

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and disability inclusion

MDG I – ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

DISABILITY AND POVERTY

Lorraine Wapling

Disabled people share the same problems as the non-disabled poor but they experience poverty more intensely. Attitudinal and structural barriers limit their opportunities to escape poverty. A strong cycle of disability and chronic poverty exists – those who are poor are more likely to become disabled and those who are disabled are much more likely to be poor (see diagram over page).

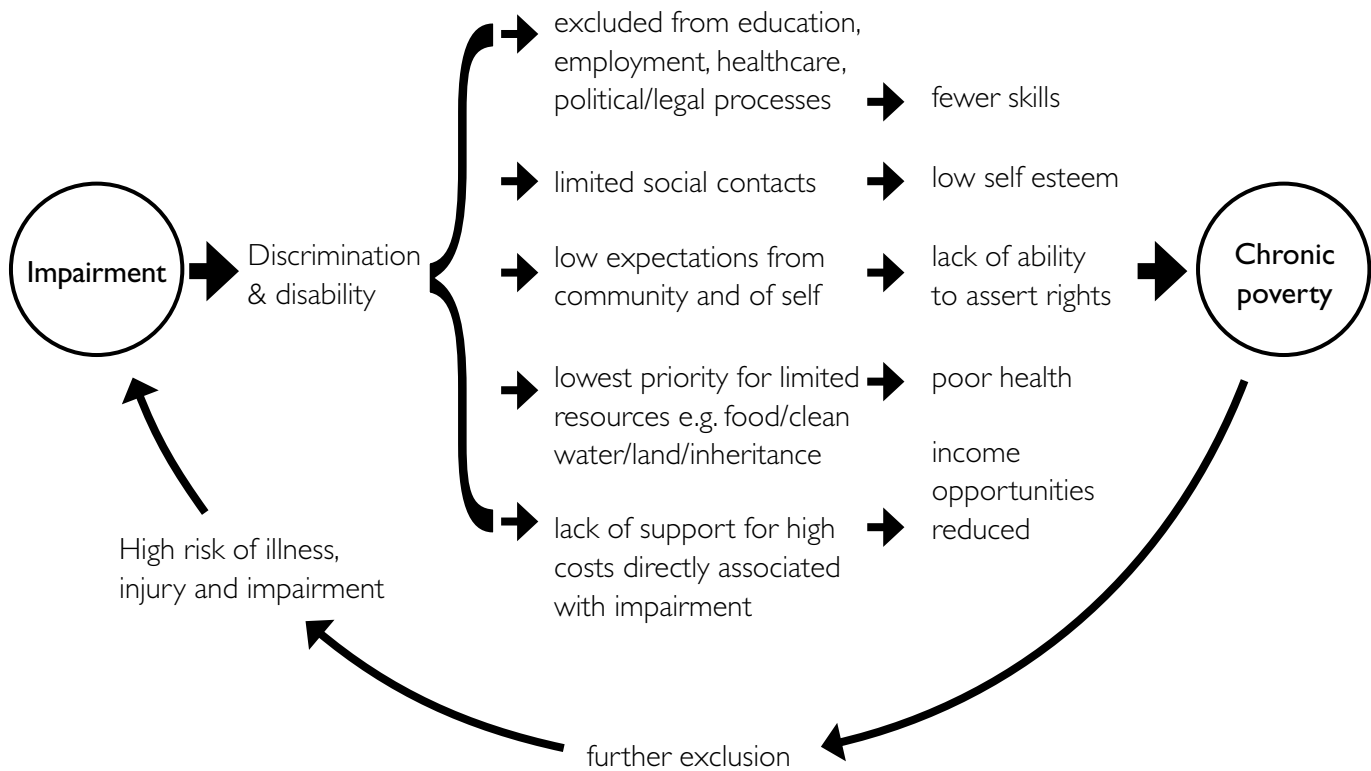
THE CYCLE OF DISABILITY AND CHRONIC POVERTY

Poverty is both a cause and consequence of disability. They reinforce each other, contributing to increased vulnerability and exclusion. The majority of disabled children and adults find their chances of going to school, working for a living, enjoying family life, and

participating as equals in social life are severely restricted – not because of their impairments but because of the attitudes and discrimination faced from communities. Disabled people who are denied formal education then find it hard to obtain jobs, access public services or participate in community development, thus segregating them further from society and making them dependent on the support of others.

