to complement the rights of people with disabilities, as contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), with wider measures designed to promote and advance equality. This chapter explores some of the ways in which this mainstreaming can be advanced and explores approaches that should be considered in addressing the needs of people with disabilities.

Lifelong Learning in Education, Training and Skills Development

Bob Ransom

This chapter outlines the components of lifelong learning that people with disabilities in developing countries can use to escape from poverty and dependence. These are competencies and qualifications. After discussing the various types of skill that people need to make a livelihood, the author shows that they can be acquired in non-formal ways at home and in the community, and in formal technical and vocational education and training institutions. It analyses the advantages and disadvantages of different institutions in training people with disabilities for a livelihood.



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The author then sketches a number of success stories: a skills transfer programme in Cambodia, a programme in Ethiopia that trains very poor women with disabilities in business skills, a community-based vocational rehabilitation programme in Nigeria and on-the-job training in a large company in Brazil. The last section focuses in detail on the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. The author concludes by emphasising that people with disabilities can learn skills in numerous ways to reach their full potential, earn a livelihood and contribute to their family and community. The key to this is to ensure equality of opportunity at every level while making adaptations according to needs.

Community Approaches to Livelihood Development: Self-help Groups in India

Peter Coleridge and Balakrishna Venkatesh

Poverty is not simply the lack of income; it is a denial of the fundamental freedom and opportunity to develop as a human being. The elimination of poverty lies, in large measure, in the creation of a just society in which all citizens have equal opportunity to develop their full potential.

Global trends show both increasing support for and increasing obstacles to the creation of just societies. On the one hand international and national legislation outlaw discrimination and governments proclaim the values of equal opportunities for disabled people. On the other hand it is primarily economics, not human values, that drives much of global development and there is often little interest from those who have economic power in sharing it on an equitable basis. Poor people all over the world, from landless peasants in Brazil to *dalits* and women in India, have learned that if equality is to become a reality it is they who must take the initiative through mobilising themselves for both political and economic power.



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Disabled people are in the same position and have made the same discovery. In many parts of the world they have found that the most effective way to do this is through the formation of self-help groups (SHGs). SHGs open the doors of possibility to both individual and community development in the fullest sense.

This chapter takes the view that the development of livelihood goes well beyond the ability to earn an income. It involves creating opportunities to develop one's full potential as a human being and the ability to contribute to the development of one's community and society.

Microfinance for People with Disabilities

Enzo Martinelli and Roy Mersland

Microfinance is considered an important tool in reaching the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. Nevertheless, few people with disabilities have access to microfinance. .

The chapter, first, provides the reader with basic knowledge about microfinance and how this is relevant for people with disabilities. Second, the chapter outlines the main mechanisms leading to exclusion from services and identifies strategies to improve the current situation. The overall objective is to give the readers a background to understand better how microfinance can be used as a tool to reduce poverty for one of the most marginalised social groups and to provide important knowledge useful in advocacy and project efforts.

Aside from a few authors, the academic literature on microfinance and disability published in peer-reviewed journals is virtually non-existent. Thankfully, some reports do provide guidelines, conceptual frameworks, basic knowledge and, when available, some statistics. The authors therefore want to make the case for information dissemination and



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awareness creation among the microfinance providers as well as among disabled people's organisations, the academic community and disabled people in general.

Self-employment for People with Disabilities

Bev Moodie

The focus of this chapter is on self-employment for people with a disability, arguing that if they are properly encouraged and supported and given the right tools, people with a disability can and should become self-employed. The author starts by discussing the context in South Africa and then offers some case studies of people who have succeeded in becoming self-employed as well as some who have not. She then draws a number of lessons that can be learnt from the case studies and examines strategies by which people with a disability can become self-employed.

Starting by discussing Die Werkwinkel (The Workshop) in Knysna, Cape Province, the author outlines ways in which people can transform themselves from being workers to contractors and independent businesspeople. She then considers different kinds of skills and resources that they need to succeed. In her conclusion she points to the overall benefits that self-employment can bring to the community and to people with disability themselves, including increased earnings, greater self-confidence and self-esteem, wider social relationships and inclusion in the community.



Waged Employment

Javed Abidi

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines 'waged employment' as 'regular paid employment'. The objective of this chapter is to understand why disabled people don't find employment, as in a regular job, and also, perhaps, what can be done to change that situation.

When the author was asked to write this chapter, he cautioned the editors that being a disabled activist; the narrative would have to cover his own story and that of his country. He believes that, by and large, the issues are the same across the world: disability, prejudice, stereotypes, self-created barriers, insensitivity, poor leadership, lack of unity amongst disabled people themselves and many others. If the issues are the same, then the remedy will also be similar. It requires adopting a rights-based approach and then sticking to it. The basics have to be questioned. The status quo has to be changed.

Social Protection and Disability

Daniel Mont

This chapter asks whether people with disabilities are afforded the same protection against poverty as non-disabled people. Starting with a discussion of the concept of social protection, the author outlines different kinds of social protection measures. The author goes on to discuss when and how social protection measures should specifically target people with disabilities, and then discusses how general social protection programmes can be made more inclusive. As an example, the author discusses how disability can be incorporated into conditional cash-transfer programmes. The chapter concludes with a set of policy recommendations.



Disability and Poverty in Post-conflict Countries

Maria Kett

There is an ever-expanding literature on the causes of conflict – of which poverty, and its resulting inequalities, are seen to be primary factors. There is also a growing awareness that poor environments – and poor people – are disproportionately affected by such disasters and emergencies. Furthermore, research now indicates that poverty alone is not the only factor in determining how people fare in times of conflict.

Violent conflict results in a loss of resources, infrastructure and essential skills and personnel. Social structures and networks are destroyed and there is an increased lack of security. Health systems are also destroyed, and take years to regenerate. The effects of conflict and ensuing poverty are reflected in health indicators such as maternal and child mortality rates, nutrition, infectious diseases (including HIV/AIDS) and mental health problems. Mitigation of conflict encompasses protection from violence, reduction in weapons circulation, empowerment of people through economic securities and universal access to basic education and healthcare.

Conflict and emergencies therefore drain resources and perpetuate poverty, yet poverty itself is a driving force for war and conflict, and often develops due to scarce or valuable resources or unequal opportunities (perceived or real).



Inclusive Development: Paving the Way as We Walk

Rosangela Berman-Bieler

This chapter proposes that disability is an experience that we all undergo at one time or another during the course of our life. After discussing the relationship between disability, poverty and exclusion, the author presents an inclusive concept of development. At the core of this is an understanding of the relationship between impairment and the social and economic environment that is responsible for disability. The first section describes how demographic changes impact on the issue.

This is followed by a sketch of the steps needed to initiate inclusive design and to implement policies and changes to the built environment. The chapter goes on to describe the research and data collection needed for improving the quality of life of people with disability, after which the author explains why planning for all is possible and how an inclusive approach to disability will enhance the lives and security of all. This is followed by articulation of the author's vision that an inclusive approach to disability will enhance general human experience and reduce poverty.

About Leonard Cheshire Disability Books

Leonard Cheshire Disability works with over 250 disability and development organisations in 54 countries worldwide. Our joint programmes support people with disabilities and raise disability within political and development agendas. All our work is underpinned by our research centre run jointly with University College London.

Poverty and Disability is the second book in the Disability and Inclusive Development series, which provides a critical overview of the inclusive development field and clear ideas on how to transform principles and goals into action.

Poverty and Disability is available from:

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