



MYRIGHT

EMPOWERS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

.....

A billion reasons to include

**On inclusion of persons with disabilities
in the work on Agenda 2030**



MyRight is the Swedish disability movement's organisation for international development cooperation. We work to ensure that persons with disabilities around the world gain greater access to their rights.

MyRight's vision is a world where everyone with a disability enjoys equal rights and opportunities for a dignified life free from poverty in an inclusive society.

MyRight's development cooperation takes place in partnership with Swedish disability organisations and their counterparts in our partner countries.

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Summary

Through Agenda 2030, the countries of the world have promised to bring about a sustainable future and eradicate extreme poverty for all. The slogan "Leave No One Behind" permeates the agenda and the global goals associated with it.

Persons with disabilities are a group that has long been rendered invisible and assigned low priority in international initiatives. The countries of the world have made a clear commitment to improving the situation for this group through the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Agenda 2030.

Experts consider that institutions and public authorities working on development issues have become more and more aware of the importance of the work to bring about the inclusion of persons with disabilities if there is to be any chance of coming close to achieving the Agenda 2030 goals. That work not only takes the form of initiatives targeted towards this group but also, primarily, of inclusion of the issue as an important component in all programmes implemented to bring about a fairer and more sustainable world.

At the same time, available statistics show that the work is progressing far too slowly. Persons with disabilities continue to fall behind in all socio-economic measurements of wealth, state of health and opportunities for participation in the life of the community. They are still among the poorest in most societies, have poorer health, eat worse, have much lower school attendance and have far more difficulties when it comes to finding work and supporting themselves. In addition, they are subjected to widespread discrimination at all levels of society – from system level down to local level where they often face disparaging attitudes. It is worst for women, who suffer double discrimination both because of their gender and because of their disability.

At the same time, the statistics to be used as a basis for the initiatives that need to be implemented are insufficient and many development agencies still lack sufficient knowledge.

In order to seriously address the inequalities and widespread discrimination faced by persons with disabilities, the insights that have begun to emerge must also be conveyed at local level. Those insights must also be formulated in clear political initiatives and laws that must also start to be applied. It is possible to change the state of things and there are plenty of good examples to provide inspiration.

At the time of writing, there are ten years left in which to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030. Although few people believe that the ambitious development agenda will be achieved in its entirety, there is still plenty of time to at least come significantly closer to achieving the goals. But it then requires political will and determination to take the words "Leave No One Behind" seriously.



“Persons with disabilities are a group that has long been rendered invisible and assigned low priority in international initiatives.”

17 year-old Isabell Massías González is blind and receives help from a special teacher so she is included in the classroom.

Foreword

MyRight's vision is a world where everyone with a disability lives a dignified life free from poverty. A world where everyone enjoys equal rights and opportunities and full inclusion.

Since the adoption of the Global Goals in 2015, Agenda 2030 has provided a framework for the international community's work to bring about a more equal and more sustainable world. The slogan "Leave No One Behind" permeates the agenda and the goal is to ensure that each person is given the opportunity to live a dignified life.

In this report, we note that many of the successes achieved in recent decades have not reached persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are still among the most marginalised group in the world. Disability determines access to food, education and health care, among other things, and also how a person is affected by disasters.

We are now living at a time when a pandemic is sweeping the world. The economic and social effects of the corona pandemic, like those of accelerating climate change, have hit hardest among those with fewest resources – a group in which we find most of the persons with disabilities in the world.

This report shows that, even though progress has been made, a great deal more must be done if the world is even going to come close to achieving the final targets by 2030. The report highlights the measures required to provide an impetus for the work to bring about an inclusive, fairer world. At the same time, the report also highlights examples of how real change can be brought about. The situation can be changed and this is demonstrated by MyRight's collaboration with our partner organisations in particular.

MyRight adopts a rights-based focus in the work on combating poverty, developing organisations and promoting gender equality. Our activities are aimed at strengthening individuals and organisations to enable them to live independently and play an active part in the communities in which they live.

It is clear that much remains to be done to reach those who have been left out for a long time. If the disability perspective were taken into account in the development of society, people urgently needing to improve their situation would be able to improve it.

Sweden has adhered to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. That means that foreign policy and international development cooperation must also conform to the principles of inclusion. At present, this takes place far too seldom.

MyRight's vision: A world where everyone with a disability enjoys equal rights and opportunities for a dignified life free from poverty in an inclusive society.



Yamuragiye Victoire and her classmates at the Blind Training Centre in Masaka, Rwanda.



Göran Alfredsson
Chairperson MyRight

There are 10 years remaining before the goals must be achieved. It is high time that all agencies in international development cooperation evaluated their efforts and made sure to incorporate a disability perspective in their future work.

Our recommendations, which are addressed to everyone working in international development cooperation, are set out at the end of this report. We hope that they will help you to contribute to the achievement of the global goals and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, both abroad and in Sweden. It is a question of adopting new perspectives and also of carrying out activities based on our joint goals. We all have a responsibility to combat prejudice and find new ways of working together to build the sustainable, inclusive societies that have been agreed on by the countries of the world through Agenda 2030.

There are a billion reasons to include.



Chapter 1:

Clear target group for the core of Agenda 2030



The UN's 17 Global Sustainability Goals in Agenda 2030.

Through Agenda 2030, the countries of the world have promised to bring about a sustainable future and eradicate extreme poverty for all. The slogan "Leave No One Behind" must permeate the work on the Agenda and its global goals. However, the work needs to be significantly geared up if the goals are to be achieved. This applies in particular to all the persons in the world who live with a disability.

In September 2015, the countries of the world agreed on the Global Development Goals which must be achieved by 2030. Through the Agenda, the countries of the world have committed themselves to the inclusion, in particular, of all marginalised and particularly vulnerable groups – such as

persons with disabilities. There is a very large group that is still left behind. That is shown in every measure of poverty levels, access to schooling, health care, job opportunities and participation in decision-making posts.

FROM INVISIBLE TO FOCUS GROUP

Before the UN's Agenda 2030 with its 17 Global Sustainability Goals was established, the world organisation's development efforts were guided by the so-called Millennium Development Goals. That was a set of goals aimed at drastically reducing poverty and inequality in the world by 2015. However, the Millennium Development Goals lacked fully stated objectives for everyone in the world living with a disability. That made the goals impossible to achieve in practice¹.

In advance of the work on establishing the new goals, the international disability movement called for the development work to focus on persons with disabilities and for the new goals to be in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The work paid off. After lengthy consultations with governments, organisations, industry and other stakeholders, the countries of the world adopted Agenda 2030 at a UN summit in September 2015.

The new Sustainable Development Goals are a much broader initiative than the Millennium Development Goals.

Whereas the situation for persons with disabilities was not even mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals, Agenda 2030 highlights it on eleven occasions. Seven of the seventeen goals contain express references to disabilities.

Through the Agenda, all the countries of the world undertake, by 2030, to bring about a sustainable, equitable future in which peace prevails, human rights are protected, environmental destruction is reduced and the climate is safeguarded.

The goals must be achieved for everyone in all social strata under the slogan "Leave No One Behind". That means that persons with disabilities – particularly women – must be one of the groups assigned top priority.

A third of the time has now passed since the Sustainable Development Goals were established. In this report, we explain why work must now be stepped up properly if it is to be possible for the international community to live up to the slogan of the agenda – Leave No One Behind.

The trend towards reduction of poverty has been broken

The fight against poverty has produced excellent results in recent decades and, at global level, the number of people living in extreme poverty has halved since 2000. In recent years, however, the number of people suffering from hunger has started to rise again – which is completely contrary to the goals of Agenda 2030².

One in ten people in the world's developing countries is still forced to survive on less than the equivalent of 1.9 dollars a day, which is the internationally-established poverty line. Millions more live on incomes that are just above that level. In some regions, the situation is much worse than that. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that as much as 42 per cent of the population live below the poverty line³.

At the same time, poverty does not just mean a lack of money. It is also about the risk of suffering from malnutrition or not being able to go to school or not having any chance of obtaining decent work. Not having access to clean water or health care or medical treatment and having no power to determine one's own life or one's own future.

The Global Sustainability Goals



GOAL 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION

Goal 4 is to ensure inclusive, equal, high-quality education and promote lifelong learning for

all. This goal emphasises that there must be educational environments adapted for children and adults with disabilities. “Equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities” must be ensured by 2030.



GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Goal 8 is to promote inclusive and sustainable economic

growth as well as decent jobs for all. One of the sub-goals is “full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities”.



GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

Goal 5 is to achieve gender equality and strengthen the empowerment of all women and girls. The

goal emphasises that gender equality is a goal in itself and a prerequisite for peaceful, sustainable development. The goal establishes that equality exists only when women and men and girls and boys have equal rights, conditions, opportunities and the power to shape their lives on their own and contribute to the development of society.

The sub-goals also include several pledges in areas in which women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable. For example, we must put an end to all forms of violence against women. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights must be ensured, unpaid care and domestic work must be recognised and women must be given equal rights to financial resources and the ability to own and control land and other forms of property.

