



**Self Help
Africa**



Guide to **Disability Inclusion**

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STATISTICS

- 1 billion persons, or about 15% of the world's population live with disabilities, with some 80% of them in developing countries.
- Exclusion of persons with disabilities is costly. Estimates range from 1- 7% of GDP.
- Four of every five persons with disabilities live in rural areas in developing countries.
- Persons with disabilities, their families and their caretakers represent around 25% of any population.

1. What Disability Inclusive Development Means to Us:

According to SHA's Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021, "Access to livelihood opportunities is fundamental to ending the cycle of poverty, and we will endeavour to include the specific needs of vulnerable groups in our programme activities." For disability inclusive development, this means that persons living with disabilities are to be consistently included in all aspects of project cycles, and allowed to benefit from our programmes.

We strive to be fully inclusive, and aim to allow everyone to benefit equally from all programmes. However, considering available knowledge and resources, we know that this is not currently fully attainable, and we understand that it will take time to build our capacity to enable full inclusion.

As we are not a disability-specific organisation, the expectation is not to develop new programmes for persons living with disabilities, but instead to recognize that people living with disabilities will be stakeholders in our projects, and make reasonable accommodations to ensure they can participate. Our aim is to include people living with disabilities in what we are already doing, so that they too can benefit from our interventions. This may include ensuring they have access to services like micro-finance agricultural extension, and livelihood programmes.

As well as this, it is important to keep in mind that, as stakeholders, people with disability (PWDs) should have a say in project design and development processes, as well as any policy development process we may undertake with the government.

We will use the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability (WGSS)¹ to disaggregate data within IHM surveys, and if persons living with disabilities are present, we commit to include them in suitable project activities.

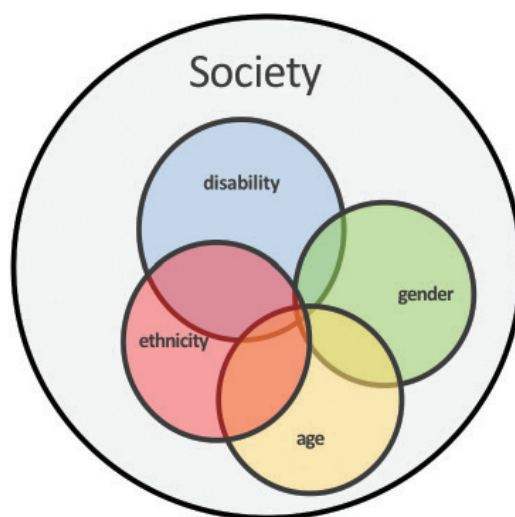
¹ For full explanation of the WGSS, as well as the questions themselves, please see the accompanying document "Targeting and Use of the WGSS."

Why does disability inclusive development matter?

Disability is not a rare phenomenon. An estimated 1 in every 7 people in the world have some form of disability². Persons living with disabilities often face significant levels of discrimination, stigma and prejudice, and as a result are not visible in society and are prevented from participating in the lives of their communities. In many countries, people living with disabilities are seen in negative ways. This can affect everything from their self-confidence right through to their capacity to engage in development programmes.

Disability can also intersect with other characteristics, sometimes causing even greater exclusion. Therefore, we need to analyse the interaction of all these characteristics together.

Data also shows that persons living with disabilities in low and middle income countries are poorer than their non-disabled peers, in terms of access to education, healthcare and income, and are much more likely to experience multiple deprivations.



As well as this, persons living with disabilities – some of the poorest and most marginalised people in the world – are often the least likely to benefit from the very programmes designed to reduce poverty and marginalisation. Unfortunately, too many existing aid programmes aiming to eliminate poverty do not take into account the unique dangers and challenges faced by persons living with disabilities.

Persons living with disabilities can experience barriers including negative attitudes, lack of access to training and information, and inaccessible work places when seeking employment. Livelihood programmes that are disability inclusive can play a valuable role in addressing these barriers and including persons living with disabilities in development at policy level. SHA aims to apply the social model of disability, which means that persons living with disabilities are hindered by the way society is organised, rather than by their impairment or difference. Social obstacles can be easily overcome by making small adaptations to the environment (including physical, attitudinal, and social barriers) surrounding

Barriers to inclusion can be:



Environmental



Attitudinal



Institutional

people living with disabilities, and by recognising that disability affects every aspect of someone's life, not just their health.

