



Sightsavers

Equality in the post-2015 development agenda: promoting inclusion for people with disabilities

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Sightsavers is calling on the post-2015 development framework to:

- Ensure the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in the development, negotiation and implementation of the post-2015 framework¹.
- Ensure a clear focus on equality of opportunities, equity of outcomes and non-discrimination.
- Help national governments to deliver disability inclusive development based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- Ensure that disability is a cross cutting theme in all development goals, with disability-specific targets and indicators.
- Ensure adequate measurement and monitoring of disability-specific targets through improved data gathering and analysis mechanisms.

Social inclusion

Globally more than one billion people live with a disability, of whom between 110 and 190 million experience very significant difficulties. This equates to about 15 per cent of the global population².

Of these, 39 million are blind and a further 246 million are visually impaired. Women and girls account for approximately two-thirds (64 per cent) of the world's blind population.

Disability disproportionately affects vulnerable populations. Women, older people and people from the poorest wealth quintile have a higher prevalence of disability and there is higher disability prevalence in lower-income than in higher-income countries. In all countries the prevalence of disability is growing, due to population ageing and the rising burden of non-communicable disease.

Social inclusion means making sure everyone in society is included and treated equally. This means

that people with disabilities have the same rights and entitlements to participate in and contribute to the social and economic development of their communities. The challenge is that many people with disabilities face barriers to their inclusion in society and cannot contribute to development efforts. That is why the exclusion of more than one billion people with disabilities from the provisions of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 was shocking.

An opportunity missed

Almost 15 years on, the exclusion of disability from the MDGs has materially affected many people with disabilities and their families; evidence suggests that not only have people with disabilities not benefited from much of the progress brought about by the MDGs, but their living standards may have declined in relative terms³. Sightsavers is calling for the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in the development, negotiation and implementation of the post-2015 framework⁴.

“Sustainable, equitable progress in the agreed global development agenda cannot be achieved without the inclusion of persons with disabilities. If they are not included, progress in development will further their marginalisation.”

UN Inter-Agency Support Group, 2011, p13

A disability-inclusive framework

While many countries have made commitments to engage in inclusive development through the signing and ratification of the CRPD, a significant number of these commitments have not been put into practice, and disability has largely remained an invisible issue in the mainstream development conversation.

Drawing on the values of the CRPD, the post-2015 framework now has the unique opportunity to embed equality of opportunities, equity of outcomes and non-discrimination in mainstream development discourse – for the next decade and more.

The post-2015 framework must include provisions that help national governments meet their obligations under the CRPD. Governments and development programmes need to budget and plan for the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in development planning thereby ensuring inclusive program design.

Sightsavers is calling for a post-2015 framework that promotes disability-inclusive development by ensuring that disability is treated as a

cross-cutting theme in all development goals, with disability-specific targets and indicators, and a clear recognition that no goal is seen as having been met unless it has been met for all social groups including people with disabilities.

“The life training skills helped my confidence. I’m the first visually impaired person to be employed here. I showed them that I did not have to be dependent on them all the time. To anyone else in my position, I would say: ‘Be confident. You have to be proud of yourself and trust in yourself.’”

VS Suraj, aged 24, India

Putting the right mechanisms in place

The paucity of data on people with disabilities remains an obstacle to the effective formulation of disability-inclusive policies and programmes, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving the MDGs. Even in many developed countries, disability statistics remain underdeveloped. Few countries collect information on disability through either censuses or surveys⁵.

Sightsavers is calling for a post-2015 framework that ensures the adequate measurement and monitoring of disability-specific targets through the support of improved disability data gathering and analysis mechanisms.

Contact us

For further information on the issues addressed in this briefing, the references list, or any aspect of our work, please contact Sightsavers’ Policy Team.

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Sightsavers works in developing countries to combat avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for disabled people.

References

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- 2 WHO (2011) *World Report on Disability*, Geneva, World Health Organization in Sightsavers (2012) *Disability in the Post-2015 Framework*. Lorraine Wapling, November 2012
- 3 Sightsavers (2012) *Disability in the Post 2015 Framework*. Lorraine Wapling, November 2012
- 4 Sightsavers (2012) *Disability in the Post 2015 Framework*. Lorraine Wapling, November 2012
- 5 UN General Assembly (2009) *Realizing the Millennium Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities through the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Report of the Secretary-General A/64/180 <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/reports/MDG%20and%20Disability.pdf>