The goals must be achieved for everyone in all social strata under the slogan “Leave No One Behind”.



GOAL 10 – REDUCED INEQUALITIES

This goal aims to reduce inequalities within and between countries and ensure that all people are

included in the economy and decision-making. One of the sub-goals is to promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all people, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status, by 2030.



**GOAL 11 –
SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES**

This goal is for cities and settlements to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. More

than half the population of the world now lives in cities, a figure that is expected to rise to 70 per cent within 35 years. That means that many cities continue to grow rapidly and urban development has led to a situation whereby almost a billion people are estimated to live in slum-like conditions. According to this goal, the world must pay particular attention to persons with disabilities, children, and the needs of older people in order to bring about sustainable urban development.

There are two sub-goals under goal 11 that directly affect persons with disabilities. By 2030, the world's cities must provide access to "safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all". That requires proper investment in public transport, "with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older people". The second sub-goal is to provide access to "safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older people and persons with disabilities."

of good-quality figures and statistics on the situation in different countries. One of the sub-goals is therefore to increase support for capacity building in developing countries in order to "significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts". The UN stresses the importance of reliable statistics and states that it is crucial for the international community to obtain data to identify which groups are falling behind, where they are and the reasons why they are falling behind.

There are also a number of measurable indicators relating to each goal. They aim to make it possible to follow up and evaluate the work on the goals. One example of this is the fact that goal 4 provides indicators for the proportion of schools that are accessible for pupils with disabilities.



**LEAVE NO ONE
BEHIND**



**GOAL 17 –
IMPLEMENTATION
AND GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP**

Through this goal, the international community establishes

that the implementation of Agenda 2030 will require intensive global commitment. One crucial issue for success is the production



Chapter title 2

Continued discrimination in many areas

Persons with disabilities are subjected to deep social, economic and political inequalities in all areas included in Agenda 2030. That is revealed by a comprehensive UN report focusing on how work on the Global Development Goals is progressing for persons with disabilities.

In the foreword to the “Disability and Development Report”, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres states that the vision of a better future can only be achieved if there is full inclusion for all. That includes persons with disabilities. He stresses that ensuring that the one billion persons in the world with disabilities are included and have their rights

protected is not just a moral obligation. It is a necessity⁴ in order to achieve sustainable development for all mankind.

The UN report launched in December 2018 was produced with the help of 200 experts. It shows that some progress has been made in recent years. But the clearest message is that persons with disabilities continue to face many obstacles to their inclusion and ability to participate in society. They are more likely to suffer poverty and lack of access to education, health care and jobs. They remain under-represented among decision-makers and in political life. Girls and women are particularly deprived⁵.

Disability in the world

- Around 15 per cent of the population of the world has at least one disability. That is equivalent to a billion persons.
- Over 80 per cent of the persons in the world with a disability are estimated to be living in poverty⁶. 800 million of them live in developing countries⁷.
- One in five of the world's poorest persons have a disability. That number is expected to increase in future as more and more people are living longer and chronic conditions leading to disabilities therefore become more common⁸.
- Between 110 and 190 million adults throughout the world are estimated to have severe disabilities, while the number of children with moderate or severe disabilities is estimated at 100 million⁹.

DISABILITY CAN CREATE A CYCLE OF POVERTY

Poverty and disability are interlinked and reinforce each other. A person living with a disability often finds it much more difficult to escape from poverty. Poor people are at greater risk of suffering a disability. In low- and middle-income countries, persons with disabilities and their families are falling behind other groups in almost all socio-economic areas.

Persons living with disabilities run a greater risk of remaining poor because they often have higher living costs and are subjected to discrimination and stigmatisation. It is common for relatives, often women, to be forced to leave paid employment in order to care for a close relative with a disability. Many persons with disabilities face obstacles at all levels, ranging from a system that excludes them to negative attitudes in local communities. Overall, there is a risk that these obstacles may lead to a cycle of poverty¹⁰.

People who are poor are also more likely to suffer various forms of disability due to malnutrition, poor health care and poor access to clean water and working toilets. Poverty often forces people to live in poor housing and close to dangerous environments such as heavy traffic. That increases the risk of accidents. Poorly-built houses provide less protection. That means that the poor are harder hit by natural disasters and conflicts and are therefore more likely to suffer disabilities. People living in poverty are also more likely to work in dangerous working conditions, which also increases the risks¹¹.

LOWER INCOMES AND POORER DIET

The UN report on the work on the Global Development Goals and persons with disabilities emphasises that it is still unusual for income statistics to disaggregate persons with disabilities. However, the available data

shows that a higher proportion of persons with disabilities live below national poverty thresholds. In some cases the proportion is twice as high¹⁴. It is also more common for households containing persons with disabilities to have insufficient food compared to other households¹⁵.

It is well documented that undernourishment among women and small children leads to a greater risk that children will suffer from delayed development and a greater risk of disability¹⁶. For example, vitamin A deficiency can cause blindness and, according to the World Health Organisation, is estimated to result in between 250,000 and 500,000 children a year throughout the world losing their sight¹⁷.

In some countries, there is a difference of over 20 percentage points between persons with disabilities and others when it comes to income-related poverty. That difference is 15 percentage points when it comes to the possibility of eating a meal of protein-rich food every other day and 50 percentage points when it comes to the possibility of experiencing good health, the ability to read and write and finding work.

Double discrimination

Girls and women with disabilities often suffer from double discrimination – because of their gender and because they often live in poverty.

It is estimated that one in five women in the world has a disability. The figure for men is one in eight¹².

In low- and middle-income countries, it is estimated that three quarters of those living with disabilities are women¹³.

In some countries, more than 80 per cent of persons with disabilities who are in need of social welfare services lack access to those services¹⁸. That may mean that they are not offered any help to improve their financial situation or living circumstances. In several countries, more than half the persons with disabilities in need of some form of assistance do not have access to it¹⁹.

SCHOOLS AND WORKPLACES REMAIN CLOSED

Children with disabilities attend school to a significantly lower extent than other children. That is linked, among other things, to the stigmatisation to which those children are subjected. It is also due to the fact that many schools are not accessible for children with special needs. Exclusion lives on in the labour market – which is largely closed to persons with disabilities or offers them worse conditions.

In recent years, the proportion of children attending school has increased rapidly in the world. However, according to the UN Children's Fund UNICEF, there are still 258 million children aged up to 17 who are deprived of their right to schooling²⁰. That group includes 121 million children aged between 6 and 14 who should go to primary and secondary school. A large proportion of those are children with disabilities.

The UN reports that available data shows that on average one in three children with a disability in the world do not go to primary or secondary school. That may be compared to one in seven children among the rest of the population²¹.

It is also observable in the fact that significantly fewer persons with disabilities can read and write – 54 per cent according to a survey conducted in 36 countries. That may be compared to 77 per cent of persons with no

disability²². At the same time, the UN highlights major differences between countries. The situation in Cambodia is one example of this. In that country, it is reported that children with disabilities are eight times less likely to go to school than other children²³.

There has been a tremendous lack of reliable statistics on persons with disabilities in the world for a long time. In countries where having a child with a disability is stigmatising, the figures for the number of children kept at home may be significantly higher than the official statistics show. In some cases, children born with disabilities are not even registered by the authorities.

Previous UN studies have shown alarming estimates from developing countries indicating that up to nine out of ten children with disabilities in those countries do not attend school²⁴.

One major reason for low school attendance by children with disabilities is that many schools are not accessible for pupils with special needs. Some children cannot even get into the school building or use the school toilets. Other children may have difficulty seeing what is written on the board in the classroom or hearing what the teacher or schoolmates are saying.

It is not uncommon for parents to keep children at home because they worry that their children will be bullied and suffer various forms of abuse if they leave the home. They may also be kept at home by their relatives because of what the stigma associated with disability means for the family. Another reason may be that relatives do not see the same potential in a child or young person with a disability as in other siblings and therefore do not prioritise the child's studies to the same extent.

Older students with disabilities may also drop out of school when educational materials for

pupils with impaired vision or hearing, for example, are only designed for the youngest children. Secondary schools and sixth form colleges are seldom adapted for children with disabilities. It may be a case of lack of accessible educational materials and knowledgeable teachers.

Children's right to education is one argument for investing in inclusive schools and another argument is the fact that it damages countries' economies when not all children are offered a basic education²⁵. Countries that do not provide

everyone with opportunities for education are missing out on large amounts of potential income from people who could otherwise have contributed to the countries' development.

For obvious reasons, children who do not go to school experience much worse conditions in the labour market and are at a significantly higher risk of being trapped in poverty as adults.

Data from 30,000 schools, mainly in developing countries, shows that less than half of the schools are accessible for persons in wheelchairs²⁶.

**1 in 3 children
with disabilities do
not attend primary or
secondary school.**

A girl with a hearing aid at school in Bolivia.



WIDESPREAD DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The UN notes that the employment rate among persons with disabilities is almost half as high as for the rest of the population. The figures are even lower for women in all regions of the world.

