Making international development inclusive for disabled people: Launching the WHO Guidelines on Community-Based Rehabilitation at the Royal Commonwealth Society.

“It is clear that disabled people are among the poorest and most marginalised and that lifting them out of poverty is essential if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.” Rt. Hon Andrew Mitchell MP

“The Coalition Government is committed to the inclusion of disabled people in development.” Stephen O’Brien MP

Round Table discussion
UNA-UK, 16th May 2011

Making Development Inclusive & the WHO CBR Guidelines

This report is based on the proceedings of the Round Table discussion that was held prior to the launch of the WHO Guidelines on Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) at UNA-UK. The Guidelines have been developed through the collaboration of three UN agencies (WHO, ILO and UNESCO) and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). IDDC, based in Brussels, comprises twenty-three international NGOs and disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) working in the fields of disability and inclusive development.

This event was part of the IDDC project Making Development Inclusive. Through this EU funded project, IDDC will raise awareness of the implications of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities for international development and share tools such as the CBR guidelines and practical field experiences of mainstreaming disability into development co-operation. This event in London was the major UK event taking place under this project. Similar events will be taking place in other EU countries including Luxembourg, Italy, Belgium and Germany to target their international development opinion-formers and decision-makers.

The Guidelines have been developed over five years during which time significant field testing has taken place in order to ensure their effectiveness. The Guidelines received a global launch in Abuja, Nigeria in October 2010 and are being launched in the UK as part of the IDDC’s current project ‘Making Development Inclusive’. The consortium wishes to ensure that the Guidelines are promoted and well understood by UK NGOs, donors, the media and government bodies active in international development work. The Guidelines have been launched regionally in countries in Scandinavia, the Asia-Pacific region, and the Netherlands, and will soon be launched in other countries in the EU following the UK event.

Round Table discussion

The aim of the Round Table discussion was to provide a recommendations report on why and how disability should be integrated throughout policy and programming in
the international development sector. In order to facilitate this discussion, the following three questions were put forward to the round table participants:

1. Why is disability not yet taken seriously in the international development sector? What are the main barriers?

2. How can the CBR Guidelines help to raise the issue and be used as a tool for inclusive poverty reduction?

3. What are the key recommendations or next steps for the international development sector on how to include disability?

Attendees

1. Chair: Sir Richard Jolly
2. Claire Melamed (Head of Growth and Equity at ODI)
3. Dr. Michele Moore (Editor, Disability and Society)
4. Sue Coe (Senior Disability Advisor at World Vision UK)
5. Caroline Sugg (Senior Project Manager at BBC Trust)
6. Annie Devonport (Humanitarian Programme Advisor at DEC)
7. Tim Wainwright (CEO at ADD)
8. Gertrude Feofame (Sightsavers)
9. Praveen Kumar (Sightsavers)
10. Mike Davies (CBM)
11. Tanya Barron (Leonard Cheshire Disability)
12. Nolan Quigley (Leonard Cheshire Disability)
13. Diane Mulligan (Sightsavers)
14. Dr. Mary Wickenden (UCL)
15. Chapal Khasnabis (WHO)
16. Liz Ford (Deputy Editor, development online) at The Guardian*
17. Doug Souter (General Secretary at ILEP)
18. Rachel Grant (Social Development Coordinator at DFID)*
19. Kamala Achu (WHO CBR contributor)*
20. Prof. Nora Groce (UCL)
21. Joe McMartin (Programme Development Team Leader at VSO)
22. Venkatesh Balakrishna (WHO CBR contributor)
23. Stephen Thrower (DWP Office for Disability Issues)*
24. Sue Bryan (Senior Policy Advisor at The Big Lottery Fund)
25. Karen Davies (UN Regional Information Office, Brussels)
26. Peter Coleridge (WHO CBR contributor)

* Unable to attend

Why the Guidelines are needed

Disabled people continue to be excluded and marginalised within development initiatives despite being the world’s largest minority which, according to the United Nations, constitutes 10% of the global population. Within this, 80% of disabled people live in developing countries, and these people are more likely to be excluded from school and employment, which has significant implications for their earning capacity. Sixty-two countries provide no access to rehabilitation services for disabled people.
Poverty and human rights are two concepts that are central to an understanding of disability issues. Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of disability, with 15-20% of the world’s poor being disabled. Poverty does not merely signify a lack of income, but includes the denial of social rights to health, housing, food, safe water and education, and internationally agreed upon civil and political rights such as access to a fair trial, political participation and security. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006 and has so far been ratified by 100 countries. Article 32 of this convention asserts that disabled people must have access to and be included in all international development programmes.

CBR is an important strategy that adopts a set of principles in accordance with those outlined in the CRPD, with an emphasis on empowerment and sustainability. CBR aims to reduce poverty, improve access to rehabilitation services and opportunities, and to facilitate social inclusion of disabled people. The approach underlines the need for action and interventions and links across five main sectors: Health, Education, Livelihood, Social, and Empowerment.

