

Inclusive Development and the UN Convention

IDDC Reflection Paper

May 2004

(note: this paper does not formally reflect the perspectives of any individual member agencies in IDDC)

www.iddc.org.uk
email: co-ordinator@iddc.org.uk

Introduction

IDDC is currently the only global consortium focusing on Disability and Development, and bringing together DPOs, mainstream development agencies, and disability service development agencies. Currently there are 15 international NGO core members based in 10 different European Countries, and working in over 100 countries globally. In addition, there is a wider network of south and north based agencies and individuals who share information and experience through an email mailing list, the website and participation in various IDDC seminars and meetings. IDDC also collaborates closely with other networks/agencies. IDDC is very diverse. Members include Disabled People's Organisations, information-sharing networks and national platforms, general development agencies, and disability and development NGOs with specific areas of focus, e.g. capacity building of DPOs, mental health, visual impairment, conflict/emergency situations. IDDC Members are united by a common aim and core principles which include

- A Rights-based approach to disability and development
- Commitment to Inclusion – as a goal and process. Inclusion is everyone's business – it is about creating a different sort of society, not just inserting one particularly group into the status quo.
- Partnership and collaboration – a commitment to work *with* disabled persons, their organisations and local communities.

IDDC and the UN Convention Process

IDDC is involved in the UN Convention process as follows;

- a) Member agencies are enabling and supporting under-represented groups of Disabled Persons to directly participate. E.g. Disabled Persons organisations from the South, from S E Europe, disabled Young Persons. IDDC members work closely with DPI Europe, the Landmine Survivors Network and EDF on this issue.
- b) Member agencies are raising awareness with participating agencies (NGOs and Governments) on issues specific to disability and development cooperation, to ensure that the UN Convention truly reflects the concerns of disabled persons in the poorest countries.
- c) IDDC has developed a Task Group on the UN Convention that is responsible for drafting this paper, and will continue to ensure that Inclusive Development issues are highlighted.
- d) Detailed comments have been submitted by agencies that IDDC collaborates with such as EDF and LSN. IDDC supports many of their recommendations and will provide more detailed comments on particular articles prior to September 2004.

Inclusive Development and the UN Convention

The principles of Inclusive Development should be integral to the UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disability. Some of these principles are already highlighted within the draft UN Convention text. The following are examples of areas that IDDC feels are either

gaps or need to be more strongly stated. They are to be used by agencies participating the working groups, and are not at this stage tied to particular articles.

Inclusive Development and Human Rights

The protection and promotion of the Human Rights of individual disabled persons, particularly in the poorest countries where $\frac{3}{4}$ of the disabled population lives, is totally dependent on development being inclusive. Disabled people globally have a right to be included in development, and governments implementing development programmes have a duty to actively ensure the full inclusion of disabled persons.

Poverty, Disabled Persons and Human Rights

Human Rights for poor disabled people means first and foremost, the eradication of absolute poverty. Without the promotion of the right to survival and access to the basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, clean water, sanitation, education and transport all others are unobtainable. There is a strong, complex and particular relationship between poverty and disability. Situations of poverty cause disability and disability causes poverty. There is a danger of narrow or culturally-specific definitions of poverty being used. In essence, poverty is 'multi-dimensional' – income level is only one factor. Inequality and social exclusion are also core concepts in understanding poverty. Poverty for disabled persons is also about social relations (lack of relationship with family, community, local infrastructures). This includes issues of ownership, control, participation and access.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide a universally acknowledged framework for the achievement of these basic rights and the development of a world that is capable of sustaining human rights.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve Universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Ensure environmental sustainability
7. Develop a Global partnership for development

The problem with global initiatives to implement the MDGs is that they invariably exclude disabled persons, who are amongst the poorest of the poor. Therefore IDDC underlines the need for the UN, the member states and all other stakeholders to undertake action to include the disability dimension in all measures and all areas related to the realization of these Millennium Goals.

