

Behinderung und internationale Entwicklung Disability and International Development

Themen: Kinder mit Behinderungen im Krieg
Themes: Children with Disabilities in Conflict



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Liebe Leserinnen und Leser,

das Jahr 2020 stand ganz im Zeichen der Corona-Pandemie. Wir mussten lernen, mit erheblichen Einschränkungen zu leben, haben unsere sozialen Kontakte reduziert und das gesellschaftliche Zusammenleben reorganisiert. So groß die Herausforderungen aufgrund von Covid auch sein mögen, so deutlich wurde auch, dass ein funktionierender Staat durchaus in der Lage ist, die schwerwiegenden Folgen einer Krise zumindest teilweise aufzufangen. In dieser Ausgabe möchten wir uns schwerpunktmäßig damit auseinandersetzen, mit welchen Folgen sich Kinder mit Behinderungen in Situationen konfrontiert sehen, in denen staatlicher Schutz und staatliche Förderung nicht mehr gewährleistet sind. Gerade sie gehören in Konfliktsituation zu den vulnerablen und am stärksten marginalisierten Gruppen.

Jodie Nguy, Diana Harnden und Elena Gariboldi setzen sich in ihrem Artikel mit dem Einfluss der konfliktbedingten Vertreibung auf die Entwicklung von Kindern mit Behinderungen auseinander. Hierbei berichten sie von Ansätzen für entwicklungsbezogene Unterstützungsangebote und deren Umsätzen im humanitären Kontext sowie von den Zusammenhängen zwischen Spielen und der Entwicklung von Kindern (mit Behinderungen).

Stephanie Schramm und Bilge Menekse berichten in ihrem Artikel von geflüchteten Kindern mit und ohne Behinderungen, die im Gaza Streifen und in Bangladesch leben. Die Autorinnen unterstreichen, dass sich insbesondere (geflüchtete) Kinder mit Behinderungen mit zahlreichen Barrieren konfrontiert sehen und unter anderem keinen ausreichenden Zugang zu Bildung haben.

Der dritte Artikel beschäftigt sich mit einem Thema, das nicht nur, aber auch in Hinblick auf die Situation von Kindern mit Behinderungen in Konflikten relevant ist: lokaler Strategien für die Umsetzung der UN-BRK. Lars Wissenbach und Dr. Isabella Bertmann-Merz stellen fest, dass nur so sichergestellt werden könne, dass bestehende Barrieren abgebaut werden und die Lebensqualität konkret verbessert wird.

Wir wünschen Ihnen viel Spaß bei der Lektüre
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Dear readers,

the year 2020 was dominated by the Corona pandemic. We had to learn to live with considerable limitations, we had to reduce our social contacts and we had to reorganise our social life. As significant as the challenges of the pandemic may be, it has also become clear that a well-functioning state can be capable of absorbing serious consequences of a crisis, at least to some extent. In this issue, we would like to focus on the consequences that children with disabilities face in situations where state protection and support is no longer guaranteed. They are among the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in conflict situations.

Jodie Nguy, Diana Harnden and Elena Gariboldi explore the impact of conflict-induced displacement on the development of children with disabilities in their article. They present developmental support approaches and their respective implementation in the humanitarian context, with a special focus on the links between playing and development of children (with disabilities).

Stephanie Schramm and Bilge Menekse report on the situation of refugee children with and without disabilities that live in the Gaza Strip and Bangladesh. The authors underline the multiple barriers and specific challenges (refugee) children with disabilities are facing, including insufficient access to education.

The third article deals with a topic that is not exclusively relevant in regard to the situation of children with disabilities in conflict: the necessity to implement local strategies for the implementation of the CRPD. Lars Wissenbach and Dr. Isabella Bertmann-Merz argue that efforts on the local level are crucial to ensure that existing barriers are removed, and the quality of life is improved effectively.