The social model views disability as a societal construct, rather than as a medical impairment. It is an alternative to the medical or charity models, which look at disability in a very narrow and clinical way. The social model frames disability as a collective issue – caused by the physical environment, inappropriate services and attitudes, and a lack of understanding – and that therefore requires collective action.

WHEN DELIVERING LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT:

- The economic empowerment of people with disability is key to independent living and social participation.
- Livelihood initiatives that include persons living with disabilities encourage opportunities to end the cycle of poverty and disability, and also contribute to poverty reduction and the inclusion of people with a disability in their local community.
- Employers do not always recognise the capabilities and breadth of experience people with a disability can bring to the workplace, therefore strengths and capacity of people with a disability need to be valued and developed.

- People living with disabilities may not be able to access small loans or other financial support to start a business and therefore need explicit consideration in microfinance initiatives.

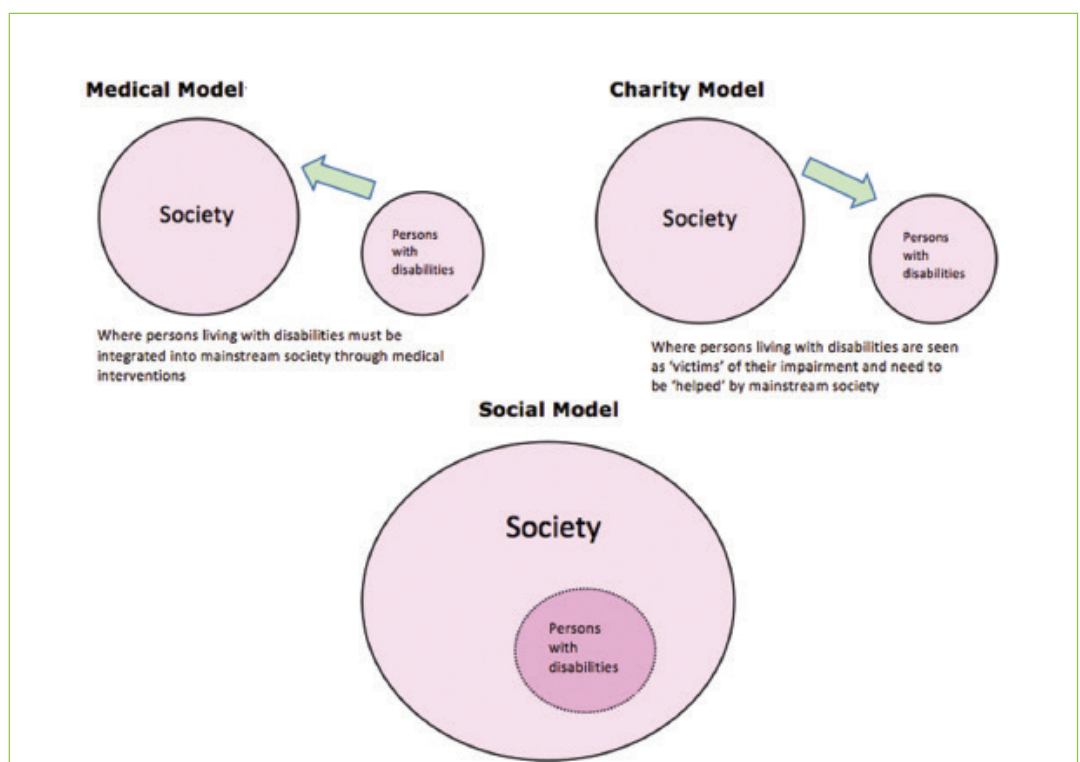
How can we be more disability inclusive at an organisational level?

1. COMMIT TO A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO DISABILITY

One of the most important places to start is for the organisation to develop clear and consistent messages around disability. Disability should be talked about as a social issue and, where necessary, staff should be trained in the social model of disability. Make the assumption that people living with disabilities will be stakeholders in all programmes.

2. ENGAGE WITH PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

The best way to promote disability-inclusive programming is by engaging with people living with disabilities as partners, expert advisors, staff, participants and beneficiaries. We must ensure that persons living with disabilities play an active role in the entire programme cycle. We, as an organisation have the capacity to address the social discrimination and stigma attached to persons living with a disability; in particular, we should challenge perceptions that persons living with disabilities are either unable to work or cannot be accommodated in the workplace.