Defective school systems lead to fewer opportunities in the labour market for many persons with disabilities. However, there are also a number of other reasons. One is that persons with disabilities are often discriminated against and face negative attitudes in their professional lives. It may also be a question of lack of available connections to get to and from work. Also, many workplaces are not adapted to persons with special needs.

In many countries, laws governing working life lack rules prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities who work are also generally paid significantly less than others. In a survey carried out in eight countries, almost a third of persons with disabilities stated that their workplace was not accessible²⁷.

At global level, it is much more common for working persons with disabilities to work in the informal sector or in their own businesses. In Mongolia, for example, persons with disabilities are four times more likely to work in the casual sector compared to others²⁸.

The UN notes that all these obstacles mean that many people who could work have no opportunity to do so. Which means that they consist of a large under-utilised labour resource²⁹.

At the same time, discrimination in the workplace has very serious consequences for the countries' economies. A 2016 report by

the International Disability and Development Consortium, IDDC, indicates that it means multiple billions in lost income each year for the world's low-income countries. Failure to invest in inclusive schools and workplaces damages countries' economies.

The authors of the report point to the example of Bangladesh, among other countries. It is estimated that the country loses income equivalent to 1.2 billion dollars a year due to lack of efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to train and be productive at work. This represents around 1.7 per cent of the country's gross domestic product³⁰. According to the latest UN report, the costs for the excluding labour markets in low- and middle-income countries are estimated to be between 3 per cent and 7 per cent of their gross domestic product³¹.

MANY PEOPLE FACE OBSTACLES IN HEALTHCARE

One of the global goals aims to improve access to good health care for all the people in the world by 2030. That is also an area in which persons with disabilities continue to fall behind.

Although persons with disabilities often have a greater need for good health care, they are less able to access the care offered to the rest of the population. Many persons with disabilities need specific interventions that relate to their underlying state of health or disability. Of course, they also need the same care as everyone else in the form of vaccinations and access to prenatal care, etc. However, they are often offered care of worse quality instead. Or they are unable to afford, or access, the care they need.

A survey carried out in 43 countries highlighted in the UN report shows that 42 per cent of persons with disabilities in these countries consider themselves to be in poor health. The figure for the rest of the population is 6 per cent³². At the same time, persons with disabilities are more than three times less likely than others to have access to care when they need it³³. In a number of countries, more than half the persons with disabilities have no access to care when they need it³⁴. In many cases, there are even more obstacles for women with disabilities³⁵.

In low-income countries, around 33 per cent of the total population state that they cannot afford health care. More than half the persons with disabilities state the same thing. In addition to the costs, suitable treatments are also commonly lacking.

Another recurring problem is that care facilities often are not accessible for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are more than twice as likely as other patients to state that health care is unable to provide the services they need. They are also four times more likely to state that they received poor treatment and three times more likely to state that they were denied treatment³⁶.

The World Health Organisation, WHO, points out that preventive care initiatives are rarely targeted at persons with disabilities. For example, it may be stated that women with disabilities are checked for breast and uterine cancer to a lesser extent than other women. In addition, high costs often constitute an obstacle that prevents persons with disabilities from receiving the care they need³⁷.

A WHO study shows that between 76 per cent and 85 per cent of people in developing countries suffering serious mental illness had not received any care in the past year³⁸.

Besides the promises made in Agenda 2030, the WHO has also set targets aimed at improving the situation for a large proportion of the world's population by 2023³⁹. The goal is to enable three billion people to gain better access to universal health care, greater protection against health crises and improved well-being.

LACK OF ACCESS TO TOILETS AND CLEAN WATER

The possibility of good health is closely associated with access to clean water and working sewers. However, many persons with disabilities in developing countries are forced to live in environments where these basic services are lacking.

It is particularly problematic for people who have difficulty accessing public toilets. Studies show that many public toilets in developing countries are still not accessible for wheelchair users. That limits their ability to move around freely in the community.

Data from a small group of developing countries shows that a large proportion of persons with disabilities also have problems with access to the toilet in their home⁴⁰.

One problem that particularly affects girls in developing countries is the lack of running water and working and separate toilets in many schools. In many cases, parents do not want to send their daughters to school when there are no separate toilets for girls and boys. This often creates particular obstacles for girls who have reached puberty and are menstruating. Furthermore, if they are living with a disability, there is a high risk of them suffering double discrimination. That is because they are girls and also because those girls may have a particular need for working, private toilet facilities and may also need help with their toilet visits.



Around one in ten people in the world lack access to clean water. In many cases, communal wells and water access points are constructed in a way that makes them inaccessible to persons with physical disabilities. That means that they have limited access to the human right of access to clean drinking water⁴¹.

WORSE ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Persons with disabilities, and girls and women with disabilities in particular, have less access to sex education and sexual and reproductive health services than other women. They are denied the right to make their own informed decisions about sexual relations, contraception and other forms of reproductive health care⁴². That is particularly clear in the case of girls with intellectual disabilities⁴³.

It means that these women run a greater risk of contracting HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases and of unwanted pregnancies⁴⁴. It is common for women with disabilities to be considered as asexual⁴⁵. When relatives do not believe that a girl or woman with a disability is sexually active, it can make it difficult for them to obtain information and support.

In a report, the human rights organisation Human Rights Watch (HRW) underlines that all risk factors surrounding HIV apply in particular to women and girls with disabilities. These include poverty, stigmatisation, lack of opportunity to practice protected sex, greater risk of violence and rape and lack of access to services and information.

In addition, women with disabilities find it much more difficult to access antiretroviral medication for HIV. When HRW in Uganda interviewed women with disabilities who had been raped, several testified that they had not been able to carry out HIV tests afterwards

because they were unable to get to a clinic⁴⁶.

In some countries, there are myths that sexual intercourse with a virgin can cure AIDS. That is something that particularly affects girls and women with disabilities, as they often find it more difficult to protect themselves from perpetrators⁴⁷.

The UN highlights a comparison between five different countries which also shows that pregnant women with disabilities are more likely than others to be forced to give birth without help from a professional midwife⁴⁸. It is stated that this may be because these women are generally poorer. However, it is also due to negative attitudes in health care towards these women.

In several countries, women and persons with intellectual disabilities have been subjected to compulsory sterilisation. For example, a smaller study among women with intellectual disabilities in Mexico in 2015 showed that nearly half of them had been recommended for sterilisation by a relative. Almost as many had been sterilised, even though in some cases the women did not understand what the procedure meant⁴⁹.

When women with disabilities are denied the right to make their own decisions relating to their sexual and reproductive rights, the risk of them being subjected to abuse also increases. Girls and young women with disabilities are also more likely to have a negative self-image than boys and men in the same situation. That in turn increases the risk of them ending up in destructive relationships⁵⁰.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES FACE DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION

One of the main ideas behind Agenda 2030 is to bring about a world with gender equality. At the same time, it is clear that many women with disabilities are subjected to double discrimination. They are often subordinated both because of their gender and because of their disability.

Research shows that girls and women make up the majority of persons in the world living with disabilities. That is even clearer in low-income countries, where more than one in five women are estimated to have at least one form of disability⁵¹.

There are several reasons why disability is more common among girls and women. One is that women often suffer injury due to deficient reproductive health and prenatal care. Another is that women have a higher life expectancy than men.

Girls and women are also at greater risk of disability due to gender-based inequalities when it comes to access to different types of services. Girls and women receive care to a lesser extent than boys and men. That is particularly true in low-income countries where it can be a long way to the nearest care facility⁵².

Statistics show that women with disabilities are three times more likely to be unable to read and write compared to men with no

MyRight's study on sexual and gender-based violence

In 2019, MyRight conducted a study aimed at combating sexual and gender-based violence against persons with disabilities. The study confirms that persons with disabilities are more likely to be subjected to sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, they are shown to have significantly poorer access to the justice system.

The partner organisations involved, in Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Nepal, themselves stated that, prior to the in-depth study, they only had a limited understanding and knowledge of the extent to which persons with disabilities risk being subjected to sexual and gender-based violence. However, the organisations state that their participation in the study has changed that.

There are many indications of a good basis for future work to combat sexual and gender-based violence against per-

sons with disabilities in the three countries in which the initiatives took place. In the countries that took part in the study, the organisations have built up platforms for evidence-based knowledge and have developed advocacy tools for the country-specific situation. The platforms lay the basis for the organisations in these three countries to be significantly better equipped to promote necessary legal and political changes regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), protection against sexual and gender-based violence and access to justice in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

One of the project's most important results is that the level of commitment to future strategic advocacy work against sexual and gender-based violence has risen considerably among the partner organisations.

Identifying and influencing key stakeholders is a priority in the work to bring about the necessary change.



Photo: Jonas Hong Soo Eriksson

disability. It is also twice as common for them to have no employment or internet access.

Women with disabilities who work are much less likely to occupy a higher position than men with no disabilities. Their situation is worse, even in comparison with other women⁵³.