We hope you enjoy the reading,
Your editorial board

Fostering Inclusive Child Development: Its Impact on the Quality of Life of Children Living in Displacement Settings

Jodie Nguy/Diana Harnden/Elena Gariboldi

Children with disabilities living in displacement settings face many barriers to access their basic rights. The purpose of this article is to describe some of the approaches and key findings from the *Growing Together*, an inclusive child development project aimed at promoting equal participation in play for children with disabilities and caregivers and to improve children's quality of life. Findings show that involvement in inclusive play-based activities had the benefit of fostering children's right to equal participation and improving their perceived quality of life.

Background and Project Aim

The Growing Together (GT) project worked with 10,297 children (50% girls, 22% with disabilities), and 3,312 caregivers (79% female) in 11 refugee camps and 52 host communities in Cox's Bazar-Bangladesh, the Thai-Myanmar border and in Peshawar and Nowshera districts in Pakistan. In the displaced and host communities where GT worked, a range of contextual factors influence the day-to-day lives and wellbeing of children. The consequences of humanitarian crisis, natural disaster, stigma, poverty, poor access to education and other socio-economic factors result in barriers to upholding children's basic rights. Children's rights to participate in play for relaxation, learning and wellbeing, to go to school, to equally participate in community life and to express themselves on matters important to them (UN CRC Article 31 and 12) are compromised in these contexts. In particular, the stigma of disability means that children usually have fewer opportunities to learn new skills, reduced time for leisure and recreation where parents see little value

in play, and services and programmes are inaccessible. Also, when living in conditions of poverty and psychological distress, parents often are less available and have no chance to listen or take their child's point of view into consideration. Children generally have some awareness about their right to be listened to and taken seriously by their parents or caregivers, but a lot needs to be done concerning adults' attitudes and practices within the community. Furthermore, children with disabilities often have reduced access to services, either because they are often invisible and more difficult to identify and reach out, or because the type of specialised services they need are not available in these deprived contexts. Consequently, children have poor access to social and recreational activities, low autonomy, and self-realisation, affecting their development and coping capacities. At the project's baseline, children with disabilities also reported feeling less able to make friends and not often or never participating in community activities when compared to children without disabilities.

Children with disabilities often have reduced access to services, either because they are often invisible and more difficult to identify and reach out, or because the type of specialised services they need are not available in these deprived contexts.

Approaches Used

The project used inclusive play as the main driver to promote children's development and to empower families and communities. It was addressed to 4,815 young children aged 0 to 5 from which 47% were girls and 24% were children with disabilities. 147 parent's clubs were set up by the project to improve the understanding and practices of 3,312 parents on early childhood development, the importance of nurturing caregiving and inclusive play (WHO 2018). Parents' clubs were a space where parents could bring their young child to play and where they gained knowledge, shared their experiences, and learn from other parents. The clubs were inclusive and were a place where caregivers of children both with and without disabilities attended equally, a powerful way to break down the stigma of disability and to meet other caregivers.

In order to promote play and stimulation of children under three years, the *Blue Box* – an early child development tool – was used to positively influence the child's physical, cognitive, communication and social-emotional growth. The Blue Box is a community-based tool, which aims to promote the development of children at risk of disability and delay associated with biological (malnutrition, prematurity, infection) and environmental risk factors (extreme poverty, violence, forced displacement, maternal mental health). This intervention is family-centred, based on routine activities, and carried out in the child's natural environment. It comprises a system that includes a chart

to monitor the child's development milestones and a set of cards with activities for the families to guide their play and ways to stimulate and promote the achievement of the next stage of development. The cards include descriptions to guide parents on how the play activities can be adapted depending upon different impairments a child may have.