But the cycle goes beyond disabled people. Their families often don't have sufficient income to meet basic needs. Inadequate shelter, unhygienic living conditions, lack of sanitation and unclean drinking water combined with poor access to health facilities are all leading causes of disability. This means communities which have high levels of chronic poverty are also likely to have high rates of disability.

DISABILITY/CHRONIC POVERTY CYCLE*



* based on R.Yeo: Chronic Poverty and Disability Cycles

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INTRODUCTION TO LIVELIHOODS AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

Sue Coe

The term 'livelihoods' can be understood as the means of earning a living or accessing a source of income. In terms of poverty reduction strategies for the global south, livelihoods relates to a range of activities and services to promote self reliance, including formal and non-formal education, vocational training, waged employment, self employment, microfinance, agriculture programmes and social protection schemes.

Many international development programmes focus directly on these issues. However, very few manage to adequately address the rights and needs of disabled people, who account for one in five of the world's poor.

Disabled people in developing countries face a multitude of barriers to securing decent livelihoods. Globally, the International Labour Organisation estimates that some 386 million people of working age are people with impairments, with unemployment among disabled people as high as 80 per cent in many countries. This is primarily due to social discrimination and stigma, a pervasive negative view that disabled people are either unable to work, or cannot be accommodated in the workplace.

Much current work focuses on establishing disabled people in their own businesses. But not all disabled people need or want to be self-employed. Discrimination by employers against disabled people is massive and strong advocacy is needed to address the widespread prejudices.

Of those disabled people who do want to be self-employed, they must fulfil specific criteria set by microfinance services. Often community prejudice and discrimination prevent disabled people accessing capital. Advocacy with the private sector and microfinance institutions should be a key part of initiatives to promote the inclusion of disabled people in livelihoods work. A study in Uganda found that disabled entrepreneurs are an untapped market opportunity and that disabled people are often misinformed about microfinance institution terms and services and don't know how to gain these opportunities (Bwire, Musaka, Mersland 2009).

A further important issue is not to confuse the role of a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) as a group advocating for their rights and an income-generating entity. Being both confuses the mandate of a DPO, and can lead to conflict of interest in leadership elections.

Much current work focuses on access to capital and financial services – yet this is only one element in the process of creating a successful business. Access to credit needs to be complemented with other services – such as skills development, access to technology, markets development, especially when working with people in socially marginalised groups including disabled people.

The documents below are grouped into key categories and have been produced in a partnership between Handicap International and Sightsavers. The full list can be found on:-

http://asksource.ids.ac.uk/cf/keylists/keylist2.cfm?topic=dis&search=QL_L10

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Social assistance and disability in developing countries
– Anna Marriott and Kate Gooding, Sightsavers International, July 2007

http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/publications/cct/Social_Assistance_Disability_Gooding_Marriott.pdf

ACCESS TO WAGED EMPLOYMENT

Assisting disabled persons in finding employment: a practical guide, Asian and Pacific Edition – 2nd ed
Robert Heron and Barbara Murray, International Labour Organisation, 2003

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_bk_pb_92_en.pdf

Employability: a resource guide on disability for employers in Asia and the Pacific – Debra Perry, International Labour Organisation, 2007

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_bk_pb_98_en.pdf

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Training for success: a guide for peer trainers – International Labour Organisation Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 2008

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_132677.pdf

SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Good practices for the economic inclusion of people with disabilities in developing countries: funding mechanisms for self-employment – Handicap International, 2006

<http://www.handicap-international.org/uploads/media/goodpractices-GB-2coul.PDF>

Count us in! How to make sure that women with disabilities can participate effectively in mainstream women's entrepreneurship development activities – Maureen Gilbert, International Labour Organisation, 2008

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_106558.pdf

MICROFINANCE

Access to mainstream microfinance services for persons with disabilities: lessons learned from Uganda – Flavia Nakabuye Bwire, George Mukasa, Roy Mersland – New York, The Society of Disability Studies, Disability Studies Quarterly Vol 29, No 1 2009

<http://www.dsqsds.org/article/view/168>