The UN Agency for Gender Equality and Women's Rights, UN Women, is one of many institutions that underline that Agenda 2030 represents a great opportunity – but also a moral responsibility. The international community must prioritise the rights and needs of women with disabilities. According to UN Women, the issue of disability must therefore be included in all efforts to empower women and achieve gender equality⁵⁴.

GREATER RISK OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Persons with disabilities run a significantly higher risk of being subjected to violence and sexual abuse. Children and young women are particularly vulnerable.

In many developing countries, persons with disabilities are more likely to live in areas that are more severely affected by violence and crime. In some countries, almost a third of the police stations and courts are not accessible, while nine out of ten persons with disabilities who need legal advice are not offered it⁵⁵.

According to the UN Population Fund, UNFPA, young women and girls with disabilities are ten times more likely to suffer gender-based violence than young women and girls without disabilities⁵⁶.

Girls and boys with psycho-social or intellectual disabilities are particularly vulnerable. They are four times more likely to suffer sexual and gender-based violence than children without disabilities⁵⁷. In addition,

these children are almost three times more likely to be subjected to sexual violence⁵⁸.

Young women and girls with disabilities are ten times more likely to suffer gender-based violence than young women and girls without disabilities.

During humanitarian crises such as armed conflicts and natural disasters, gender-based violence all too often continues after the crisis itself is over. Sexual and gender-based violence is generally high in countries with a high level of general violence, but it can also be high in countries with relatively low levels of violence.

In addition to the discrimination and stigmatisation often suffered by children with disabilities, widespread violence also poses major obstacles for them at school. The children risk being subjected to various types of violence by their parents and also by their peers, teachers, partners and other perpetrators.

The UNFPA states that statistics on the violence suffered by children and young persons with disabilities are still inadequate. They therefore warn that the hidden figures may remain high and the true figures may actually be even higher⁵⁹. The UNFPA notes that the violence suffered by children and young persons with disabilities poses an extremely serious global problem.



LACK OF ELECTRICITY AND THE INTERNET

As the world becomes digitalised, access to electricity and the internet becomes even more important. But even there, persons with disabilities continue to fall behind when it comes to progress.

For many persons with disabilities, lack of electricity is a constant problem. Particularly considering that many have a greater need for power because they often spend more time at home than many other people. In addition, many of the technical aids that can simplify everyday life for persons with disabilities are powered by electricity. These may, for example, include electric wheelchairs and other technical tools that enable these people to lead independent lives. But it may also be a question of a need for cold storage facilities for storing essential medicines.

Internet access

A survey in 14 countries shows that only 19 per cent of persons with disabilities use the internet. This can be compared with 36 per cent of the rest of the population. One reason for this is that the technology is less accessible for persons with disabilities.

Another reason is that these people are less able to afford to connect to the Internet. Figures from three countries in southern Africa show that only 8 per cent of households containing at least one person with disabilities can afford the internet. That proportion is double that of the rest of the population. In terms of access to mobile phones, the proportion is also lower among families containing persons with disabilities⁶².

At the same time, a survey carried out in 17 countries shows that more than half of households containing at least one person with a disability lack access to electricity. Another effect of the lack of electricity is that it forces those households to use traditional fuels such as firewood when cooking. That in turn increases the risk of being exposed to dangerous indoor smoke that causes the premature death of almost four million people every year⁶⁰.

The UN emphasises that surveys carried out in a number of countries have shown that more than half the households containing at least one person with a disability use wood or coal for cooking food. Efforts to make clean energy sources available are therefore extremely important for increasing the well-being of persons with disabilities. So far, however, the UN notes that too few such initiatives have been implemented⁶¹.

CRISES AND DISASTERS HIT HARDER

Conflicts, natural disasters and climate crises hit persons with disabilities particularly hard. They often find it more difficult to flee and have less access to information. They also run the risk of being particularly hard hit by the long-term consequences.

Persons with disabilities run a greater risk of being injured or dying in armed conflicts and other humanitarian disasters. One explanation for this may be that many of them are not able to join in with evacuations quickly. They are often also subjected to targeted attacks and other forms of abuse and exploitation, including sexual violence.

Furthermore, material and social disturbances that arise at the time of crises and conflicts are more likely to affect these people, who already have poorer access to basic social services.

Women with disabilities are often doubly discriminated against and are even more likely to suffer all forms of violence, extreme poverty and lack of access to health care and education⁶³. Despite this, persons with disabilities are often excluded from humanitarian operations⁶⁴ and peace processes.

Studies have shown that very few peace treaties even mention the situation for persons with disabilities⁶⁵.

More than half of all persons with disabilities live in countries affected by conflicts and natural disasters⁶⁷.

Accelerating climate change hits the poorest people in the world hardest and also risks causing many millions more to become trapped in poverty. Up to 143 million people may have been forced to flee their homes due to climate change in Latin America, southern Africa and South Asia by 2050. That warning is issued by the World Bank in a report⁶⁶.

Persons with disabilities and their families run a particular risk of suffering from climate change and its consequences. Extreme weather phenomena can affect this group in a number of different ways and can also affect their ability to provide for themselves. They may also suffer even more if competition and conflicts over diminishing natural resources increase.

LACK OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes that states must ensure that persons with disabilities are able to participate in political and public life on the same terms as everyone else. But this is rarely observed in practice.

One of the rights included in the Convention states that persons with disabilities have the right to vote in public elections and to stand as candidates. Despite that, many countries still have rules that place obstacles in the way of persons with disabilities. In its 2018 report, the UN notes that 128 out of 190 countries in the world have constitutions or laws that could restrict persons with disabilities' right to vote. In 94 countries, these restrictions are specifically targeted at persons with psycho-social or intellectual disabilities⁶⁸.

Even in cases where people are entitled to vote, information in advance of elections may be inaccessible for many people. This may be due, for example, to a lack of subtitles or sign language interpretation in election debates, which limits people's ability to make an informed choice.

In addition, polling stations may simply be physically inaccessible for persons with disabilities. Another problem may be that ballot papers can only be read by sighted persons, which jeopardises the secrecy of the ballot. All these obstacles limit the right to vote and people's participation and ability to have an influence in the society in which they live.

That may be one reason why persons with disabilities are less likely to vote in public elections than others and are less politically active than others. The UN notes that there is a gap of over 30 percentage points in some countries⁶⁹.



Chapter 3:

Voices on the most important issues

What is the most important issue at present?



Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo, the World Bank Group adviser on disability issues:

“I would say accountability. Governments are accountable to one another when it comes to processes for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. The national evaluations are also a question of accountability. However, it is also a question of governments and authorities being accountable to their populations, including persons with disabilities. Another issue is that organisations must demand accountability of their governments. We now have the framework – Agenda 2030 has been established. We have the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In many countries, we have begun to see laws passed and guidelines drawn up to meet the global goals or comply with the UN Convention. However, we are also told that many of those laws and guidelines are subsequently not applied. The requirement for accountability is important there too.”



Tiina Nummi-Södergren, project leader, Lika Unika Akademi, UN Association of Sweden:

“Goal 10 on inequality within and between countries. It includes all discrimination and matters relating to unjust treatment, both for individuals and groups, and with regard to intersectional discrimination. Goal 10 is a so-called gateway goal that can be compared to all the others to find and reduce inequality and find out if someone is not included. This is also the goal that inspires development cooperation and collaboration between countries.”



Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius, Program Officer/Bilateral Associate Expert, Global Program for Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development, World Blind Union (WBU):

“Accessibility It is a fundamental right under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Accessibility and design for all has been clearly included in Agenda 2030 and its goals. Greater accessibility is a catalyst to allow everyone, regardless of their disability or other limitations, to fully enjoy their rights in practice and participate in and contribute to social, economic, cultural and political life. Lack of accessibility adds to the widespread discrimination faced by persons with various forms of disability in everyday life and restricts access to work, education, basic social services, public places and transport. With access to services being increasingly digitalised, we have seen a widening digital gap as information and communication systems fail to comply with international and national accessibility standards. The digital gap is at its widest for persons with disabilities and older people. Accessibility also plays a vital role in preventing particularly vulnerable groups from being excluded during crises and emergency measures.”



Catalina Devandas Aguilar, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities 2014 – 2020:

“The issue of policy. That is what we need to focus on now. We must support states, international partners and organisations for persons with disabilities in understanding policy development and analysis. That will enable us to get to the next level. We need to increase our ability to understand how to translate the Convention and the sustainable goals to concrete initiatives that can bring about change. That includes everything from design to monitoring and evaluation. It also includes accountability and how initiatives are reviewed.

“If policies exist but results are not measured, it is impossible to say whether they lead to greater inclusion”.

If policies exist but results are not measured, it is impossible to say whether they lead to greater inclusion of persons with disabilities. It is also about what successes are achieved and how work on policies can be adapted if some things fail to work. In my opinion, that is the biggest challenge at the moment and it is faced by all stakeholders.”



Chapter 4:

The playing field has been altered and changes are taking place

Although many obstacles remain, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Agenda 2030 have paved the way for clear successes in the work to make visible and include persons with disabilities in international development work.

