

FACT SHEET ON POVERTY AND DISABILITY

“If development is about bringing excluded people into society, then disabled people belong in schools, in legislatures, at work, on buses, at the theatre and everywhere else that those who are not disabled take for granted... Unless disabled people are brought into the development mainstream, it will be impossible to cut poverty in half by 2015 or to give every girl and boy the chance to achieve a primary education by the same date-goals agreed to by more than 180 world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000.”

James D. Wolfensohn, President, World Bank
Tuesday, December 3, 2002; Page A25, Washington Post

EXPOSING A GLOBAL PICTURE OF DISABILITY AND POVERTY

- ⊙ The United Nations estimates that 600 million people worldwide have a disability, of which approximately 70% are believed to live in a developing country¹
- ⊙ According to the United Nations, one in 20 people have a disability (this is admittedly a conservative estimate. It has been noted that a more realistic figure is closer to one in 10)², of which an estimated 1 – 3% of the total population have an intellectual disability³
- ⊙ Recent World Bank estimates indicate that people with disabilities may account for as many as **one in five** of the world’s poorest people⁴, suggesting that of the World Bank’s 1.3 billion living on less than \$1 per day⁵, approximately 260 million have a disability (or an estimated 43% of the total disabled population)
- ⊙ UNICEF notes that some 150 million children with disabilities lack access to child care services, schools, recreation and other social services, and are likely to remain illiterate and untrained, ultimately unable to join the labour force⁶

¹ E. Helander, *Prejudice and Dignity; an introduction to community based rehabilitation*, UNDP, 1992.

² Ibid.

³ UNICEF, 1998, p. 16.

⁴ Ann Elwan, Poverty and Disability; a background paper for the World Development Report, World Bank, October 1999

⁵ See James D. Wolfensohn. Poor, Disabled and Shut Out, Tuesday, December 3, 2002; Page A25 Washington Post

⁶ UNICEF, 1999. “The right to education of children with disabilities, a review of States Parties initial reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child”, prepared by Amor Almagro, Consultant, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office.

THE CYCLE OF POVERTY AND ISOLATION BEGINS: EXCLUSION FROM EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, EMPLOYMENT

"Poor nutrition, dangerous working and living conditions, limited access to vaccination programmes, and to health and maternity care, poor hygiene, bad sanitation, inadequate information about the causes of impairments, war and conflict, and natural disasters all cause disability."

Department for International Development (DFID), UK, [Disability, Poverty and Development](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/disability.pdf),
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/disability.pdf>

- ⊙ UN statistics state that roughly 20% of all disabilities are caused by malnutrition and over 10% are caused by infectious diseases
- ⊙ Mortality for children with disabilities may be high as 80% in countries where under-five mortality as a whole has decreased to below 20%. In certain cases there seems to be a 'weeding out' process where the lives of infants with disabilities are so severely undervalued⁷
- ⊙ Recent UNESCO studies suggest that only 1-2% of children with disabilities in developing countries receive an education. Boys with disabilities attend school more frequently than do girls with disabilities⁸
- ⊙ UNICEF estimates that only around 1% of girls with disabilities are literate⁹
- ⊙ It is estimated that only 2% of people with disabilities in developing countries have access to rehabilitation and appropriate basic services¹⁰
- ⊙ A recent report for the ILO notes that approximately 80% of people with disabilities are unemployed¹¹
- ⊙ Employment opportunities for people with disabilities, whatever their capabilities, are limited due to a lack of education, vocational training, and, as a result, experience
- ⊙ Employers' prejudice and lack of awareness of the abilities of people with disabilities is another major contributing factor to a staggering unemployment rate
- ⊙ Access to self-employment is limited by inadequate credit and support services

⁷ World Disability Report, 1999.

