

Decent Work for People with Disabilities

Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Cambodia



International Labour Organization



FACT SHEET

Women and men with disabilities can and want to be productive members of society. In both developed and developing countries, promoting more inclusive societies and employment opportunities for people with disabilities requires improved access to basic education, vocational training relevant to labour market needs and jobs suited to their skills, interests and abilities, with adaptations as needed. Many societies are also recognizing the need to dismantle other barriers - making the physical environment more accessible, providing information in a variety of formats, and challenging attitudes and mistaken assumptions about people with disabilities.

Current Situation

Estimates of people with disabilities in Cambodia¹ vary significantly. According to the 2004 Census of the National Institute of Statistics, nearly 5 per cent of the country’s population is disabled². Applying this estimate to the 2008 population census for Cambodian (approximately 14 million) would indicate that there may be some 700,000 disabled people in the country.

People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups in Cambodian society. They lack equal access to education, training and employment. This constant lack of opportunity alienates them from fully participating in their communities. While many workers with disabilities have considerable skills, many have not had the opportunity to develop their potential.

Governmental support for people with disabilities

The Government of Cambodia has adopted and implemented a number of laws, Cabinet resolutions, regulations and policies pertaining to people with disabilities, including their right to productive and decent work. The main ones are listed below.

- **Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, 1993 (amended 1999)**, recognizes fundamental human rights, equal rights to employment, and equal pay for equal work.

¹ Cambodia has as its formal name the “Kingdom of Cambodia”.
² Disability Action Council (DAC), <http://www.dac.org.kh/index.htm>, accessed on 25 June 2009.

- **Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of People with Disabilities (2009)**, provides for the right of people with disabilities to be employed without discrimination in the public and private sectors. It requires an employer, who employs more than a certain number of full-time employees, to employ a proportional number of full-time disabled people. It further requires that reasonable accommodation be made at the workplace.
- **Cabinet Resolution on Principles of Rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Job Placement for Persons with disabilities (No. 181/SSR), 1990**, provides guidelines on rehabilitation, training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- **Ministerial Decision on Establishment of National Centre of Disabled Persons (NCDP) (No. 757/MOSALVA), 1997**, establishes NCDP to provide job-placement and referral services for people with disabilities.
- **Royal Decree NS RKM 0699/60 on MOSALVY, 1999**, establishes MOSALVY, or the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation. A Government Sub-decree on MOSALVY functions in the rehabilitation sector defines its priorities as preparing policies and guidelines to support people with disabilities and for providing vocational rehabilitation and employment services.
- **Ministerial Decision on Establishment of the Disability Action Council (DAC), 1999**, establishes the DAC as a national semi-autonomous coordinating body for the rehabilitation sector. DAC advises the Government and policy makers on all disability issues and coordinates Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International NGOs (INGOs) activities.
- **Government Sub-decree on Investments (No. 88/ANK/BK), 1999**, one of the only legislative instruments that promotes employment of people with disabilities. It regulates a tax exemption for foreign enterprises based on several factors, including the percentage of disabled workers.
- **National Education Law (2008)** aims at promoting lifelong education as a means of contributing to personal development and society as a whole. In addition, it recognizes the fundamental human rights of disabled students on an equal basis with other students.
- **National plan of action for persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW³ survivors 2009 – 2011**, is intended as an important contribution to efforts to address the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, including landmine and other ERW survivors, their families and affected communities in the country. The Plan of Action has been a collaborative effort, developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation and the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority in partnership with DAC.
- **Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities (2008) and its Master Plan (2009)**, aims to ensure the equal rights of all children with disabilities to an equal education with other children.
- **Circular on Improving the Quality Standard for Vocational Training Centres (2008)**, provides guidelines for the provision of vocational training services and job placement. It also facilitates official recognition of the competency level and potential of people with disabilities who have successfully completed the training courses at vocational training centres.

Key ministries responsible for disability issues

In Cambodia, six ministries have responsibility for providing services for people with disabilities:

- Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS)
- Ministry of Rural Development
- Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA)
- Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training

The Ministry of Planning through its National Institute of Statistics is responsible for collecting statistics through national socio-economic surveys, including disability-related data.

Key international standards on disability and their status

- International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958, (No. 111). *Status: ratified, 23 August 1999.*
- ILO Convention Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons), 1983, (No. 159). *Status: not yet ratified.*
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and Optional Protocol. *Status: signed on 1 October 2007, not yet ratified.* Optional Protocol signed on 1 October 2007, *not yet ratified.*

Cambodia also works to achieve targets set in the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action and Biwako Plus Five Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and Pacific. Both form regional policy guidelines for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, which has been extended to 2012.

Organizations of persons with disabilities

- The Cambodian Disabled People's Organization

Coordination and Advisory Body

- Disability Action Council (DAC)

Organizations for persons with disabilities

- Action on Disability and Development
- Association for Aid and Relief – Vocational Training for the Disabled
- Association for Aid and Relief – Wheelchair
- Association of the Blind in Cambodia
- Australian Red Cross
- Cambodia Development Mission for Disability
- Cambodia Trust
- Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development
- Cambodian War Amputees Rehabilitation Society
- Capacity Building of Disabled People in the Community Organization
- Comité Exécutif International De l'Ordre de Malte pour l'assistance aux Lépreux (CIOMAL)
- Deaf Development Program of Maryknoll
- Disability Development Service Pursat
- EPIC ARTS
- HAGAR International
- Handicap International
- Helen Keller International Cambodia

- International Committee of the Red Cross
- Jesuit Services Cambodia
- Komar Pikar Foundation
- Krousar Thmey
- Landmine Development Service
- Marist Mission Australia (Lavalla School)
- National Centre of Disabled Persons
- New Humanity Cambodia
- Opération Enfant Du Cambodge (OEC)
- Pour des Sourir des Enfants (PSE)
- Rehab Craft workshop (in Phnom Penh)
- Social Services Cambodia
- Supporting and Development the Health of the Poor (TASKS)
- Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation
- Trauma Care Foundation
- Veteran's International
- World Vision Cambodia
- YODIFEE Cambodia

The role of the ILO

The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for everyone, including people with disabilities, to obtain decent and productive work, based on the principles of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The ILO works to achieve its goals of decent work for all through promoting labour standards, advocacy, knowledge building and technical cooperation services and partnerships, both within the ILO and externally. The ILO's Decent Work Country Programme provides the basis for the ILO's contribution to the Cambodian Government's Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency and the National Strategic Development Framework.

In Cambodia, a current ILO technical cooperation project on disability is "Promoting Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities through a Disability Inclusion Support Service" (INCLUDE).

The project builds capacity at regional and national levels to effectively support the full participation of women entrepreneurs with disabilities in entrepreneurship development activities conducted under the ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) programme. INCLUDE also involves advocacy and awareness-raising activities to promote decent work for persons with disabilities.

The way forward

Productive and decent work enables people with disabilities to realize their aspirations, improve their living conditions and participate more actively in society.

Ensuring a disability perspective in all aspects of policy and labour legislation, effective implementation and enforcement of existing disability laws and policies and providing for equal employment opportunities and training are among the factors that contribute to the reduction of poverty and to the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities in Cambodia.

Further information:

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