The Convention was groundbreaking

Catalina Devandas Aguilar was the world organisation's special rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities from when the UN established the post in 2014 up to 2020. She has extensive experience of working for greater inclusion in international development cooperation and considers that many positive things have happened in recent years.

“When the struggle to get the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNCPRD, adopted began, the disability movement could still only dream of getting to hold meetings with the most senior leaders of the UN,” she says. Now the situation is completely different.

“We have a space that didn't exist before. Through the Convention, we moved up to senior leadership levels within the UN, but getting to have a meeting with the Secretary-General remained a dream. Now, however, we are at a level where we have an office for cooperation with the UN Secretary-General. It is one way of measuring it. We now have a Secretary-General who often talks about persons with disabilities.”

Catalina Devandas Aguilar says that this is also observable in a number of national development strategies, where persons with disabilities are now mentioned. She also points out the importance of the fact that Agenda 2030 is universal – and therefore applies to all countries.

“Even the very richest countries have made a commitment to act against injustice. As a result, those countries are also making efforts to include persons with disabilities and to address the inequalities they suffer.”

Her experience is that issues affecting persons with disabilities were previously only discussed as specific development issues. That has changed because the UN Convention and the sustainable goals now establish that persons with disabilities are important for all efforts that contribute to the development of a nation. That is true regardless of whether it concerns human rights, peace and security or climate change.

The UN disability strategy

The UN disability strategy was launched in June 2019 with the aim of integrating the rights of persons with disabilities into the entire UN system. Through the strategy, the UN as an organisation has undertaken to implement and apply the principles of universal design in all its strategies and programmes. Universal design is about a responsibility to make use of people's experiences and to create solutions that work for as many people as possible from the start. At the same time, obstacles to

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted in December 2006. It is a crucial document in the fight to ensure that all people are able to exercise their human rights. The Convention also laid the foundations for persons with disabilities to be clearly highlighted in the global goals.

The impulse for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is usually abbreviated to UNCRPD, came as a result of persistent pressure from the international disability movement. It represents an important shift in perspective in the perception of persons with disabilities – from being regarded as passive recipients of welfare to being regarded as individuals with rights.

The Convention will promote, protect and guarantee the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities. It does not contain any new rights, but clarifies what is required for persons with disabilities to have their rights fully protected in the same way as everyone else. The aim is to remove the obstacles that prevent persons with disabilities from being able to exercise their human rights.

Persons with disabilities are, of course, also included in other conventions and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UNCRPD aims to strengthen the protection that persons with disabilities already have in other conventions.

The principles of the Convention relate to accessibility, non-discrimination, gender equality, individual self-determination, equal opportunities, respect for diversity, participation and inclusion in society. As well as respect for the development potential of children with disabilities. The Convention is an important tool in the work to eliminate disability throughout the world.

An overwhelming majority of the world's countries have ratified the UNCRPD. That means that the states have undertaken to comply with the Convention. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities scrutinises how countries implement and comply with the Convention. To allow comparison of how different countries apply the work on the UNCRPD, it is therefore important for reliable and relevant statistics on persons with disabilities to be available at global level.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been in force since 2006 and has been ratified by 181 states at the time of writing⁷⁰.

The Convention entered into force in Sweden in 2009. That means that all laws and all public activities in Sweden must comply with the articles of the Convention. The UNCRPD must also be one of the guiding principles of Swedish development policy.



Children of preschool age playing in a school playground in Kabaya, Rwanda.
Photo: Mia Munkhammar

accessibility must be identified and removed. The plan is for the strategy to provide a basis for sustainable development of accessibility in the UN for persons with disabilities⁷¹.

UN special rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities Catalina Devandas Aguilar stresses that the strategy is extremely important because it encourages the UN to become more inclusive internally. Through who is employed, for example, and also by prescribing that accessibility must be improved. It is also a question of the results the UN achieves. The strategy prescribes that the question of inclusion of persons with disabilities must be included in all work carried out by the UN.

The resolution on support at times of conflict and disaster

In June 2019, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution to support persons with disabilities affected by armed conflict and disasters. The resolution is described as the first of its kind. It calls on all member states and armed groups to protect persons with disabilities in conflict situations and ensure that they have access to justice, basic services and humanitarian assistance⁷².

Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network

The GLAD network is a collaboration between donors. The network coordinates bilateral and multilateral donors, the private sector and foundations that are working to improve

the disability perspective in international development cooperation.

The network was launched in London in December 2015 by a group of agencies that felt that the international community needed to share expertise and coordinate initiatives better in the work to implement Agenda 2030 and achieve its global goals.

The network operates according to the principles reflected in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the principle of Leave No One Behind⁷³.

Clearer rights perspective

Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius, of the World Blind Union's Programme for Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development, points out that the global goals and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities should be seen as mutually reinforcing tools, along with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction⁷⁴. This forms part of the work to ensure inclusion, enjoyment of rights and access to opportunities on an equal basis for everyone.

He considers that the global goals have changed international development cooperation and have influenced many agencies.

"There is an increasingly clear focus on rights to ensure that groups are not left behind. The specific references to persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups in general have contributed to this. Several major aid agencies, including Sida, have increasingly switched to working on the basis of a multidimensional poverty analysis. That analysis is aimed at illustrating the dimensions of poverty and marginalisation that go beyond material resources, including discrimination," he says.

Greater focus on the issues

Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo, the World Bank Group's adviser on disability issues, says that the specific references in Agenda 2030 were extremely important. They completely changed the way in which work for persons with disabilities was carried out.

At the same time, the follow-up reports produced to evaluate how far the countries of the world also meet the goals are voluntary. The UN holds an annual summit meeting to ensure that the work for Agenda 2030 is progressing. At the meeting held in July 2020, 47 countries voluntarily presented their national reviews of how their work was progressing⁷⁵.

Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo points out that some countries have dealt with reporting better than others. One positive example is Malaysia – a country that has clearly realised the need for cooperation with disability organisations in order to achieve the goals.

"They establish that disability organisations are key stakeholders. For Malaysia, it is also a question of beginning to identify the action that must be taken. I think that governments have begun to take concrete steps to enable them to really achieve the goals."

The Convention and Agenda 2030 have served as a platform that has enabled the world's disability organisations to grow stronger.

"The UN and aid donors have undoubtedly begun to think more about what development linked to persons with disabilities means in their programme work. Multilateral institutions such as the World Bank have also got better at inclusion," says Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo.

For the World Bank, this resulted, in 2018, in the institution establishing a framework consisting of ten points aimed at increasing



inclusion in a number of areas relating to the Bank's lending projects. The framework expressly emphasises the requirement for non-discrimination against persons with disabilities⁷⁶.

Examples from the UK and Sweden

In December 2018, the UK presented a new strategy to increase inclusion of persons with disabilities in the country's development cooperation over the next five years. In the programme statement, the then Minister for Development Penny Mordaunt stated that greater focus on persons with disabilities is crucial in the fight against poverty, for sustainable development and to be able to carry into effect the contents of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNCRPD. She stressed that inclusion leads to healthier, fairer and more prosperous societies – for everyone. At the same time, the strategy notes that many decision-makers and those active in development are still ignorant of the international frameworks for persons with disabilities. They are also unaware of the fact that persons with disabilities must be included in all development work and in all humanitarian operations⁷⁷. In July 2018, the UK also hosted the world's first global disability summit. It resulted in UN agencies, international financial institutions, representatives of governments and industry promising new initiatives to strengthen the inclusion of persons with disabilities⁷⁸.

The Swedish Sida has also increased support for combating discrimination and enabling persons with disabilities to have their human rights respected and escape from poverty. In December 2019, Sida announced that in the coming years they would, among other things, provide new support⁷⁹ for the UN Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNPRPD, which carries out work at global

and local level to strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities. Sida has also started to use a specific statistical marker for improved monitoring of its initiatives relating to persons with disabilities⁸⁰.

The changes are noticeable in the field

New resolutions and strategies are examples of how the issues have had a greater impact at the highest level of global development cooperation in recent years. However, the changes have also started to become visible in the field. This is described by Tiina Nummi-Södergren, a project manager at Lika Unika Akademin, a project that aims to provide more detailed knowledge of the disability and rights perspective based on the UN's sustainability goals.

She stresses that Agenda 2030 is “one of the biggest and most important political agreements of present times” and says that implementation is now on the agenda in many countries. She gives the example of Mozambique, which adopted a new education strategy in 2019. According to Tiina Nummi-Södergren, that strategy clearly takes into account the global development goal of every child's right to schooling.

“The strategy states that children with disabilities must be included in education. It means that a survey must be initiated to find the children with disabilities who are being kept at home and have no opportunity to go to school at present. Teachers must also receive special training on how to include these children,” she says.



A school child with albinism, Tanzania. Photo: Anita Andersson

“A survey must be initiated to find the children with disabilities who are being kept at home and have no opportunity to go to school.”

Chapter 5:

The way forward – from greater knowledge to real changes

Countries and development agencies have therefore come some of the way through a greater realisation of what is required in order for the slogan “Leave No One Behind” to be carried into effect. However, concrete action is also required in order to transform words into deeds. Particularly in the form of political decisions that are also implemented.

