



Inclusion of disability in Dutch development co-operation policy and practice

Summary report of the invitational expert meeting held at the Hague, the Netherlands, on September 16th, 2003.

DCDD / Cordaid

date: 16 september 2003
place: Utrecht
organisers expert meeting: DCDD and Cordaid

publisher: DCDD, November 2003
version: 02 - **SUMMARY**
more information: at www.dccd.nl?1830 you can download the report (pdf)



'Networking to make disability matter'

DCDD Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development
P.O. Box 3356, 3502 GJ, Utrecht, the Netherlands
Phone: +31.30 291 67 11
Fax: +31.30 297 06 06
dcdd@dcdd.nl
www.dccd.nl



Contents /

2

Introduction and background /
Dutch policy / Time for change / The meeting / Meeting report

4

Part I Executive Summary /
General principles with regard to working on inclusion / Focal points /
Working on issues in disability advocacy / Concluding remarks

8

10 points for action

9

About the organisers

Expert meeting on inclusion of disability in development co-operation /

Introduction and background

Every community in the world has its share of disabled persons. After all, people anywhere can become disabled for whatever reason. Moreover, as populations age, more people will experience disability at some stage in life. Yet, all over the world disabled people - children, women and men - are denied basic human rights and are marginalised, excluded and discriminated against. The WHO estimates disability at ten percent of the world population. The World Bank estimates that 17% of poor people in developing countries are disabled. This would mean that practically every family in a poor community is directly affected by disability.

Dutch policy

In spite of these facts, disabled people are on the whole 'invisible' and are not included in Dutch development co-operation policy and practice aimed at reducing poverty. Even when policy-makers are aware of the need to include disabled people in development co-operation activities, there is a lot of misunderstanding and ignorance about the practical implications. Many donors assume that it is a highly specialised area requiring many additional specialist resources. But inclusion of disabled persons could progress a long way if project designers would consult disabled people and take care not to put up barriers that exclude disabled people.

The Netherlands have no policy of integrating - or mainstreaming - disability into development co-operation from a human rights perspective. Although many (donor) organisations have experience with disability projects, their expertise is rarely shared or built upon. The trend actually seems to be towards lower budgets for disability. In other parts of the world, however, there is increasing attention for disability in the framework of development co-operation. The Nordic countries, for example, have a great deal of knowledge about disability inclusion, and in Norway a budget of 8.5 million euro is spent by Norwegian Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) on collaboration with Southern and



Eastern DPOs. The World Bank is adopting a human rights based policy towards disability and a UN Convention on the rights of disabled people is in preparation.

Time for change

With the foundation of the Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development (DCDD), an activating network came into being which can stimulate Dutch development co-operation to 'go inclusive'. It is of particular importance that policy-makers learn to think inclusively and integrate the disability dimension into overall policy for poverty reduction. They will also need to find or devise practical tools for making their policies work in the field. DCDD strives to place disability on the agenda of development co-operation as an integrated element and provides a platform for debate and exchange.

The meeting

The meeting of experts held on September 16th, 2003, which was organised by DCDD and facilitated by Cordaid, was the first meeting on inclusion of disability to be held in the Netherlands. The goal of the meeting was to investigate and discuss the best ways of obtaining political and social support for integration of disability into Dutch development co-operation, meaning special as well as inclusive attention for disabled people. The added value of including 'disability' in diversity policy was debated, and the latest information and experiences concerning the current disability-and-development debate was presented in background documents and by means of presentations. A lobby workshop and a practical workshop were held in which the participants learned about practical tools for mainstreaming disability into development co-operation. Ten points of action were presented at the meeting, which will be used as a reference tool to measure changes in Dutch policy and practice. These action points can be found on page 8.

Almost sixty (senior) policy, regional and desk officers, representing (Dutch) donor agencies involved in development co-operation, NGOs, political parties and government agencies, participated in the meeting. During the plenary session in the morning the participants listened to contributions from Southern and Northern experts on the subject of inclusive disability. The workshops stimulated the lively debate the organisers hoped for.