The Twin Track Approach

The full human rights of disabled persons will not be realized without a twin-track approach to promoting Inclusive Development. This means;

- a) Focus on Society: the barriers that prevent disabled persons from full participation and inclusion need to be removed. This means institutional, environmental, attitudinal barriers in all sectors and at all levels of society. It means existing barriers and also the creation of new systems, environments, structures, cultures etc that are barrier-free, non-discriminatory and disability friendly. In poor countries and post-conflict reconstruction situations, there are many possibilities for creating inclusive and barrier-free environments. 'Disability Proofing' of general development programmes is a basic tool to identify barriers, but creating inclusive societies is much broader than this requiring radical systematic change.
- b) Focus on disabled persons: In order for individual disabled persons and their organisations and networks to function and gain influence, the appropriate circumstances should be present. This includes capacity building, in the form of empowerment both from an individual and structural perspective. Many disabled persons and their families in poorer countries lack access to basic information, skills and support that are required for the development of essential life skills. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that these essential circumstances and pre-conditions are present.

Especially Difficult Circumstances

Disabled persons in specific contexts can also be more vulnerable. Situations of conflict, emergency and disaster, and refugee and stateless populations are particularly challenging for disabled persons. These situations in themselves increase the numbers of disabled persons, including the intentional disablement of people as a weapon of war or form of torture. Existing disabled children, women and men are especially vulnerable to the breakdown of basic infrastructures such as family support, and access to basic health and education facilities. In conflict situations, disabled civilians are disadvantaged in comparison with their military counterparts, who are often perceived as war heroes and eligible for state support.

There are also contexts where disabled persons are subject to institutionalization as a norm. Many of these countries are in transition to becoming 'new' democracies, with extremely damaging consequences for disabled persons. In addition to the fact of institutionalization being an abuse of human rights, there is the breakdown of infrastructures and decrease in resources. The rights of disabled persons in such situations needs specific consideration.

Community-Based Service Development

Disabled persons live in communities, and particularly in many of the poorer countries in the South, community is often regarded as more important than the individual. Inter-dependence is the reality. It is also estimated that 80% of information, skills, resources that disabled persons need to enable them to fully participate and access their rights can be met within their local communities. Communities, including other disabled persons and families, are the primary

resource for disabled persons. Inclusive development begins in the home and community. Governments have a responsibility to ensure that individual disabled persons have the possibility to access their rights within their own communities, and that accessible, affordable, relevant services are available in these communities.

Collaboration and Networking

Inclusive Development is the business of every person – every person and agency is a stakeholder. For disabled persons to fully access their rights, people in mainstream society need information, knowledge, skills to change and to create inclusive, barrier-free, disability friendly cultures and communities. In situations of poverty, whole communities lack access to basic services because they do not exist. Therefore the issue is as much about inclusive service development as access to existing infrastructures. In addition, DPOs in the South are still at an early stage of development and rarely represent the rural poor disabled child, woman and man. IDDC believes that for the rights of disabled persons to be realized, collaboration between Governments, DPOs, mainstream development agencies, disability service development agencies, families and communities is essential, not an option. All have a role to play in the promotion of disability rights.

Representation and Participation

The principle of consultation directly with disabled persons in the drafting of this Convention is well established, and has resulted in the key global DPOs being an integral part of the drafting process. The majority of disabled persons live in the poorer countries of the South and other resource- poor or isolated regions. These regions are very diverse and encompass a wide diversity of cultures and contexts. Disabled persons in these regions should be given the opportunity to represent and speak for themselves and to fully participate in the drafting and monitoring of the UN Convention if they so desire.

Summary of Key Issues

1. Inclusive Development is integral to the promotion and protection of the Human Rights of Disabled persons
2. Poverty is a cause and consequence of disability and needs to be highlighted as a complex and central issue
3. The Millenium Development Goals provide a framework and support for the Human Rights of disabled persons, and the disability dimension needs to be integrated into all these goals
4. A Twin Track approach is essential to achieve Inclusive Development. This means a) creating inclusive, barrier-free and disability friendly societies and cultures, and b) providing opportunities for capacity building in the form of individual and structural empowerment of individual disabled, their organisations and networks.