Experts stress that the lack of reliable, relevant and disaggregated statistics relating to persons with disabilities makes it more difficult to compare the effects of different initiatives. That data would also be important to allow comparison of the extent to which the countries comply with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the commitments in accordance with Agenda 2030.

The international disability movement calls on the countries of the world to increase the collection of disaggregated statistics relating to persons with disabilities. This is in order to pave the way for new initiatives based on accurate factual data.

The aim is to produce better statistics in several priority areas. So that they can then form the basis for new rules and laws aimed at enabling persons with disabilities to be included and able to participate in society on equal terms with everyone else.

The statistics and data collected and analysed in the UN Disability and Development Report show that persons with disabilities have hitherto not been sufficiently included in the implementation of the global goals. This also applies to monitoring and review of developments⁸¹.

The authors of the report note that the goals of Agenda 2030 can only be achieved if the work is carried out in such a way that persons with disabilities are also included and engaged⁸².

The goals of Agenda 2030 can only be achieved if persons with disabilities are included and involved.

International organisations also stress that all development initiatives must be based on a rights perspective. That means that the rights of persons with disabilities must be included in all political actions and programmes aimed at reducing inequalities.

The fact that greater involvement by many local authorities is still needed is shown in a global study produced by the International Disability Alliance (IDA). It shows that a very large proportion of organisations working for persons with disabilities are dissatisfied

with the level of commitment to these issues shown by local authorities⁸³.

Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius of the World Blind Union programme for inclusive and accessible urban development also stresses the need for more aggregated statistics in order to create more evidence-based work on policies in which disability organisations are involved. He also points out the importance of development funding being more rights-based and states that there is currently a gap between organisations working in a rights-based way and the way that the financial system works. He states that the rights of persons with disabilities should therefore be included in the financial regulations and frameworks aimed at reducing inequality so that policies and laws are not weakened.

Inclusion must permeate all initiatives

Persons with disabilities cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group.

“Greater focus must be placed on the diversity of any existing subgroups and in particular those that are often invisible,” says Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius.

There is a great need for “mainstreaming” in line with Agenda 2030. That concept means that issues relating to persons with disabilities should not be dealt with separately, but should be integrated and included in all ordinary parts of an activity.

“In my experience, state agencies have not done enough to involve disability organisations in work on policy and budgets and have not taken sufficient advantage of the expertise and experience possessed by disability organisations and their members. This has created a vacuum in which states do things in good faith but then risk not responding to the needs that the

various disability groups have. He states that if countries had really accepted the ambitions contained in Agenda 2030 and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there would have been more progress today.

“There is a need for targeted action to ensure that persons with disabilities are not ‘dealt with in silos’. That is because of the risk of it leading to a situation whereby necessary and extensive organisational or social changes cannot be carried into effect,” says Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius.

“Agenda 2030 represents a comprehensive commitment to mainstream disability inclusion in global development work. Agenda 2030 has also created greater clarity with regard to the fact that both mainstreaming and targeted action are necessary in order to achieve the goal,” he states.

Investments that also work in practice

A considerable amount of work will be required before the principle of Leave No One Behind can be carried into effect. This applies, among other things, to the goal that all children with disabilities must also be able to go to school. However, it is not just a question of making room for these children in the classroom, it is also a question of providing them with meaningful schooling.

“Although there may be guidelines that establish that every child has a right to go to school, it may be the case that schools are not accessible and these children just end up in a corner. It is about developing policies that also work in practice,” says UN special rapporteur Catalina Devandas Aguilar.

There is now greater knowledge of what needs to be done to include persons with disabilities in global development work. But



this must also be turned into concrete work on policies at national level. Those are the big obstacles at present, says Catalina Devandas Aguilar:

“Countries are generally still in the process of beginning to understand what human rights-based inclusion of persons with disabilities means in terms of subsidies, social protection, health and non-discrimination. But it is not sufficiently clear to everyone. She says that many states are still carrying out initiatives from a charitable perspective or a health perspective instead of from a human rights-based perspective.

The next step is to also start implementing the necessary political efforts. One prerequisite for that is development of countries' work on policy. That is an area where there are still major deficiencies, according to the UN special rapporteur:

“It is about changing the daily lives of persons with disabilities at national level.”

She stresses how important it is for all countries in the world to adopt a so-called twin-track approach in all policy work and in all initiatives. It means that all activities combine universal solutions and a disability perspective with separate targeted solutions for persons with disabilities. Adequate measures must also be put in place to ensure that no discrimination against persons with disabilities may occur. Other crucial issues, according to the UN rapporteur, include ensuring in the initiatives that persons with disabilities are able to participate in everything that is done and that the activities are accessible.

World Bank adviser Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo also stresses the importance of the measures being distributed downwards at all levels of the public authorities – and also at local level.

“That is where the people live and that is where the message of ‘Leave No One Behind’ must be put across. People in smaller towns and villages must also have access to inclusive schools, care facilities and water resources. There is still a great deal to be done,” she says.

Some groups remain particularly vulnerable

The goals for persons with disabilities are set high in both the Convention and in Agenda 2030. It is about creating equal access to education, jobs with decent working conditions, inclusion in social, economic and political life and designing accessible cities. Although there is still a long way to go, UN rapporteur Catalina Devandas Aguilar believes that the bar must be set high in the struggle for inclusion. Compromises are not enough. Half-way is not good enough, she says.

“The situation for persons with disabilities is worryingly bad in many places in the world. Particularly if you factor in intersectionality. If you have a disability and are also poor, female or belong to an indigenous people, the situation becomes even more complicated.

Action is required to combat the widespread violence suffered by girls and women with disabilities. One of the sub-goals in Agenda 2030 aims to significantly reduce violence in the world. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also clearly establishes that the countries of the world must implement all possible measures to reduce gender-based violence. Studies show that girls and women with disabilities are many times more likely to suffer violence⁸⁴. But, despite this, the problem is still all too rarely highlighted,” says Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo:

“When we talk about violence, it is important for us also to stress the need to reach out to

these girls and women, who are still extremely vulnerable.”

Institutionalisation is still a problem

For persons with certain forms of disability, the consequences can be particularly severe. This applies to persons with intellectual disabilities, extensive movement impairment or mental health problems, for example. In many countries, these people run a very high risk of being forced into institutions where they lose their personal freedom and in some cases may be subjected to extremely bad treatment.

The institutionalisation of persons with disabilities is still a major problem in many countries in the world, says Catalina Devandas Aguilar.

“It is terrible that in many cases this is justified by the assertion that it is necessary. It is wrong to keep people locked up in psychiatric or other institutions. Instead, alternatives based on a human rights perspective are needed, where people are offered the support they need in their homes.”

A report published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2019 gives examples of the inhumane treatment many persons with disabilities are subjected to. The report states, among other things, that thousands of people who either are – or are presumed to be – suffering from mental health problems are being kept in chains in various institutions in Nigeria⁸⁵. It is a form of crime against humanity that HRW has also documented in several other countries, including Indonesia and Ghana.

Civil society needs more knowledge

Many countries have included guidelines in their development strategies stipulating that their initiatives must include persons with

disabilities. At the same time, many of the international NGOs operating in the field have not done this. This is verified by researchers at the University of Washington in an article⁸⁶ published in August 2019. Their conclusion is that the international aid community has thus failed to live up to the slogan “Leave No One Behind”.

The study shows that all organisations from large development agencies down to organisations at grassroots level largely lack knowledge of the need for inclusion of persons with disabilities. The authors of the article stress that efforts to increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities will simply not succeed unless the organisations that are active in the field also change their methods. That is because it is often these organisations that deliver the services for which the official aid is intended, such as building schools and delivering educational materials, providing vocational training and distributing food.

Many organisations in international development cooperation regard the disability perspective as an area that is completely separate from the initiatives they themselves are implementing. It is common for organisations working in the field not to realise that persons with disabilities are also among the groups that need income and jobs, good education and health care. Many organisations also state that they include a gender equality focus in their initiatives. However, at the same time, they forget that girls and women with disabilities are often unable to participate in their projects on the same terms as others.

The researchers at the University of Washington state that aid agencies will not succeed in achieving their goals of reducing poverty or improving health among the most marginalised unless persons with disabilities are included to a significantly greater extent⁸⁷.





A demonstration in Brussels in 2017. Photo: Anna Morin

This conclusion is shared by MyRight and our partner organisations.

The goals may not be achieved – but the objective must remain

So far, there is little evidence that the global goals will be achieved in time. Regular UN reports⁸⁸ and other statistics show that progress is far too slow.

The UN special rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities from 2014 to 2020, Catalina Devandas Aguilar, says that mobilisation of resources is the major problem for all sustainability goals. In order to achieve the goals, states and development agencies would need to allocate more funds. She considers that this is a major structural issue in international terms and the concentration of wealth would need to be addressed. At the same time, she says that there have been important steps forward in the work to improve the situation for persons with disabilities.

