

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT through DECENT WORK

FOR GROWTH, PRODUCTIVE JOBS, INCOME, FOOD SECURITY, GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, RIGHTS, VOICE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CRISIS RESILIENCE



International Labour Office

People

Rural Policy Briefs

## Empowering People with Disabilities for Rural Development

*Living in rural areas poses particular challenges for people with disabilities in accessing education, training, and employment opportunities.*

*Dismantling the barriers that rural disabled people face enables them to improve their livelihoods, those of their families, and take an active role in rural economic development.*

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### Facts and figures

- One in every ten people has a disability, representing 650 million people worldwide. Four of every five disabled people live in rural areas in developing countries.<sup>1</sup>
- Disability is both a cause and an effect of poverty: Poor people are more likely to have a disability because of the conditions in which they live, and disability can result in poverty due to limited opportunities for skills development and employment.<sup>2</sup>
- Not all disabled people are the same: they are women and men, boys and girls, with a range of physical, sensory, intellectual or psycho-social impairments, which in interplay with various barriers may hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others.<sup>3</sup> They have different skills, abilities and interests - but many share the experience of social and economic exclusion resulting from disability.
- Disabled children are often excluded from education. For example, in Malawi and Tanzania having disabilities doubles the probability of children never having attended school.<sup>4</sup> The problem is often more pronounced in the rural areas, where education and training services are limited and hard to access.
- Disabled people are less likely to be employed as compared to their non-disabled peers. Globally, the employment rate for women with disabilities is on average lower than that of men with disabilities.<sup>5</sup>
- Excluding disabled people from the world of work may cost countries 1 to 7 percent of GDP, according to ILO estimates.<sup>6</sup>

### Why action is needed

- Disabled people are often left out of rural development strategies and programmes, which leads not only to their exclusion from initiatives but also their marginalization in community decision-making.
- Policies for disability inclusion do not always exist, and where they do exist they are not always implemented. For example, staff of rural training centres and employment programmes and services may lack the capacity to serve disabled people. Disabled people may also lack access to information about community services and programmes, or about their rights to participate.
- Many rural disabled people have limited or no access to transportation, and rural roads and buildings are often not accessible to those with physical or visual impairments.
- Rural disabled people are largely excluded from existing disability services, such as vocational rehabilitation services, which tend to be located in urban areas.
- Rural schools and training centres are scarce, they lack the necessary assistive devices, and their training approaches are often not geared for diverse learners.
- People with disabilities are often excluded from basic education and therefore do not meet the entry requirements of formal vocational training programmes, such as literacy skills. This affects their chances of finding decent jobs.
- Negative attitudes and stereotypes about the abilities of disabled people emanating from society and sometimes the family can lead to discrimination. Community development schemes often disregard disabled people because of negative, mistaken assumptions about their ability to participate.



## What is...

### Accessibility?

Ensuring that people with disabilities have access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, on an equal basis with others.<sup>8</sup> Examples include:

- Building new facilities or infrastructure accessible to disabled people, or making existing facilities accessible to persons with disabilities through modifications, e.g. installing an entrance ramp; retrofitting bathrooms; improving signage
- Providing information in alternative formats, such as on a CD, in Braille, or visual format for those with hearing impairments

### An assistive device?

Any device designed to assist a person perform a particular task,<sup>9</sup> such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes, tape recorders for those who cannot take notes.

### A reasonable accommodation?

Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, for instance to a training venue or workplace, that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden. The purpose of reasonable accommodation is to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy or exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others.<sup>10</sup> Examples include:

- Providing a sign language interpreter for deaf people at a community meeting, or transportation for a disabled beneficiary in a rural development project
- Purchasing equipment, such as a speaking software for visually impaired persons
- Adjusting and modifying equipment, such as raising or lowering a chair in a training situation

Not all people with disabilities require accommodations; this depends on the particular individual, the impairment and the requirements of the training, job or other activity.

- Most disabled people who do work in rural areas are engaged in income-generating activities as subsistence farmers or small-scale entrepreneurs in the informal economy. However, they frequently lack access to essential business development services and microfinance, particularly credit, because of the mistaken assumption that people with disabilities are not 'credit-worthy'<sup>7</sup> or constitute a 'high risk' group.