5. Disabled persons in Especially Difficult Circumstances such as conflict, disaster, emergency, stateless and refugee populations, and where institutionalization is widespread, need particular consideration
6. Community-Based Service Development is integral to Inclusive Development particularly in resource-poor contexts, and governments have a responsibility to ensure individual disabled persons have access to community-based services.
7. Everyone is a stakeholder in Inclusive Development. Collaboration and Networking are not optional extras, but essential to inclusive development and the achievement of full human rights of disabled persons
8. Disabled persons from the South, and in vulnerable contexts should have the practical possibility to speak for and represent themselves and actively participate in the drafting process and in the monitoring mechanisms.

IDDC Member Agencies

ORGANISATION	PHONE/FAX NUMBERS	E-MAIL
1. Action on Disability and Development	Tel: +44 1373 47 30 64 Fax: +44 1373 45 20 75	Barbara.frost@add.org.uk
2. Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau	Tel: +39 051 43 34 02 Fax: +39 051 43 40 46	ortali@aifo.it
3. Basic Needs	Tel: +44 1926 330101 Fax: +44 1926 420012	Chris.underhill@basicneeds.org.uk Mike.paul@basicneeds.org.uk
4. Christoffel Blindenmission	Tel: +49 62 51 13 1202 Fax: +49 62 51 13 1165 Phone : +63 2 807-8586; 807-8587 Fax : + 63 2 807-8292	mike.davies@cbmseapro.myip.org office.eu@cbmi.net (Barbara Oosters) axel.hardenberg@cbm-i.org
5. Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development	Tel: +31.30.291.67.11 Fax: +31 30 297.06.06	mark.raijmakers@dcdd.nl
6. Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People	Tel: +45 36 75 1777 Fax: +45 36 75 14 03	Hw@handicap.dk alj@handicap.dk .
7. Finish Disabled People's International Development	Tel: +358 40 752 3834 Fax: +358 9 6124 0333	tuija.halmari@fidida.fi
8. Handicap International	Tel: +33 4 78 69 79 79 Fax: +33 4 78 69 79 90	nheeren@handicap-international.org pchervin@handicap-international.org
9. Healthlink Worldwide	Tel: +44 207 539 15 70 Direct: +44 207 539 15 83 Fax: +44 207 539 15 80	Payne.h@healthlink.org.uk
10. Organismo di Volontariato per la Cooperazione	Tel: +39 031 625111 Fax: +39 031 625243	Ovci@pl.Inf.it msala@pl.Inf.it
11. Leonard Cheshire International	Tel: +44 20 7802 8200 Fax: +44 20 7802 8250	s.dyer@london.leonard-cheshire.org.uk
12. Norwegian Association of the Disabled	Phone: + 4724102400 Direct line: + 4724102480 Mobile: + 97071075 Fax: + 4724102499	Lissen.bruce@nhf.no
13. Platform Disability and Development Cooperation	Tel: +32 2 242 05 96 Fax: +32 2 242 05 96	info@phos.be jean-luc.destoop@skynet.be
14. Save the Children Fund	Tel: +44 207 703 54 00 Ext. 2616 Fax: +44 207 793 76 30 Tel: +31 20 463 3013 Telefax: +31 20 463 3016	m.vanderkroft@scfuk.org.uk
15. Swedish Organisation of Disabled Persons	Tel: +46 8 462 33 60 Fax: +46 8 714 59 44	Fredrik@shia.se Malin.ekman@shia.se
IDDC Administrator		Administrator@iddc.org.uk
Co-ordinator. Sue Stubbs	Tel: +44(0) 1273727289	Co-ordinator@iddc.org.uk