3. BUDGET FOR INCLUSION

Be realistic about the resources that are needed to bring about the inclusion of persons living with disabilities. This means planning for the physical/sensory/cognitive and psycho-social access needs of persons living with disabilities in some programme activities. Relatively small adjustments to the way activities are carried out can result in the inclusion of many people living with disabilities if included in the design from the outset. We need to budget for inclusion from the start.

4. REMEMBER, INCLUSION IS MORE THAN JUST PHYSICAL ACCESS.

Generally, people living with disabilities find it difficult to participate in mainstream development activities because the activities are not designed in accessible ways. This needs to be addressed, but it is also important to realise that environmental access alone will not necessarily lead to inclusion – attitudes and policies also need to recognise the rights of people living with disabilities and their participation in decision making should be actively promoted.

5. LOCAL DPOS

Fundamental to the implementation of all Self Help Africa's disability programming – and to linking organisational policy with active field work – will be working through local partners. We aim to find local disabled persons organisations who have the knowledge and expertise to make all of our interventions fully inclusive in the most efficient way possible. Local or national disabled persons organisations are vital in helping us to sensitise staff, identify people with disabilities for inclusion in our programmes and to advise on the types of interventions and accommodations needed to include people with disabilities in our projects.

How can we be more disability inclusive at the field level?

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY INTO LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS:

- **STEP 1:** Sensitise staff on the importance of disability inclusive development.
- **STEP 2:** Raise awareness among target communities about disability inclusion within the programme. Ensure information about the programme is accessible to people living with disabilities.
- **STEP 3:** Identify PWDs within communities in partnership with local DPOs.
- **STEP 4:** Gather data specifically on persons living with disabilities in the community using the Washington Set of Short Questions within the IHM or other surveys.
- **STEP 5:** Identify areas where the intervention could benefit persons living with disabilities (e.g. training people living with

disabilities in beekeeping, adapting agricultural practices or tools to be accessible for people living with disabilities).

- **STEP 6:** Involve people living with disabilities and disabled persons' organisations in programme planning and development.
- **STEP 7:** Remove any access barriers that may exclude people living with disabilities from engaging fully with the intervention (e.g. ensure that stakeholder meetings are held in accessible rooms).
- **STEP 8:** Get feedback from the community, people living with disabilities, and disabled persons' organisations on the intervention to continually improve accessibility over the project life-cycle.
- **STEP 9:** Include persons living with disabilities in routine monitoring activities in order to track if inclusion has increased over time. Also include progress on livelihood improvement and inclusion of people living with disabilities in quarterly reports.
- **STEP 10:** Promote success stories from this intervention in order to engage more people living with disabilities in future projects.

CHECKLIST FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION IN LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMMES:

- ✓ Have staff been sensitised on disability inclusive development and its importance?
- ✓ Have awareness-raising activities about the potential for inclusion of people with a disability been delivered to target communities?
- ✓ Have local communities been surveyed to determine numbers of people with a disability?
- ✓ Are persons living with disabilities playing an active role in programme planning and evaluation such as being represented on stakeholder committee meetings?
- ✓ Have opportunities been identified within existing programmes to include people living with disabilities? E.g. Inclusion in VSLAs, smallholder agriculture activities.
- ✓ Have practical access barriers been addressed for people with a disability? E.g. holding meetings in accessible buildings.

References:

1. World Health Organisation. (2011). World Report on Disability. See: http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/
2. ADD International. (2017). Understanding disability & gender in development: Rights based approach.
3. Action on Disability and Development. (2016). The Value of Mainstreaming. See: https://www.add.org.uk/sites/default/files/ADD_The_Value_of_Mainstreaming_2016_1.pdf
4. For the full set of questions, please see the corresponding document on "Targeting and how to use the WGSS" Or go to <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/washington-group-question-sets/short-set-of-disability-questions/> and download the pdf at the top of the page.
5. For the full 'Inclusion Made Easy' Document, please go to: <https://www.cbm.org/Inclusion-Made-Easy-329091.php>
6. Rodolf Cziki. (2013). *About the possible role of rural advisory services in disability-inclusive development.* GIZ.