Meeting report

The report of the meeting is divided into two parts:

Part I: Executive summary – this document

In the summary, opinions, views, recommendations and action points that came out of the presentations are presented in a condensed way. If you wish to read only about the main ideas and actions, we refer you to the summary (total of 4 pages).

Part II: Full report

The full report includes all presentations given at the meeting as well as the workshop reports. If you wish to read more about a certain topic or a certain speaker's contribution, please turn to this part (total of 19 pages). The full report including list of participants plus ex. summary can be downloaded from www.dccd.nl?1830.



Expert meeting on inclusion of disability in development co-operation /

Executive Summary

Hereunder you will find the executive summary of the report of the September 16th expert meeting organised by DCDD and Cordaid. The full report can be downloaded from www.dccd.nl?1830.

General principles with regard to working on inclusion

Many contributors at the meeting stressed the importance of participation of disabled people in development activities. **Yolan Koster** (director of Kantel Konsult) stated that, where change is desirable, the initiative for change has to come from the disabled themselves. Another task is to build solidarity among disabled people. The main message to put across to disabled people is that they can learn from each other. The way to achieve this is by empowering disabled people, especially children, to change their point of view, so that they look upon themselves and each other as 'powerful' people. It is therefore absolutely necessary to integrate empowerment programmes in development programmes. **Yolan Koster's** advice to the listeners: invest in empowerment programmes, because only empowered people can change the world.

In the lobby workshop, 'consultation of disabled people' was identified as a cross-cutting issue in lobbying. However, the debate shaping (Dutch) development co-operation takes place mostly in the West. **Huib Cornielje** (acting chairman of DCDD) warned that disability and development may all too easily become a toy for academics and activists. This concern was also expressed in the practical workshop: focus too much on the debate and you will forget about the people themselves. Be critical and ask yourself whether this involvement leads to any real improvements for disabled people in the South. In order to be meaningful it is first and foremost of importance to listen carefully to disabled people from these countries. Secondly, DCDD needs to build bridges between stakeholders, both in the South and in the West, and to convince the various stakeholders in development assistance that substantial attention should be paid to the needs and abilities of disabled people in the South.

Experience in Norway shows that involvement of Norwegian disabled people, and disabled people's organisations in particular, was crucial in pressing the government to make its development policy more inclusive. **Elisabeth Bruce** (Norwegian Alliance for the Disabled) described the continuing role of the Atlas Alliance as the government's watchdog, pointing out that the Alliance's activities have led to greater visibility of disabled people internationally. Implementation of the '*UNESCO flagship on inclusive education*' and the *World Bank trust fund on disability* are indirect results of the Nordic countries' progress in the area of disability inclusion.

The much-needed focus of seeing disability as a more cross-cutting development approach which has inclusion of marginalized and deprived groups in society as its starting point, requires a redirection of thinking, said **Huib Cornielje**. On the one hand, everything possible should be done to create a more inclusive society, while, on the other hand, affirmative action and special attention is required for the specific problems that people with disabilities experience on a daily basis. Other contributors also discussed this twin-track approach. **Rens Rutten** (Cordaid policy officer) explained why Cordaid has chosen a two-way strategy consisting of direct intervention with vulnerable groups besides inclusion of vulnerable groups in Cordaid policy. Direct intervention with vulnerable groups consists of care for these groups, strengthening of community activities related to care for these groups, and promotion of self-organisation of vulnerable people. Cordaid now intends to shift to interventions in care that are more related to community development, and to lobby and advocacy activities. Cordaid's thematic policy deals with the 'mainstreaming' of vulnerable groups in its overall policy: addressing inequalities between particularly vulnerable groups and non-vulnerable groups in all strategic areas of Cordaid's work.