“We are a long way from achieving all the goals we want to achieve. But I believe that change will be achieved. There is more awareness of the issue of inequality now than at any previous time. We have ten years to come a little closer and we must use the global goals to provide the impulse for this. But it is a question of a process, and processes take time. However, we are a long way away from a situation whereby in 2030 we experience a world in which every single person with a disability is included.”

Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius at World Blind Union says that achievement of the goals is not realistic and refers to the fact that world communities, governments and organisations have been discussing how important the agenda is and how to measure the achievement of goals for five years. He considers that while the agenda has resulted in many good initiatives, the “required systemic shift” has still not happened.

“Agenda 2030 is based on human rights, but many state agencies fail to see the link. And while the agenda is embraced, space for civil society is limited globally, nationally and locally in many places,” he says.

At the same time, Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius stresses that even though the goals will not be fully achieved, the world still has the chance to go a long way in the work on inclusion of persons with disabilities. But then it requires a “conversion”.

“There is a need for greater focus on accessibility in all areas where systems and strategies must be permeated by accessibility and inclusion. Only then can we move forward. In three decades from now, nearly two billion persons with disabilities and elderly people will be living in cities. That leads to greater pressure to make accessibility an accepted component of all urban planning and to implement it together so as not to exclude particularly vulnerable groups”, he says.

Twin-track approach

A term to denote working on the basis of universal solutions combined with specific targeted solutions for those affected.

Adopting a twin-track approach means 1) including a disability perspective in all activities (main-streaming), 2) working with targeted solutions (targeting) for groups and individuals.

Chapter 6:

The pandemic threatens development goals

The global crisis triggered by the Corona pandemic reinforces pre-existing inequalities and shines a light on the widespread exclusion of persons with disabilities. The virus hits persons with disabilities harder, both directly and indirectly. The work on inclusion will be of crucial importance.

Even before the current crisis, the international community faced major challenges in the work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Now the economies of both low- and high-income countries have been severely affected, while reports warn of a rapid increase in poverty and hunger in the world. Many experts fear that the restrictions and lockdowns that have followed in the wake of the spread of the virus will lead to many millions more people suffering poverty and hunger.

"We see how Covid-19 is wreaking havoc in the global economy and it is most observable among our most vulnerable ethnic groups", says Tariq Ahmad, a senior adviser at the Oxfam aid organisation in the USA⁸⁹.

A study by the UN University, UNU, warns that almost half a billion more people are at risk of ending up in poverty in the wake of the global pandemic. That equates to eight per cent of the population of the world⁹⁰.

Those who are already marginalised suffer the most

A so-called policy brief issued by the UN in May 2020 states that persons with disabilities are among the most marginalised in all societies affected by crises. It is also, as noted earlier in this report, a group that is more likely to live in poverty and experiences more difficulty accessing health care. This situation has been made worse by Covid-19.

There is a risk that the socio-economic consequences may affect persons with disabilities in both the long and short term. This applies in the labour market, for example, where research has shown that this group is at greater risk of losing their jobs⁹¹. The social safety nets for persons with disabilities are also extremely weak in many countries. The growing need for unpaid domestic work also tends to reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities⁹², which risks having a particularly serious impact on women with disabilities⁹³.

A survey of how the crisis has affected the circumstances of children, parents and carers shows that persons living with disabilities are among the groups that are hardest hit by the consequences of the pandemic. Half the carers with a disability who took part in the survey report losing their jobs during the crisis and 85 per cent of them report losing more than half their income⁹⁴.

The evidence also suggests that schoolchildren with disabilities are particularly badly affected by school closures. These pupils run a greater risk of being excluded in any transition to distance learning⁹⁵. Lack of support, a working internet connection and accessible educational materials has an adverse effect on the most marginalised groups, including children with disabilities.

Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo, the World Bank's global adviser on disability issues, says that the pandemic has left many children in the world without school meals, health care, education and other social services. She says that the distance learning introduced in many countries does not work for everyone. It is not just a question of internet access being too expensive for many poor families.

"If you decide, for example, that all teaching should be carried out by radio – how will you manage that if you are deaf?," she asks.

Greater risks for persons with disabilities

The UN stresses that persons with disabilities run a greater risk of contracting Covid-19. That may be because they have no access to basic services in the form of clean water and sanitary facilities or because they are placed in institutions that are often overcrowded⁹⁶. Persons with disabilities, including the elderly, make up the majority of the people in the world living in institutions, where there is a heightened risk of contagion⁹⁷.

Persons with disabilities are often discriminated against in health care. This also applies in the context of the corona crisis. They run a greater risk of not receiving the care they need or access to interventions of decisive importance.

MyRight's partner organisations have reported how persons with visual or hearing impair-

ments have not been reached by important information on spread of contagion or safety measures. The same applies to information on distribution of food parcels. The reason is often lack of access and failure to adapt official information for persons with special needs.

Many also testify to how they become reticent when it comes to seeking care for themselves or their child with a disability for fear that the family will be infected by Covid-19 during a hospital visit. Lost income may mean less money for vital medicine and treatment for this group.

Also, when it comes to the risks of suffering domestic violence, the pandemic has had a particularly severe effect on persons with disabilities, especially women and children. Research has shown that children and women with disabilities run a much greater risk of being subjected to violence than others. Many experts consider that it is extremely likely that these risks have increased due to restrictions and curfews imposed in the wake of the pandemic. The introduction of quarantine leads to a significant risk of more girls and women who suffer violence and sexual abuse being isolated with their abusers.

Need for statistics to monitor the effects

Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo says that one important lesson learned from previous crises is that there is a great need to compile information and statistics on persons with disabilities in connection with the pandemic. Work is also being carried out at the World Bank to bring this about. She points out that there are unconfirmed reports that a considerable number of persons with disabilities have died in the pandemic in the United States and elsewhere.

"We have not data on this as yet. But even if



there are no official figures, we know that the places most affected are health facilities and housing communities. And who are the people present in these places? Elderly people and persons with disabilities. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that this is the case throughout the world,” she says.

The UN stresses that the corona pandemic has led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis which has affected persons with disabilities to a disproportionate extent. For that reason, according to the UN, the world must also respond to the crisis with ‘unprecedented’ efforts. It should take the form of a massive upgrade in support and political work to ensure that persons with disabilities are offered basic social services, including access to health care and social protection⁹⁸.

The economic impact of the Corona crisis poses a serious threat to the development successes achieved in recent decades. Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo at the World Bank stresses how important it is that this should not be permitted to occur.

“Because we know that persons with disabilities often come in last place, their organisations and development agencies must now come together to work towards the requirement that these people should not be left behind”, she says.

At the same time, UN Rapporteur Catalina Devandas Aguilar emphasises that some results have actually been achieved even amid the darkness of the pandemic. She says that the reports issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights show that persons with disabilities often come in second place in countries’ crisis management. But there are also several cases where states have actually made efforts to include this group.

“Although those efforts are highly dispersed,

they are nevertheless good examples. If we had not had the Convention or the sustainable goals, the situation would have been characterised by complete invisibility.

Catalina Devandas Aguilar says that the pandemic has made some countries realise that their level of preparedness for persons with disabilities has not been good enough. Which has led them to begin reviewing their

“Although those efforts are highly dispersed, they are nevertheless good examples. If we had not had the Convention or the sustainable goals, the situation would have been characterised by complete invisibility.”

systems. That is something new.

“In the past, we would have been forced to protest against this and would then probably have received the response that ‘we’re doing everything we can’ and that would have been the end of the discussion”, she says.

If the corona crisis is tackled by means of efforts including persons with disabilities, it could lead to the creation of systems that are more inclusive, accessible and flexible. Which are therefore in a better position to respond to complex situations by first reaching out to those who are most vulnerable, says the UN⁹⁹.



Kundan Kamar Shah, 7 from Nepal, has just received treatment for his haemophilia.
Photo: Liun Riad Edmon

MyRight's recommendations for Covid-19-related initiatives

1. RIGHT TO AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Everyone has the right to know how they can protect themselves and others from infection, how rules and restrictions are planned and what services are available to help and assist the sick. Persons with disabilities must receive information in a way that is accessible for them. This may, for example, consist of information in sign language, easy-to-read or braille.

2. SPECIFIC INITIATIVES FOR THOSE BELONGING TO A RISK GROUP

For certain groups of persons with disabilities, those in authority must take specific responsibility and put specific measures in place. For example, extra testing and support for those at particular risk of being seriously affected by Covid-19 due to, for example, illnesses affecting the lungs and respiratory systems or other health conditions.

3. INSTITUTIONALISATION IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE

Persons with disabilities must not be placed in closed institutions or abandoned. Isolation or institutionalisation is never acceptable.

4. NECESSARY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS MUST BE GUARANTEED

In the case of any quarantine, the authorities must ensure that necessary medicines are available for persons with disabilities and that support functions work for persons with disabilities with a need for access.

5. EQUAL CARE FOR ALL

Persons with disabilities who have Covid-19 and need care may be discriminated against. Everyone must receive equally qualified care, regardless of whether or not they have a disability. No-one must have any difficulty seeking or obtaining help and care due to a disability.