In the case of school-aged children, GT promoted the participation on inclusive play opportunities of 5,482 children out of which 20% with disabilities and 53% were girls. 215 inclusive children's clubs were the main structure where a range of play, arts and sports activities was used as the approach to delivering play and learning. This is where children 6-12 years with and without disabilities, identified among the children in most need of social support, participated in play activities in a friendly, safe, and inclusive space. The first few club sessions usually served to build the relationship among children and GT staff. Facilitators identified children who showed respect and leadership qualities and asked if they would be interested to become a *buddy*; this model of a *buddy system* involves identifying children who demonstrate attributes to be a good support for a child who has a disability (O'Connor 2016). Children who were willing to take on the role of a buddy were coached on what it takes to be a friend within the club and how they could support another child who may have additional support needs to be able to equally participate. Buddies' coaching included some basic principles on what it means to be inclusive of other children, understanding the value of diversity, while also being given some concrete coaching on how to support their buddy on specific aspects of their impairments. For example, where a child may need some additional support to maintain attention or need extra explanation of the rules of an activity to be able to equally join in, or where a child who uses an assistive device may need another child to help them collect and position the device at the end of an activity.

To promote a more participatory and child-led approach, actions like setting up child leaders and having children create their own club's rules to be respected by all members, were important approaches to build collective ownership by children (Hart 1992). Children participated in a range of activities like drawing, inclusive dance, theatre/drama, puppet shows, sports and games. These approaches were designed and adapted to be able to genuinely include children of different abilities and have them participate and express themselves. For example, Theatre for Development (TfD) was used as an approach that highlights children's unique strengths and attributes. Thereby it enabled all children to have a meaningful role in the theatre activity, whether it was a child using a wheelchair, where this aspect would be built into the character

Promoting an inclusive environment, where disability is not seen as a problem or an obstacle, enhanced the sense of wellbeing in children, particularly in those children with a disability.

they played, or a child with attention deficit disorder who played a ferocious lion, a role he was able to shine at. Also, through theatre and other play-based approaches, children were able to explore and experience first-hand the concepts of equal participation and discuss the meaning and the impact of what is it to be included or excluded. Or they learned something about child protection and rights and disaster risk reduction, where children were involved in the process of identifying solutions to problems faced by children in their community (Nyohi 2002). The clubs run weekly in the project locations and were facilitated by community workers, who were either refugees themselves or host community members. Community workers were trained in the methods and allowed some flexibility in using these play-based approaches to design activities that both met the interests of the children in each of the groups while covering the project key topics.

Additionally, the creation of 50 inclusive play spaces was an important component of the project. This included outdoor constructed playgrounds located in communities; play and learning spaces within school environments and alternative indoor play spaces within the housing compounds of community members. These indoor spaces were especially created for girls living in Pakistan who are often excluded from play as they get older, linked with conservative cultural values reducing their movement in the community. The play spaces were designed and constructed according to key criteria in order to be inclusive and participatory of all children, families, and communities (Casey & Harbottle 2018). The design included children and community consultations, especially of children with disabilities to have their views on barriers and facilitators to play. Creating play elements as accessible as possible included for instance ramps and pathways' fitting and offering different seating options where children could

have a break from play or participate in more quiet seated activities. Having swings with different types of seating options allowed children with different physical needs to be able to access the play facilities (Feske n.d).

The space also provided a range of play types, especially sensory play opportunities. Sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches were promoted, using low-cost and locally available materials, and finding ways to involve the community, for instance, working with local artists or having children involved in painting, art projects or taking care of the garden (Moreno & Veerman 2018). Having a gender sensitive lens was also an important approach especially in some of the conservative contexts, to ensure that barriers to play did not get in the way for girls especially.

Method and Main Findings of the Survey

Several instruments supported the analysis of the project's impact, including a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey across the target groups of caregivers, children and service providers and Key Informant Interviews (KII) for external service providers and partners, as well as other qualitative tools to understand more deeply children's views. For the purpose of this paper, we will focus on sharing the findings regarding children's and caregivers' knowledge and practices and children's perceived Quality of Life (QoL). The changes in knowledge and practices of children and caregivers were measured mainly through a KAP survey. Structured questionnaires were administered at the end of the project to 440 parents and caregivers of children aged 0 to 5 years and to 664 children aged 6-12 and their caregivers, selected among project beneficiaries.