This report provides a detailed set of recommendations based on the discussion held during the Round Table session on how inclusion might be achieved and how CBR can be implemented using the new Guidelines.

**Recommendations and Next Steps**

In response to the three key questions, the discussions were as follows:

Responses to Question 1:
*Why is disability not yet taken seriously in the international development sector and what are the main barriers?*

The group established that there tend to be many competing priorities for governments, different local or international NGOs and other organisations working within different international development fields, such as gender, indigenous peoples, and other minority groups.

It was agreed that discourse around disability and inclusive development tends to circulate amongst organisations working exclusively on these issues and often fails to reach governments or mainstream development NGOs.

**On outreach**

To improve links with mainstream NGOs, the Round Table members made the following recommendations:

- Disability-inclusive organisations need to adopt an outward-facing focus and seek partnerships with NGOs working in all other domains.

- Inclusion should be regarded as a two-way process in which mainstream NGOs and agencies incorporate disability issues into their policy and programmes on the one hand and NGOs working in disability take responsibility for promoting inclusion and engaging with these other
organisations on the other. Within this, DPOs need to engage on mainstream issues such as gender issues, food security, and climate change.

- Disability-inclusive organisations should recognise that inclusive development, “development for all”, relates to every sector within international development. Too often, disability is considered niche or specialist issue by both mainstream and disability-inclusive NGOs.

- A three-year strategic plan needs to be developed for NGOs working on disability, setting milestones to achieve impact within the broader development community.

**Information and data**

- Establishing a firm evidence base should be prioritised, with a particular focus on generating greater knowledge of numbers of disabled people, of interventions that are effective, and of the costs/benefits of including disabled people in development efforts. This will enable more effective advocacy aimed at organisations that do not include disabled people in their activities, and more positive and effective marketing of these issues.

- Linking poverty to disability can act as a way for mainstream NGOs to understand the issue and demonstrate that disabled people form a very large minority group. The statistics available on disability and development need to be framed in a way that is more persuasive to organisations and agencies not working solely on these issues. For example, instead of stating that 98% of disabled children do not go to school, the statistics should represent a percentage of the total population in question, by saying that a third of all children that are not in school have a disability.

- A cost-benefit analysis of not including disabled people in a country’s development programme should be conducted.

- Examples of good practice should be provided, which demonstrate how disability can be included effectively in development policy and practice. This could include demonstration models and guidelines on best practice examples that can be scaled up. A list should be created of structured interventions on different levels that could include disabled people, for example, disability statistics included in the MDG country reports.

- Good practice examples, such as the inclusion of disability in the EU policy on overseas aid, should be demonstrated to donors.

- Disability-inclusive organisations should advocate for high profile champions to endorse this agenda.

**CRPD / MDGs**

- DFID should refer to the CRPD in its strategic plan in addition to its focus on the MDGs. This is particularly important as the MDGs cannot be met unless disabled people, which make up 10% of the world’s population, are included.

- The current momentum of the CRPD should be utilised in the same way the Convention on Child Rights acted as a catalyst for changes in policy and
practice. Mainstream NGOs and governments should be encouraged to produce policy documents based on the Convention.

- Disability should be incorporated into the post-2015 MDG agenda.

**Aid agencies**

- Donor agencies should be encouraged to refuse to fund activities that fail to reach disabled people or fail to show clearly how they actively include them.

- There needs to be a focus on ways in which the capacities and capabilities of disabled people can be strengthened.

**Lessons learned**

- Organisations working in the field of disability should draw from the experiences of the gender agenda and gender mainstreaming, with particular reference to policy analysis and recommendations, the use of disaggregated data, and gender-based budgeting.

- DPOs and NGOs working on disability and inclusive development should adopt the language of mainstream policy makers in order to achieve better leverage.

**A Human Development focus**

- Dominant development discourse focuses on the $1 per day measure of poverty, which is misleading. There should be a shift towards a human development perspective, based on Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach, highlighting the multidimensional aspects of poverty. The Human Development Report could have a specialised report on disability.

- There should be a move away from income inequality as the main focus within international development, to an equally persuasive demonstration of how different inequalities intersect and are relevant at different points across multidimensional poverty.

**Education and training**

- International Development and Global Health courses at universities should include a focus on disability as part of mainstream development, not as a specialist issue.

- Key decision makers in the UN system should receive training on inclusive development.

**Responses to Question 2:**

*How can the Guidelines help to raise the issue and be used as a tool for inclusive poverty reduction?*

The Guidelines can be used in the following ways:
• To provide an understanding of the “twin track” approach, which promotes inclusive development whilst focusing in particular on disabled people;
• To explain the linkages between poverty and disability and the need to engage donors and agencies in dialogue on disability issues and poverty reduction;
• As an awareness-raising and outreach tool, that can be used to engage the humanitarian world and connect with other development sectors;
• To provide an understanding of the links between human rights and disability;
• To guide all development organisations in relation to all development issues, not only disability;
• As a tool for training and multi-sectoral capacity-building by:
  o presenting a workable matrix for practitioners,
  o providing ideas, practical activities and examples on ‘how to’ include disability issues,
  o and addressing multi-sectoral issues and multidimensional sectors, rather than focusing on resolving single problems;
• As a tool for empowerment that involves disabled people and their communities in driving development forward.