Chapter 7:

Good examples of how initiatives produce results

The work carried out by the world's disability organisations shows that it is possible to bring about real change. Initiatives are producing results, both at global and local level. That work has led to changes in laws and to a new approach among international institutions. It has also brought about initiatives that have changed the lives of many individuals.

Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius reports that in 2020, the World Blind Union, which represents 250 million persons with visual impairments worldwide, signed a groundbreaking agreement with the UN body UN-Habitat¹⁰⁰. It relates to an initiative to increase accessibility, disability inclusion and universal design which focuses, among other things, on Goal 11 on the need to create sustainable cities.

"The agreement is unique. Hopefully it will pave the way for more UN agencies to actively cooperate with organisations representing persons with disabilities. Thus enabling persons with disabilities to act as experts in their own right," says Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius.

In February 2020, UN-Habitat organised the tenth World Urban Forum, the world's largest conference for the development of sustainable cities. Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius says that organisations representing persons with disabilities at the meeting had "a huge impact". That is partly due to the fact that representatives of public authorities, cities, the private sector, multilateral bodies and research held

talks with disability organisations. Which is something that, according to him, rarely happens otherwise. The impact was also made clear in the declaration adopted at the meeting, which includes measures to make the world's cities more inclusive and accessible.

Another example highlighted by Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius is the Bridging the Gap¹⁰¹ project, which is financed by DCI, the EU's aid instrument. It is an initiative aimed at increasing the inclusion of persons with disabilities at both international and national level. The programme involves collaboration with authorities and local disability organisations to increase inclusion and knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in several African and Latin American countries.

Inclusion improved water resources

One successful project highlighted by Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo of the World Bank is an initiative to improve access to water and sanitary facilities in rural Indonesia. The need for clean water and good sanitation for all is included in Goal 6. The initiative in Indonesia was implemented by the World Bank in collaboration with the Australian Development Agency and local civil society. In the project, which was named Pamsimas, all parties joined forces and began by drawing up a strategy document that then formed the basis for the initiative.

"What was unusual here was that the project went further than usual by viewing water as an asset. The extent to which persons with disabilities had access to that asset was then also controlled.

In the villages, local committees were dealing with issues relating to the priceless water resources. The project also allowed persons with disabilities to receive the training needed to enable them to be members of these control groups. Charlotte Vuyiswa McClain-Nhlapo tells how this gave people a new opportunity to make their voices heard and gain greater influence.

"When the committees brought in members with disabilities, those people were able to contribute ideas based on their own experience. For example, it might be a question of where access to water could be placed and how it would be designed. That led to major changes and really altered the whole playing field. It was a large project that was of great importance in a number of villages in rural areas", she says.

Outreach activities make a difference

Sujana Shakya, MyRight's land coordinator in Nepal, describes how the projects implemented by MyRight's partner organisations in the country focus on a number of areas linked to the global goals. One example of this is a number of courses, including sign language, that can be linked to Global Sustainability Goal 4, which stipulates that everyone must be provided with a good education.

Sujana Shakya tells how it is common for parents to be initially reluctant to release children with disabilities. That can also apply to adult family members. In Nepal, it is very common for families not to want to invest any resources in these people because it is often considered a waste of scarce resources.

Instead, children and young persons with disabilities are often made responsible for doing part of the housework. According to Sujana Shakya, they are rarely seen as a necessary resource in society.

For that reason, the partner organisations are actively seeking parents of children with disabilities. These meetings enable the members of the organisations, who have disabilities themselves, to describe in their own words how their lives have changed. Another important goal of these meetings is to show parents that they represent a serious, well-functioning organisation.

Pavements in Sarajevo are being adapted for persons with visual impairments

In central Sarajevo, work is being carried out to improve the accessibility for persons with visual impairments on the city's pavements, an initiative that is in line with Goal 11. Binasa Gorallija, MyRight's land coordinator in Bosnia-Herzegovina, describes how it is a clear result of the advocacy work carried out by MyRight's partner organisations in the country and their cooperation with the Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired Stockholm Gotland, SRF, from Sweden.

Binasa Gorallija has extensive experience of working for greater inclusion in her home country and says that much has happened over the past 15 years. Although support from the country's public authorities is still far too weak. However, according to her, the demands of young persons with disabilities are completely different nowadays. Their attitude is that they also have rights.



Statement

From isolated in her home to breadwinner

Learning sign language can change everything for people who have never had a chance to learn to communicate with those around them. One example of this is 25-year-old Heera Rana, who comes from southern Nepal. This is her story:

I live in a village in the district of Kailali and have lived at home with my parents all my life. For a long time I had almost no contact with the outside world because I am deaf and could not talk to anyone.

I have always dreamed of going to school, but it never happened because I come from a poor family.

But, a couple of years ago, representatives from the local Deaf Association of Kailali organisation came to our house to talk to my parents. They wanted me to take part in a project they were running, in which I would get the chance to learn sign language.

However, my parents were doubtful at first. It took a lot of persuasion before they allowed me to start the training course. Then everything moved quickly.

I didn't know a single sign before, but I managed to learn sign language in a short time. Suddenly I was able to communicate with the outside world – and also with my classmates and teachers. My self-confidence grew.

Through the project I later had the chance to train as a dressmaker. I was proud to show my family that I had learned a trade.

My goal was to start my own dressmaking business in my home village. With the help of my family and a grant from the organisation, I was finally able to open my own business.

I received a lot of orders from my neighbours in the village and suddenly I had an income of my own. Previously, my family had no hope that I would be able to contribute financially, but they now depend on the money I earn from my dressmaking.

Over time, women in the village began to come to me to ask for advice. That led to me starting to give lessons in dressmaking.

I'm now treated with much more respect by those around me. And my self-esteem has grown a great deal compared to just a couple of years ago.



“Previously, my family had no hope that I would be able to contribute financially, but they now depend on the money I earn from my dressmaking.”

Chapter 8:

Recommendations



Bishan is one of the students at the Autism Care Nepal Society in Chitwan, Nepal.

Work and initiatives take place within international development cooperation and unfortunately often completely bypass persons with disabilities. They are often forgotten or given low priority.

With a disability perspective in international initiatives, we are not only able to reach more people, we can also ensure that persons with disabilities themselves are involved in improving their circumstances and the circumstances of those around them. It is possible, with relatively simple resources, for existing activities and initiatives to reach and include millions more.

Agenda 2030 and its 17 global goals cannot be achieved without including persons with disabilities. In order to achieve the joint sustainability goals we have set together, everyone working on initiatives at international level must have a disability perspective. Only then can we say that we are actually working according to the principle stated in the agenda: Leave No One Behind.

MyRight has 10 pieces of advice for agencies in international development cooperation:

1. MAKE SURE YOU REACH EVERYONE

Ensure that your initiatives benefit persons with disabilities on equal terms with others in the target group. Develop policy work and adapt your goals and policy documents. Make sure you include the required development for persons with disabilities in your organisation's procedures.

2. IT MUST WORK IN PRACTICE

Don't forget the local level. Ensure that investments not only become national targets, but are also converted to practical investments at local level.

3. COLLABORATE WITH DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS

Involve and collaborate with organisations representing persons with disabilities as experts in all initiatives. Consult people who possess their own experience and ask them for tips and suggestions. Plan and map out how you are going to include, consult and collaborate with persons with disabilities and the disability movement.

4. IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION

Include questions about the situation for persons with disabilities in data collection and evaluations and inventory the situation for persons with disabilities in your partner countries. Here it is particularly useful to consult the disability movement in your partner countries. Improve the collection of disaggregated data and statistics which separates out the situation for persons with disabilities. This enables you to create an accurate basis for initiatives.

5. WORKING WITH TWIN-TRACK

Use twin-track when you work on including everyone, regardless of their disability, in projects. Twin-track means: 1) including a disability perspective in all activities (mainstreaming), 2) working with targeted solutions (targeting) for groups and individuals.

6. USE UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Think about it beforehand and use universal design. Arrange new environments, materials and activities so they are accessible for everyone. Introduce accessible ways of working. Stakeholders should ensure that premises, both workplaces and clubs and associations, are accessible for persons with disabilities. That also applies to products, services and activities. Get help from disability organisations and organisations with expertise in accessibility.

7. INCLUDE GIRLS AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Girls and women with disabilities must be included in all work relating to gender equality and in all initiatives relating to women. Inclusion must take place at all levels: planning, design, implementation, execution, follow-up and evaluation. Specific initiatives are also needed for girls and women with disabilities.

8. SEE THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE GROUP

Remember that persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous group, but consist of a number of subgroups in which some people are particularly invisible.

9. PAY ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT AUTHORITIES ARE DUTY-BEARERS

In countries that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, public authorities at all levels of society are obliged to comply with the undertakings in the Convention.

10. MAKE SURE TO BRING ABOUT FULL PARTICIPATION AT HOME

Organisations involved in development work should be more willing to open the door to persons with disabilities, both in their workforces and in decision-making bodies such as boards of directors.



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