The children's perceived quality of life was measured by using the ScoPeOKids tool. This is a short and child-friendly survey with questions covering 5 domains of quality of life: physical wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, perceived security, autonomy and self-realisation and social wellbeing. The tool contains 20 questions and was administered to children in the project target areas before and after project implementation. To measure QoL, the project took a sample of school-aged children between 6 and 18 years, and disaggregated it by gender, age, and disability (Baseline: n=378; 196 girls and 182 boys. Endline: n= 494; 257 girls and 237 boys. 17% of children with disabilities in both rounds of the survey).

Main Findings

The project reached 3,312 caregivers of 3,968 children aged 0-5 and 5,482 children of primary school age (6-12). At baseline, very few parents (21%) were participating in playgroups with their young children, in comparison

to 96% of those surveyed at the end of the project, who regularly participated in playgroups with their children and other caregivers. Parents showed a 20% increase in awareness of the value of play, with 59% at baseline and 83% at endline recognising that play is very important. In relation to why play is important to children, at endline 93% of caregivers reported that play brings joy and happiness to children, 73% reported that play helps them learn and understand the world, 69% reported that play helps children to develop different skills, 55% reported that every child has a right to play and 54% reported that play helps children grow-up to be well adjusted.

In terms of the amount of time parents reported spent playing, 54% play with their child between one and two hours a day and 41% reported that they play for less than an hour a day at the end of the project, overall with a 9% increase in reporting that they engaged in play or stimulating activities within the past week with their child. At endline, approximately 90% of respondents read books or look at picture books with their child, told him/her stories, led small group games with the child and siblings or peers and encouraged or engaged the child to play with their peers. Particularly, the latter activity is where the most significant improvements (+37%) were recorded as compared with baseline results.

As per school aged vulnerable children (6-12), it was found at baseline that only 24% had the opportunity to participate in recreational, awareness-raising, and complementary learning activities. At the end of the project, 97% of surveyed children were engaged in child-led games, educational games on disaster risk reduction, arts, sports, and complementary learning, promoting their equal participation, safety, protection, and wellbeing. The percentage of children reporting feeling bullied or excluded during this type of activities sensibly decreased from baseline to endline (from 39% to 4% and from 31% to 2% respectively). While at baseline only 46% of children felt comfortable to play with children with disabilities, by the end of the project 84% felt comfortable to play together with children with disabilities. Also, at endline, 86% of children surveyed did not agree with the statement that adults should not listen to children about their opinions (only 49% at baseline), 97% of children surveyed agreed that their parents should encourage them to make choices (78% at baseline) and 95% agreed that their parents should encourage them to try and do things on their own (77% at baseline).

The global score of children's perceived quality of life improved at the end of the project by 5 points (values out of 100). For children with disabilities, their global QoL score increased by +9, with significant improvements reported across all the five dimensions but particularly on

physical wellbeing, autonomy and self-realisation and social wellbeing. Likewise, GT played an important role in reducing the perceived inequalities of children with disabilities who scored the highest improvement of perceived quality of life (+9), in comparison to other vulnerable children (+4).

Discussion

The results indicate a significant positive improvement in the participation of caregivers in playgroups and a general increased proportion of mothers engaged in playgroups since the GT project was established. This is a positive signal of change in practice, particularly in culturally conservative locations, as a result of increased access to play based opportunities for caregivers and children 0-5 years old in the project locations. Also, there has been a noticeable improvement against almost all activities and the time spent by caregivers in playing with their children. The findings demonstrate that caregivers not only recognise play as important for child development, but also that they actively practice child development activities with their child: when regularly stimulating their children, the parents were able to see the positive changes. The findings confirm that the methodology proposed and utilised by Humanity & Inclusion is context appropriate, suitable, and easy to understand and replicate by people with low level of formal education. However, it was also found that caregivers particularly in the case of Thailand, in some cases do not see the value of play for the sake of play. Similar to findings in other studies, caregivers' attitudes affect children's participation in play across different gender, ages, and abilities (IPA 2017). The findings confirm that more advocacy and awareness is needed among communities in displacement contexts in order to change attitudes towards play for all children.

