



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FACT SHEET

General Information on Disability and Development¹

Incidence of Disability

- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 10% of any given population has a disability with a higher incidence for post-conflict countries.
- It is estimated that 80% of those people who have some form of disability live within developing countries.
- The United Nations recently stated that in reality the percentage of people who have some form of disability is much higher and estimates that 25% of the world's population has a disability.
- Although many countries may have conducted individual surveys or censuses in order to ascertain the number of men, women and children living with disabilities within their countries, the results of these queries are often viewed as unreliable and tend to grossly underestimate the number of people with disabilities. Potential reasons for these miscalculations are poorly trained enumerators on the topic of disability, social stigmas, and limiting definitions.

Definition of Disability

- The Americans with Disability Act (ADA), which is considered to be one of the world's leading pieces of legislation on disability rights, defines a person with a disability as someone who "has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities."²
- The newly adopted UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities has a slightly different definition and states that "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."³
- Both the ADA and the UN specifically include men, women, and children with mental or psychosocial disabilities in their definitions. Psychosocial disabilities include disabilities, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disease and other disorders, have historically been excluded from disability programs and services, especially in developing countries.

¹ This publication was prepared for the Office of Women in Development, United States Agency for International Development by Anne Hayes and DevTech. Downloaded from www.usaid.gov

² Department of Justice, "Americans with Disabilities Act" www.ada.gov

³ United Nations, "Final report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities" Enable website <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/ahcfinalrepe.htm>

Poverty and Disability

- The World Bank estimates that there are approximately 1.3 billion people world-wide living below the poverty line, and of whom, people with disabilities make up around 20% of the poorest of the poor.⁴
- This translates into an estimated 260 million person with disabilities (PWDs) living in absolute poverty.
- The World Bank estimates that 1 in 5 people living on less than a \$1 a day have a disability.⁵
- There is a clear indication that poor people with disabilities are more likely to be caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and disability, each being both a cause and a consequence of the other.

Development and Disability

- Men, women, and children with disabilities have traditionally been excluded or ignored from both domestic service programs, as well as international development programs.
- Global estimates indicate that 90% of people with disabilities are illiterate and 80% live in isolated rural areas.⁶ Almost the same percentage is estimated live in areas where the services needed to help them are unavailable.
- Women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence; injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment; discrimination; maltreatment; or exploitation. Furthermore, sexual abuse and other forms of violence against women often lead to psychological, sensory, and/or physical disabilities.
- HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB and other diseases are disabling and impoverishing, and furthermore they increase the risk of secondary disabilities, increase child mortality, and worsen maternal health. Moreover, men, women, and children with disabilities have often been excluded from HIV/AIDS and health awareness raising activities thereby further increasing the incidence of HIV/AIDS and other diseases among people with disabilities.
- Men, women, and children with disabilities are substantially more prone to be adversely affected by natural disasters, conflict, or other emergencies and yet are continually excluded from disaster planning and response efforts.

USAID and Disability⁷

- The United States signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) on July 30, 2009. As a signatory of the UN CRPD, the US is obligated to not violate the object and purpose of the Convention.
- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to including men, women, and children who have physical and mental disabilities and those who advocate and offer services on behalf of people with disabilities.
- This commitment extends from the design and implementation of USAID programming to advocacy for and outreach to men, women, and children with disabilities.
- USAID's policy on disability (AAPD 04-17 Supporting USAID's Disability Policy in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreement) is: to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities

⁴ World Bank,

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/EXTDISABILITY/0..menuPK:282704~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:282699,00.html>

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ United States Agency for International Development (USAID) http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/

in programs which USAID funds, and to stimulate an engagement of host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations, and other donors in promoting a climate of nondiscrimination against and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

- USAID is also committed to inclusive development and the avoidance of building new barriers by ensuring that all new construction or renovation of structures, facilities or buildings in an accessible manner through AAPD 05-07, “Supporting USAID’s Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements.”