## Policy options

### Involve Disabled People in Rural Programmes

- Collect data disaggregated by disability status and type to design relevant policies, services and programmes, and include persons with disabilities in existing mainstream policies, services and programmes.
  - Develop agricultural and rural development strategies and programmes that include people with disabilities, and involve disabled people in designing those strategies and programmes to allow them to define their priorities. Collaborate with national institutions, international agencies, scholars and practitioners skilled in disability issues.
  - Make reasonable accommodations so that disabled people can participate in programme planning and implementation as well as in training and employment (See Box 1).
  - Collaborate with disabled persons' organisations (DPOs), disability NGOs and rehabilitation centres or community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programmes to raise awareness and to facilitate the participation of disabled persons.
  - Develop specific outreach measures for rural people with disabilities. This could include disability-trained community workers, and targeted information that is shared through various mainstream information channels, as well as disability-specific groups, such as DPOs.
- Expand rural disabled persons' access to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), such as mobile phones and computers.
  - Ensure that both women and men with disabilities can participate in rural development. This may require specific measures for women such as life skills training to build self-confidence, access to credit, and work with women's families to gain their support (See Box 2).
  - Advocate and raise awareness about the rights and potential of people with disabilities among disabled people themselves, their families and communities, local government officials and the business community.
  - Sensitise and build the capacity of teachers, trainers, agricultural extension workers and providers of enterprise development service and credit to work with and have an unbiased attitude towards disabled people. Collaborate with DPOs and disability NGOs to conduct training workshops on disability issues.



## Include in Education and Training

- Develop policies for the inclusion of disabled persons in education and training.
- Facilitate disabled children's access to basic education as it provides the foundation for further training and employment.
- Use flexible teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles and disabilities. For example, use learning-by-doing approach, on-the-job training and other practical methods. Develop flexible delivery systems such as mobile training units, extension schemes and distance learning using mobile phones, radio and internet for reaching remote locations.
- Collaborate with the disabled person to accommodate the training methods to individual needs - do not assume to know what the person needs.
- Provide any necessary supports and accommodations. (See Box 1).
- Make use of disabled people's problem solving skills and solutions they have developed to overcome challenges and barriers. They often transfer well to the training situation.
- Provide remedial training, for example, on literacy and numeracy. Disabled people may also benefit from life skills training, such as confidence building.
- For non-formal training, recruit skilled local crafts people to provide training courses and/or offer apprenticeships with successful disabled entrepreneurs. Role models can send a powerful message of encouragement (See Box 3).

## Box 2

### Developing Entrepreneurship among Women with Disabilities (DEWD)

The ILO DEWD project which operated in five African countries (2001 - 2007), provided training to women with disabilities in micro-enterprise and vocational skills and improved their access to credit and business development services. The beneficiaries took part in the training programmes run for non-disabled women under another project - Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE). Through DEWD some 450 women with disabilities gained new skills and enhanced their businesses. The project also pilot-tested an innovative inclusion approach that is now endorsed in the ILO strategy for Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship Development.

Source: See: <http://wedgelo.weebly.com/dewd.html>

### Alleviating Poverty through Peer Training (APPT)

In rural Cambodia, the ILO APPT project (2002-2007) used successful micro-entrepreneurs as peer trainers for disabled people, developing technical and business skills required to run similar micro-businesses. Over 700 beneficiaries started their own micro-enterprises or enhanced their existing businesses. The project approach has been adopted by several international and local NGOs in Cambodia.

Source: See: [http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2009/109B09\\_364\\_engl\\_replicating.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2009/109B09_364_engl_replicating.pdf)

## Promote employment and livelihoods opportunities

- Provide vocational guidance to people with disabilities to ease the transition from education and training to work life.
- Where opportunities for wage employment exist, assist people with disabilities to find and retain jobs. This may require networking with employers, trade unions and employment service providers; providing job-seeking skills; conducting specific job and work site analysis to match the disabled person to a job; providing supports and accommodations (See Box 1); identifying on-the-job coaches or mentors to provide support to disabled employees, and building awareness about the benefits of hiring disabled people.
- Make specific efforts to link people with disabilities to enterprise development services and to microfinance by guaranteeing loans and establishing savings circles (See Box 2).
- Strengthen self-help groups among disabled people and make efforts to include disabled people in cooperatives. Partnering with others allows for collective power and sharing tasks according to each person's ability.