Current Dutch governmental policy, although it is oriented towards structural poverty alleviation, does not include any policy on disability. **Aagje Papineau-Salm** (head of the social policy division, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs) explained that, at country level, poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) will remain the basis for collaboration between governments, civil society organisations and other donors. This implies collaboration with all stakeholders to try to implement the sector plans, which were developed jointly. In practice there will be little room left for support of special activities through bilateral co-operation. The Dutch government's influence can be used to make sure that important



aspects are not forgotten, but Dutch Development Co-operation cannot dictate what should be in the policy. Especially with regard to cross-cutting issues such as gender, children in difficult circumstances and disability, this will be a 'handicap', Ms. Papineau said, but there are still two ways left for further strengthening the issue of inclusion of disability. One of these ways is to mainstream as much as possible. Two areas where this can be done and where things are already on their way are human rights and basic education. The second way is to work through NGOs and civil society organisations, both in the Netherlands and in developing countries.

Focal points

Jabulani Ncube (disability consultant, Namibia) declared that it is necessary to give specific attention to supporting disabled women and girls. As a practical measure to end the vicious cycle in which disability and poverty are inextricably linked, it is essential to recognise and support existing and emerging groups, organisations and networks of disabled women to promote their full inclusion within the disability movement. Building the disability movement by supporting efforts by disabled people to form their own organisations is another focal point. These are not attempts to create a separate world for disabled people, **Jabulani Ncube** emphasised. By beginning to organise from an internal perspective, the movement essentially builds the constituency for change. And anyway, if disabled people themselves are not involved, no momentum for change will develop either. By building the disabled people's movement, one actually contributes to strengthening the 'twin-track approach'. It means focusing on special measures of building the strength of the movement, and at the same time mainstreaming disability issues through the movement's advocacy work.

Maria Kangere (director of COMBRA, Uganda), in her contribution to the practical workshop, spoke about the disability movement in Uganda. In the beginning of the nineteen-nineties disabled people in Uganda came together to form the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU). The founders of NUDIPU were motivated by a local Ugandan saying, "*A gali awamu ge galuma enyama*", which means, "It is the teeth that are together that can bite the meat". About ten years after its foundation NUDIPU faces several challenges: In Uganda the election of more than 47,000 councillors representing persons with disabilities in 56 districts ushered in a new era of governance for persons with disabilities. However, many disabled people are still not aware of their rights. Some

categories of disabilities, specifically the deaf and women, have not enjoyed the same opportunities offered by the new developments. Finding employment is a nightmare. The disability budget is still regarded in terms of projects. There is a tendency to regard disability issues as donor responsibility and it is at the bottom of priorities.

In **Jabulani Ncube's** view, a key weakness in organisations of disabled people lies in the field of policy and legislation. It has therefore become a key priority for them to work in this area and to pay attention to advocacy and lobbying with local and national government authorities to pass laws and policies that will facilitate disability work and improve access to opportunities and resources for disabled people. What has changed? On the negative side, one sees that in some countries existing laws and policies are not implemented. Sufficient resources to allow implementation are rarely allocated. In this context tokenism is a challenge requiring constant vigilance. On the positive side, the Ugandan and South African examples show a definite improvement in the visibility of disabled people and their issues as they get to be represented on various levels of governance in their countries. We have seen the emergence of close relationships between the disability movements in Uganda and South Africa and the respective ruling political party or movement. We are, however, unsure what will happen if the ruling party is replaced.

Working on issues in disability advocacy

Although the necessity to include disability in development policy is emphasised time and again, lack of action on the part of politicians and policy-makers means that progress remains rather slow. Is it a matter of not hearing the message or is the message so confronting that people pretend not to hear?, **Huib Cornelje** wondered. In response, **Jabulani Ncube** made some suggestions for how people in the North may help the efforts to mainstream disability and thus contribute to raising the profile of disability issues. Firstly, he urged the audience to understand and take note of the agendas of the key players involved in disability, so that they may be able to align their strategies accordingly. Secondly, he asked them to seek to ensure the inclusion of the disability dimension into bilateral and, possibly, multilateral agreements between the Dutch government and Southern partners. Thirdly, the growth and development of organisations of disabled people should be supported. An important way of promoting the rights of persons with disabilities is through setting international standards, spoke **Aagje Papineau-Salm**.