A balance needs to be established between advocacy and practice/service provision around the CRPD and CBR. The Convention is a statute, whereas CBR is a strategy, and the Guidelines offer a mechanism by which to deliver the CRPD. There is currently a strong emphasis on advocacy and as this has increased in response to the CRPD, less attention has been devoted to service provision. A balance needs to be maintained between these two efforts.

Responses to Question 3:
What are the key recommendations or next steps for the international development sector on how to include disability?

Aid agencies

• The sector should make use of the Paris and Accra agendas on aid effectiveness to stimulate a demand for inclusive approaches to development by governments who receive assistance. This would obligate Bilateral and Multi-lateral donor agencies to align their strategies with these demands.

• Donors should be encouraged to require reporting on disability.

Outreach

• A consortium of disability-inclusive NGOs should create a system of mentoring partnerships with leading INGOs, putting in place a one to two-year action plan to provide training and support mechanisms to enable mainstream INGOs to be inclusive in their policy and practices.

CRPD / Advocacy

• Article 32 of the CRPD on the importance of including disability issues in international cooperation, should be used as a lever for change.

• The momentum generated by the EU ratification of the CRPD and the resolution that came with the MDG Outcome documents can be used to
advocate for change. There should be an analysis of the UK’s report to the CRPD committee on inclusive international cooperation, and the role of DFID in following up on the resolution for MDGs should be questioned. This might also be a way in which to motivate DFID.

- Evidence of the impact of CBR at the grassroots level can act as a catalyst for inclusive development at the national and the international level, so better monitoring and evaluation of CBR needs to be developed in order to show impacts.

**DFID**

- Disability-inclusive NGOs should provide recommendations on how to move from policy into action using DFID’s ‘How to Note on Disability’ practice paper as a starting point. DFID should ensure that its country offices each have a focal point for disability and each use the ‘How to Note’ as a mandatory requirement. Good practice examples could be presented of other donors that operate in this way.

- DFID should ask for more inclusive disability reporting in their current Partnership Programme Arrangements (PPAs) and in the replacement process after the PPAs come to an end.

- DFID should adopt results measurements that include disability.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

- DPOs should measure their effectiveness when working on mainstream development issues and poverty. Within this there should be a focus on how we know that disabled people are being included, and whether the data is being disaggregated.

- DPOs need to ensure the quality of the work of disability-inclusive organisations is good and reaches minimum standards.

**Issues to be addressed within the inclusive development sector**

- There should be recognition that national and grassroots disability agendas are often not aligned and government agencies and organisations working at these different levels should endeavour to reach a common voice in order to achieve a wider impact.

- It should be noted that as countries develop and, for example, more children gain access to education or poverty generally decreases, the situation for disabled people does not necessarily improve. There must be a concerted effort to ensure that disabled people are not left behind as conditions improve for the general population.

- Within the category of ‘disabled people’ attention must be paid to those with particular impairments who are especially marginalised within this category.

- There are occasional divisions within the community of NGOs working on disability and inclusive development, which need to be addressed. These organisations, working on different disability issues (e.g. impairment-specific),
should endeavour to collaborate more and find a shared, more outward-facing focus.

**Information, data and evidence**

- Disability-inclusive NGOs should influence the institutions that conduct the large-scale surveys on which mainstream development discourse is based, such as the World Bank, USAID (DHS), UNICEF (MICS) and UNAIDS. These agencies should be encouraged to gather more and better data on disability, and recommendations should be made to them along the lines of the UN Inter-agency statistics group on how to include disabled people in the MDGs.

- Information management at the grassroots level is key for data gathering. This needs to be included in the role of government agencies, DPOs and local and international NGOs.

- In the humanitarian sector, the SPHERE Guidelines include disability, thus providing a solid evidence base on disability inclusion in disasters and emergency contexts, founded on strong monitoring and evaluation models. This kind of approach can provide a model for increased visibility of disabled people and ways to be inclusive.

- Data needs to be disaggregated by impairment, as mental health difficulties and learning and communications impairments are often invisible. However, care should be taken when advocating for quantitative data, to the exclusion of descriptive qualitative accounts, to ensure that good quality programmes are not overlooked or misrepresented.

- Spending on disability-specific projects and implementation of Article 32 by Bilateral donors should be tracked to provide a positive evidence base. For example, a recent GPPD event was held at NORAD with government donors from Norway, Finland, Italy, Japan and Australia, who are all strongly committed to disability issues.