⁸ C. Lewis and S. Sygall (eds.), Loud, Proud and Passionate; Including Women with Disabilities in International Development Programmes, MIUSA 1997

⁹ UNICEF (1999) An Overview of Young People Living with Disabilities: Their Needs and their Rights. Working Paper Series

¹⁰ Leandro Despouy, 1993, *Human Rights and Disabled Persons* (Study Series 6), Centre for Human Rights Geneva and UN New York

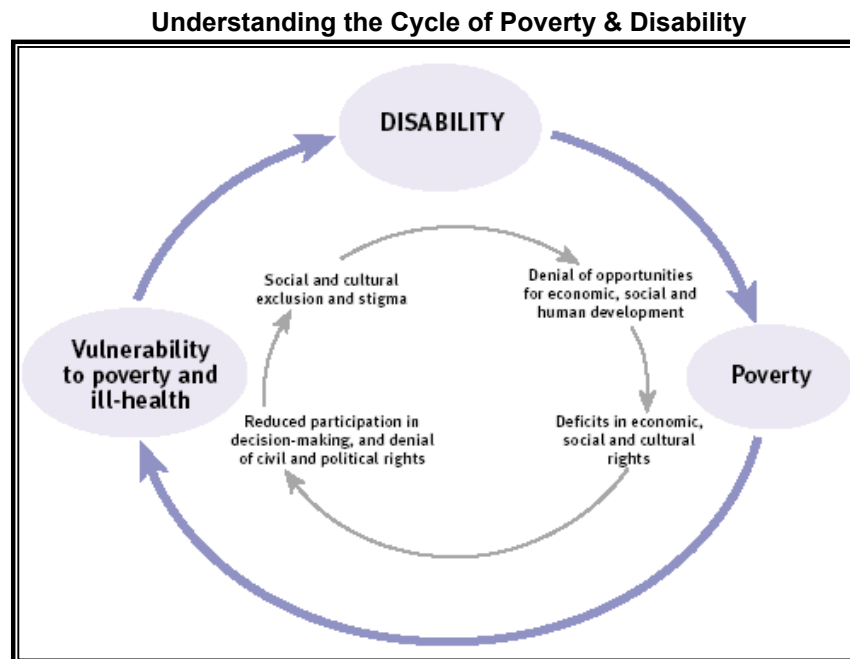
¹¹ The International Labor Organization (ILO), "Time for Equality in Work"

EXCLUSION: A FAMILY AFFAIR

“Analysis of Tanzanian survey data has revealed that households with a member who has a disability have a mean consumption less than 60% of the average (and a headcount 20% greater than average), leading the author to conclude that disability is a hidden face of African poverty.”

Howard White, Africa Poverty Status Report, Third Draft, SPQ 1999

- ⦿ It is recognized that decreased exposure to educational and vocational training coupled with undervaluing of the abilities of people with disabilities result in fewer opportunities for self-sustaining employment
- ⦿ Increased medical costs associated with disability, including travel and access costs
- ⦿ Responsibility of care-giving falls disproportionately on mothers or female siblings resulting in even fewer opportunities for female family members to gain employment or complete schooling¹²
- ⦿ Families report that time to build social networks and support circles, friendships, get involved in their community are consumed with the need to just “get by” resulting in fewer mechanisms for support and limited social capital



Source: <http://www.dff.gov.uk/Pubs/files/disability.pdf>

¹² S. Miles, *Strengthening Disability and Development Work*, BOND Discussion Paper, Feb. 1999

BEING PART OF CHANGE: THE PRSP PROCESS AND OTHER RELATED INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

Any poverty reduction strategy has to put the disability issue in a prominent position. Perhaps more than for others, poverty for individuals with disabilities is not only monetary poverty...Among the dimensions put forward in recent poverty concepts, "voicelessness" and "powerlessness" are particularly important to understand the specific determinants of the poverty of disabled persons

(ILO, Disability and Poverty Reduction Strategies: How to Ensure that Access of Persons with Disabilities to Decent and Productive Work is Part of the PRSP Process, November 2002, p.4)

- ⊙ Disability has not been explicitly included in any I-PRSP or PRSP to date
- ⊙ Three of seven Fast Track countries – countries that will receive additional funding for their Education for All planning (Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Honduras) – working directly with Inclusion International members have included the needs of students with disabilities
- ⊙ The G8 Task Force on Education noted in their Education for All report that fewer than 2% of children with disabilities participate in formal education systems and recommended that "measures for disadvantaged children should be included in national education plans and that education must be inclusive"; report endorsed by G8 leaders
- ⊙ A World Fit for Children entrusts signatory governments of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to, "... take all measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including equal access to health, education and recreational services, by children with disabilities and children with special needs; to ensure the recognition of their dignity; to promote their self-reliance; and to facilitate their active participation in the community." (WFfC, para III.A.21)

