

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

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Disability is Not Inability



Why should access of persons with disabilities to productive work be part of Poverty Reduction Strategies?

- Disabled persons are not a small minority: 7-10% or more of any population
- Disabled persons are among the poorest of the poor in developing countries
- Disability increases poverty, poverty often contributes to disability
- Many MDGs cannot be met without including disabled persons in Poverty Reduction Strategies

Many disabled youth and adults, men and women, can and want to be self-reliant through productive work

- Equal access to work is a basic right
- Work provides benefits to the individual and society: income, self-esteem, participation
- Work is often the more cost-effective solution to poverty reduction: it reduces social welfare costs and contributes to economic growth
 - WB study estimates global annual loss of GDP through exclusion of disabled persons from work at US\$ 1.37 - 1.94 trillion

What is disability?

- A disability is the *social* outcome of a physical or mental *impairment*
- A disability is an individual destiny
- It is also is the outcome of collective attitudes, situations and decisions: disability policy is a question of *social justice*
- Disability is the result of accumulated social exclusion mechanisms, and not a natural fact

Recent conceptual revolution in the understanding of disability

- From adapting the disabled individual to society to adapting society to the needs of disabled persons
- From individual rehabilitation to creating an enabling environment
- From social assistance to economic empowerment
- From marginalization to respect for minority rights, social diversity - the concept of a society for all

Who are persons with disabilities?

- Disabled people are not a homogeneous group:
 - Children, youth, adults, aged
 - Boys and girls, men and women
 - Different types of impairment: seeing, hearing, moving, learning, other
 - Different levels of autonomy: continuum
 - Different levels of poverty: urban, rural
 - Different needs: continuum from “social assistance” to “able to do productive work”

How should persons with disabilities be included in poverty reduction strategies?

- Integrate disability issues and disabled persons in all components of PRSPs: health, education, social, agriculture, other sector development programmes
- Integrate into sector development programmes a comprehensive set of policy and practical support measures at different levels to facilitate inclusion and compensate for impairment
- By including disabled persons in Poverty Reduction Strategies, social justice and economic rationality can go hand in hand

What is the nature of support measures?

- Limited to advocacy and facilitating functions:
"interface services"
- Interface services are not parallel services: they are measures required to ensure access of persons with disabilities to poverty reduction measures, opportunities, resources available to all
- Examples of Interface Services include referral services, Braille materials, sign language interpretation, transport
- Provision of support measures is often assigned to ministries or departments of social affairs

What happens when disability is solely the affair of Ministries of Social Affairs ?

- When Ministries of Social Affairs (MSA) manage parallel programmes for disabled persons:
 - they often deliver second class services (ex: vocational training, SED, access to credit...)
 - disabled persons are excluded from the technical competency and financial resources of technical line ministries
 - due to reform policies (SAPs), MSA often have reduced human and financial resources

Disability is a Cross-cutting issue, and disabled persons need to be taken into consideration by all technical ministries, sector development programmes and poverty reduction strategies

The treatment of disability in the World Bank PRSP “Sourcebook”

- An exclusive “Social Protection” approach
 - Disabled persons taken as a homogeneous group
 - Disabled persons defined as “unable to work”
- Social protection understood as opposite to economic growth
- No understanding of the nature of work as both social protection *and* participation in economic growth
- Non-inclusive approach to work: “sheltered workshops”
- No reference to multi-sector cross-cutting nature of disability
- Excellent proposals for participation, strengthening and advocacy of civil society organizations in the “Participation” chapter, that can also apply to DPOs

Strategy proposals

- How to get disability issues into the *PRSP process*
- How to treat disability and persons with disabilities in *PRS documents*
- How to keep disability and persons with disabilities in the *PR policy*

How to get and keep disability issues in the PRSP process

- Advocacy
- Knowledge and capacity building
- Assurance of sustainability

Advocacy

- Build “disability coalitions” at national level – National Partnerships for Disability and Development
- Advocate for the inclusion of disability and persons with disabilities in donor-funded development cooperation programmes
- Support the effective participation of disabled persons and DPOs in the PRSP consultative process:
 - meet special needs – documents in Braille, sign language interpretation, transport
 - facilitate voice of disabled women and men in negotiations
 - assist disabled persons from being overruled by more powerful stakeholders

Knowledge and Capacity Building

- Empower disabled persons and their organizations
 - Encourage “representiveness”, democracy, transparency, gender equality, organizational and staff development, sharing of information
 - Contribute to awareness raising about PRSPs and consultation process
 - Encourage line ministries to consult with disabled persons and their organizations about policies and programmes that affect them
 - Make use of local research capacities

How to include disability in PRS documents

- Poverty diagnosis
- Education policy for disabled persons
- Employment policy for disabled persons
- Formal employment in public and private sectors
- Work in the informal economy

Public and private sector formal employment

- Quantitatively marginal, but of high demonstrative value: visibility, role models
- Access to formal employment means access to recruitment, return-to work, job retention, equal opportunities for training and advancement: all dimensions of *decent work*
- *Fair share* of formal sector work opportunities
- Training in marketable skills essential

Elements of a formal sector employment strategy for disabled persons

- Adoption of a “Disability Management in the Workplace” strategy by employers (ILO Code of Practice)
 - participation of trade unions, DPOs, OSH services in design, implementation and monitoring of the strategy
 - adjustment of workplaces, including job content, work environment, job organization, tools, IC technologies
 - vocational rehabilitation, evaluation, orientation, job placement and job coach services
 - recruitment procedures that attract disabled workers
 - strategy of work experience training

Inclusion of disabled persons in sectoral employment programmes: agriculture, labour-intensive public works, urban poverty

■ Steps to integration:

- ensure equal access to service providers (training, credit, extension services, cooperative support, etc.) and programmes in the field
- ensure physical and communicational access by disabled persons to these services and programmes
- assist networking between “ordinary” services and specialized rehabilitation services

■ Ensure inclusion at de-centralized levels (districts, communities), and in local economic development

Informal sector work for disabled persons: lessons from ILO experience

- Technical and business skills training is necessary but not sufficient: viable business plan is required
- Integration in mainstream micro and small enterprise development programmes works best
- No “special” conditions for disabled micro-entrepreneurs: business is business!
- “Begging” may be a viable alternative in the disabled individual’s personal cost/benefit analysis
- Disabled individuals tend to be more successful in business than groups

The place of Social Protection in disability policy and PRS

- Some persons with disabilities will be unable to work and require social assistance, just like some non-disabled persons
- Social Protection policies and programmes need to target and assist such dependent persons
- Having a disability should NOT be the sole criteria for social assistance

Sustainability: how to ensure that disability issues remain in the PR policy

- ensure the effective participation of disabled persons in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP
- formulate clear strategies and programmes for the inclusion of persons with disabilities
- articulate clearly linkages between proposed policies, strategies, actions and poverty reduction outcomes for disabled persons
- define indicators and set quantified targets for all formulated strategies and actions

- make sure that all objectives, strategies and actions identified in the text are also taken up in the Action Plan tables and budget provisions
- make sure that priorities and strategies formulated in the PRSP feed directly into the national budget
- indicate clearly in updates of the PRSP how disability issues have been newly or more adequately treated in the new version
- keep records of progress/problems of disability issues in the Annual Progress Reports and subsequent updates of the PRSP

Including Disability and Persons with Disabilities in Poverty Reduction Strategies:

- Combats exclusion and marginalization
- Contributes to poverty reduction
- Makes good economic sense
- Advances the rights of persons with disabilities
- Fosters a more inclusive society

Only IF an economic empowerment rather than a
social protection strategy is adopted and followed