## ILO's role

- The ILO is committed to achieving decent work for all, including for persons with disabilities. In doing so, it works in partnership with various ministries, workers' and employers' organizations, disabled persons' organizations, NGOs and other international agencies. Its work combines advocacy, tool development and dissemination of good practices and country level operational activities.
- The ILO has a twin-track approach to disability. This means including disability in all ILO work, programmes, projects and tools (e.g. See Box 4), while recognizing the need for disability-specific initiatives to address discrimination and exclusion. Disability-specific activities may be appropriate, for example in providing mobility training for blind people or confidence-building for disabled persons so that they may eventually participate in mainstream initiatives.
- The ILO's work with disabled persons builds on strong legal foundations, in particular the following:
  - ◆ **Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159)**, based on equal opportunity and equal treatment for disabled persons. It calls for formulating a national policy for disabled persons and developing vocational rehabilitation and employment services for disabled persons in rural areas.<sup>11</sup>



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## Box 4

### Disability Elements in Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE)

TREE is an ILO community-based training programme that includes disabled people in its mainstream programme. It promotes income generation and employment opportunities for disadvantaged women and men by developing skills and knowledge relevant to their communities. In Burkina Faso (2009), a TREE initiative targeted women specifically and 16 percent of those women had disabilities. Disabled beneficiaries, most of whom had mobility impairments, took part in the same skills training as non-disabled persons. To facilitate group cohesion, the training included disability awareness sessions.

Source: ILO: *Implementing and Learning from Community-Based Training/Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (CBT/TREE): Country Experiences and Lessons Learned*, (Geneva: 2009) [unpublished background document].

- ♦ **Recommendation No. 168**, that advocates integrating vocational rehabilitation services in rural development policies, and provides guidance to this end.<sup>12</sup>
- ♦ The **United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008**, which reaffirms human rights for persons with all types of disabilities, and supports participation and inclusion of disabled persons in the community and all aspects of society, including in rural areas.<sup>13</sup>

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### References

- <sup>1</sup> UN Enable: *World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons* (Geneva: 2006) Available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enablenet/diswpa04.htm>.
- <sup>2</sup> ILO: *Facts on Disability and Decent Work* (Geneva: 2009) Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_117143.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_117143.pdf).
- <sup>3</sup> *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2008 (Article 1).
- <sup>4</sup> UNESCO: *Education for All - Global Monitoring Report 2010. Reaching the Marginalized* (Paris: 2010)
- <sup>5</sup> *Facts on Disability and Decent Work*, op. cit.
- <sup>6</sup> Murray, Barbara: *Disability Employment for Social Justice and a Fair Globalization. Overview of ILO Programmes* (ILO, Geneva: 2010) Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_140958.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_140958.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> ILO: *Skills Development through Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR): A Good Practice Guide* (Geneva: 2008)
- <sup>8</sup> *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2008 (Article 2)
- <sup>9</sup> ILO: *Rural Skills Training: A Generic Manual on Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) Volume VIII: Including People with Disabilities in the TREE Programme* (Geneva: 2009)
- <sup>10</sup> *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2008 (Article 2)
- <sup>11</sup> *Convention Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons)* No. 159 (1983)
- <sup>12</sup> *Recommendation Concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons)* No. 168 (1983)
- <sup>13</sup> *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2008 (Article 2)

### Links

- ✎ ILO Skills and Employability Disability <http://www.ilo.org/disability>
- ✎ Disability Inclusion Knowledge Sharing Platform for ILO staff <http://papyrus.ilo.org/disability>
- ✎ ILO: International Training Centre of ILO in Turin Italy for training courses on disability issues <http://www.itcilo.org>

### Tools

- ♦ ILO: *Rural Skills Training: A Generic Manual on Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) Volume VIII: Including People with Disabilities in the TREE Programme* (Geneva: 2009)
- ♦ ILO: *Replicating Success: A Manual to Alleviate Poverty through Peer Training* (Phnom Penh: 2009)
- ♦ ILO: *Training for Success: A Guide for Peer Trainers* (Bangkok: 2008)
- ♦ ILO: *Managing Success: An Instruction Manual for the APPT Database and Management Information System* (Phnom Penh: 2008)
- ♦ ILO: *Count Us In! How to Make Sure that Women with Disabilities Can Participate Effectively in Mainstream Women's Entrepreneurship Development Activities* (Geneva: 2008)

- ♦ ILO: *Skills Development through Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR): A Good Practice Guide* (Geneva: 2008)
- ♦ ILO: *Job and Work Analysis: Guidelines on Identifying Jobs for Persons with Disabilities* (Geneva: 2005)
- ♦ ILO: *Assisting Disabled Persons in Finding Employment: A Practical Guide. Asia and Pacific Edition* (Geneva: 2003)
- ♦ ILO: *Managing Disability in the Workplace: ILO Code of Practice* (Geneva: 2002)

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