In the United Nations context, the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a *Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities* is of great importance. It is the intention of the Dutch government to contribute constructively to the negotiations.

In the Dutch government's new development policy there will be a strong focus on basic education, aids, reproductive health and environment. As regards basic education, Dutch policy is geared in the first place to supporting governments in their efforts to implement national education reform programmes designed to meet Education-for-All objectives for basic education. In those plans, in the opinion of the Dutch government, it is required to take account of the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged, including working children, ethnic minorities, children affected by conflict or HIV/AIDS, and children with special needs. In other words, the inclusion of children with special needs must be an integral part of strategies to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015.

Inclusion through mainstreaming should be the main focus when influencing Dutch governmental policy, Ms. Papineau-Salm continued. Although it is not certain what will happen on country level, no special targets or earmarked funding are foreseen. The help of civil society organisations and NGOs is needed to promote continuous attention for the inclusion of disability. Not to start all sorts of projects, but to fight for the rights of disabled people.

Maria Kangere, in her contribution to the practical workshop, asked: What are the issues that need to be incorporated in a policy for mainstreaming disability from the perspective of a developing country? When countries in the North offer aid, the negotiators from the Southern countries usually lack the necessary knowledge or have a negative attitude towards disability. Disability issues are usually lowest on the agenda because people with disabilities are a minority and have no voice. Disability will thus not surface in the dialogue unless the programme is specifically aimed at disability, which again segregates disability interventions further. For members of the DCDD coalition, as concluded in the lobby workshop, this underlines once more the need to strengthen, capacitate and empower disabled people's organisations in developing countries and to build and strengthen civil society organisations in which disabled people are included, in order that their perspectives on, for example, PRSPs are included.

The lobby workshop provided concrete examples and strategies of how to lobby for disability inclusion and how to advocate disability issues in general. **Elisabeth Bruce** described how the political process in Norway was influenced by Norwegian disabled people's organisations. The lessons learned in Norway may well apply to the Dutch situation. In the lobby workshop the following basic question was investigated: "What are good strategies for mainstreaming disability awareness in the practices of Dutch actors in development co-operation?" The answers to this basic question can be divided into four categories: 1) Tools and examples showing "we can do it!"; 2) Creating win-win situations for decision-makers; 3) "Inclusive policy promotes development"; and 4) How to put disability on the agenda.

Tools and examples showing "we can do it!" (1) include integration of disability issues in the training of development workers. We could use the experience of gender-mainstreaming. It is important to demonstrate that disability inclusiveness works, by highlighting good examples, for instance. Other ideas are to develop joint projects across organisations and to develop a disability checklist to analyse organisations (see below). In lobbying work it is important to create win-win situations for decision-makers (2). Methods include direct confrontation with policy-makers using a single clear message. We have to work with allies to influence actors. We need to stimulate partner organisations to consult disabled people's organisations. We need to learn to speak the language of the planners. Besides creating critical mass it is important to have legitimacy to be able to speak on behalf of disabled people from Southern countries. We should influence MPs to change minister's policies. The lobby workshop facilitator, **Henk van Apeldoorn**, suggested that DCDD's advisory group on lobbying and advocacy should study these ideas. "Inclusive policy promotes development" (3) should be promoted as the central idea. Disabled people are ambassadors for this concept. Central issues include: "nothing about us without us", "inclusion comes first". Lots of ideas were collected in the workshop on how to put disability on the agenda (4). Among these are: connect with policy priorities; set up a multi-theme working group; inclusion of disability increases the quality and quantity of results; know which actors to connect on which "hot issues"; making the position of the disabled visible.

