

Justification: to support the inclusion of a disability perspective in Gender Issues



Why is it relevant to include gendered concerns around disability in development projects and programmes?

In general, women and girls with disabilities often belong to the most excluded groups of people in developing countries. In facing discrimination based both on their gender and disability status, they are compelled to deal with greater extremes of poverty. They may face exacerbated problems in addressing basic needs such as shelter, food, safe water, sanitation, health services, education and employment opportunities. Overall, women with disabilities are often left out of decision-making processes, including decisions that are about them.

Development programmes are meant to support and empower the most excluded and poorest people. Within these programmes, whether as active beneficiaries or policy makers, women and girls with disabilities are particularly under-represented. For example, microcredit schemes and maternal health programmes directed at poor women have often failed to include women with disabilities

Statistical	<p>The UN states that women report higher rates of disability than men. In practical terms, this means that poor women with disabilities are at a greater risk of experiencing multiple forms of discrimination as well as poverty.</p> <p>The estimated literacy rate for women with disabilities is 1 percent compared to about 3 percent for people with disabilities as a whole¹. Only 25 percent of women with disabilities worldwide are employed compared to 50 percent of men with disabilities.²</p> <p>The preamble to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states that woman and girls with disabilities often face additional risk of violence. A survey from Orissa in India found that every women and girl with a disability surveyed had been beaten at home, while 25% of women and girls with learning disabilities had been raped and 6% of women with disabilities were forcibly sterilized.³</p> <p>However, there is no consistent data available on the status of</p>
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¹ Rousso, H.: Education for all: A Gender and Disability Perspective, CSW, Disabilities Unlimited
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/280658-1172610312075/EducationforAllRousso.pdf>

² Groce, N.: Women with disabilities in the developing world. Journal of Disability Policy Studies. 1997. 1&2, pp. 178-192.

³ Mohapatra S, Mohanty M: Abuse and Activity Limitation: A study on domestic violence against disabled women in Orissa, India. Swabhiman, Orissa. 2004

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<p>Economic</p>	<p>women and girls with disabilities. For that reason, the WHA Resolution on "Disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation" calls on the WHO and its member states to collect gender - disaggregated statistics on disability in different sectors.</p> <p>According to the UNFPA Report 2003, 20 million women a year experience disability and long term complications due to lack of access to appropriate antenatal care.</p> <p>Women and girls with disabilities face multiple discrimination and are therefore less likely to have access to services, education, and employment and to participate in decision-making processes. This disenfranchisement can serve to aggravate their poverty and dependence upon others. Development programs that improve access to resources and services not only strengthen the independence and dignity of persons with disabilities but also release those individuals charged with their care. It is often girls that are taken out of school to support their relatives.</p> <p>Improved maternal healthcare given to women during and after pregnancy will reduce the number of women becoming disabled as a result of childbirth and decrease the economic consequences of disability both in the women giving birth and the decreased number of children experiencing disability through abnormal pre or peri-natal events (UNICEF 2001).</p>
<p>Legal and Political</p>	<p>The Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 resulted in the Platform of Action that addresses women with disability concerns in several paragraphs and urges governments and civil society actors to integrate women with disabilities in policy decisions and in programs.</p> <p>The UNCRPD includes gender mainstreaming in Article 6 on multiple discrimination of women and girls with disabilities and it calls on states to develop policies accordingly.</p> <p>By signing the UNCRPD and by issuing the EC Guidance Note on Disability and Development the EC acknowledged the existence of multiple forms of discrimination for women and girls with disabilities and affirmed its dedication to promote gender equality.</p> <p>MDG target 3 on Gender Equality does not mention women and girls with disabilities explicitly. However, the targets apply to all</p>

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women and girls and can only be reached by including women and girls with disabilities who often belong to the poorest parts of the population and are particularly likely to be subjected to violence and abuse.