Offering a 'checklist' can be a useful lobby tool, a present that can be used by decision-makers. But the checklist can also show whether the decision-maker is favourable to 'disability issues' or not. Then it is more



like a pressure tool. The idea of using a checklist was discussed at length in the practical workshop. Common ground was found in that developing such a checklist could work well in advocating disability at several decision levels.

Concluding remarks

The presentations, workshops and discussions at this invitational expert meeting were fruitful and dynamic. The large number of participants from various Dutch and foreign organisations associated with development co-operation promise potential for change in Dutch policy and practice. The contents of the contributions and debates are rich and will provide DCDD with sufficient material to work with in the coming years. DCDD hopes that the participants in the meeting will want to share in the work on disability inclusion.



Disabled children sitting in front of a school (photo: Huib Cornielje)



Expert meeting on inclusion of disability in development co-operation /

10 points for action

In the Netherlands the time has arrived for making development co-operation inclusive. It is of particular importance that policy-makers - at government level as well as at NGO level - think inclusively and integrate the disability dimension in overall policy for poverty reduction. Disability, like gender, deserves structural and pro-active attention from donor organisations. For Dutch development co-operation policy in the coming period this should entail the following:

1. Three years from now, the Dutch government and co-financing NGOs (donors) pay considerable attention to disability from a human rights perspective in their strategic policy plans.
2. Three years from now, an operational network exists, between policy-makers, service providers and persons with disabilities themselves, which is aimed at increasing knowledge of disability and good practice in projects targeting inclusion of disabled people.
3. Five years from now, major donor organisations agree on working towards incorporating disability in development co-operation.
4. Five years from now, Dutch persons with disabilities and their organisations are involved in development co-operation policy and practice.
5. Five years from now, donor organisations have and use tools for effectively designing development projects and programmes incorporating disability inclusiveness.
6. Ten years from now, the Dutch public in general has knowledge of the need for improvement of the position of disabled people in developing countries from a human rights perspective.
7. Ten years from now, three to five percent of the budget of donor organisations is earmarked for disability projects and programmes.
8. Of this budget, ten percent is aimed specifically at empowerment of persons with disabilities.
9. Ten years from now, development projects and programmes can be tested for being 'disability-inclusive' by means of an agreed evaluation tool.
10. Ten years from now, Dutch donor organisations are in the forefront of organisations advocating 'disability' within a wider diversity policy.

Note to the meeting's participants:

This discussion document is intended to channel the discussions held at the expert meeting. It has been sent to all speakers and facilitators of the plenary and workshop sessions with the request to pay attention to (some of) the action points. The document does not necessarily reflect DCDD's or Cordaid's opinions or policies but translates the call for inclusion into practical action points. The action points may evoke much discussion, please use this document as a reference for reflection and discussion; and for future reference.



| About the organisers |

| Your notes |

About DCDD -->

DCDD goal is inclusive development co-operation policies. DCDD regards disability as an important theme that deserves much more attention and emphasis than it has had up to now. DCDD tries to create more opportunities for integration of disability in (Dutch) development co-operation, specifically by raising awareness and increasing knowledge about the connection between disability and poverty and the nature of this connection, and by disseminating knowledge about strategies for influencing it. DCDD is an NGO and a coalition of many organisations, and works towards improving the condition of disabled people in developing countries from a human rights perspective. DCDD is a member of the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC - www.iddc.org.uk). For more information on DCDD, visit: www.dccd.nl.

About Cordaid -->

Cordaid is one of the biggest international development NGOs. Together with more than a thousand local organisations, Cordaid fights poverty and injustice in over forty countries. Every year, Cordaid spends around 150 million euro on projects in developing countries. Inspired by Catholic social doctrine, Cordaid focuses on solidarity: everyone is entitled to a dignified existence irrespective of their income, age, sex, gender, origin, beliefs or political convictions. For more information, visit: www.cordaid.nl.