Offering more opportunities to safely play in contexts where cultural norms and values often hinder children's involvement in social life has ensured good levels of girls' participation. This is important, especially in conservative contexts like Pakistan and Bangladesh where 50% and 48% of the participating children are girls. Creating these play opportunities close to children's homes, accessible and inclusive of children with disabilities, while also providing culturally acceptable and safe play spaces in local communities, were key approaches to improve school aged children's physical (+7 points) and social wellbeing (+7 points) as per ScoPeOKids survey results. Promoting an inclusive environment, where disability is not seen as a problem or an obstacle, enhanced the sense of wellbeing in children, particularly in those children with a disability.

An evolving change of attitudes towards children with disabilities and greater inclusion in different activities by

caregivers and other children is a significant change the project methodologies fostered. The increase in children's level of comfort in playing and learning with children with disabilities between baseline and endline is significant and demonstrates the success in building greater inclusive knowledge, attitudes, and practices in children 6-12 years old. At endline, 96% of children beneficiaries were aware of the importance of equal participation, which was embraced for example through the buddy system in the children's clubs. Also, the increased visibility and participation of children with disabilities, to the eyes of their peers and to the community indicates that the GT project had successfully promoted their inclusion. Inclusive children's and parent's clubs, the regular opportunities for children to express their views and raise awareness of the rights of children with disabilities during community events, were all important modalities contributing towards reducing the level of exclusion of children with disabilities from social and community life. Through these increased opportunities to equally participate to community life, children reported an improved perception of their social wellbeing, an important achievement considering the disruptive social contexts the project worked in.

A number of tools and participatory approaches were used involving children in project design, monitoring and implementation, and providing the space and opportunity for children to express their views using different modalities including arts, drama, and sports. This opportunity has challenged cultural norms on the role children can play in society and an important opportunity to raise children's awareness on their rights. The implementation of the child buddy system and participatory tools were all effective mechanisms that contributed to fulfil an equal level of participation, particularly for girls and children with disabilities. Indeed, these interventions notably improved children's sense of autonomy and self-realisation as confirmed by ScopeKids findings (+7 points) survey results.

Limitations

The global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 impacted the regular implementation of activities, which were adapted to respond to the contextual restrictions, but as well to the evolving beneficiaries' needs. The endline exercises were conducted between March and June 2020, and the anxiety created by the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted on respondents' answers and their practices.

Conclusions

Projects like GT, aiming to foster inclusive child development through innovative approaches in humanitarian contexts, are important as they give children a better chance of achieving their full potential. Through its

activities, the project successfully reduced some of the risk factors related to negative child development outcomes. Amongst these, the risk of poor mental health associated with the experience of conflict, displacement, and deprivation through building strong involvement of caregivers in their child's early learning experiences and building resilience and coping strategies. Play is the main driver to counteract the above-mentioned risk factors, including protection and safety risks, which are multiplied for children with disabilities, increasing their social vulnerability. The project gave children with disabilities more of an opportunity to participate in community related activities, access services and play and socialise with other children, making them more visible and included and ensuring children with disabilities are not left behind.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Kinder mit Behinderungen, die in Vertreibungssituationen leben, sind mit vielen Barrieren konfrontiert, die ihnen den Zugang zu ihren Grundrechten erschweren. Der Zweck dieses Artikels ist es, einige der Ansätze und Schlüsselergebnisse aus dem Projekt *Growing Together* zu beschreiben, einem inklusiven Projekt der kindlichen Entwicklung, das darauf abzielt, die gleichberechtigte Teilnahme von Kindern mit Behinderungen und Betreuern am Spiel zu fördern und die Lebensqualität der Kinder zu verbessern. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Beteiligung an inklusiven spielbasierten Aktivitäten den Vorteil hatte, das Recht der Kinder auf gleichberechtigte Teilhabe zu fördern und ihre wahrgenommene Lebensqualität zu verbessern.

RÉSUMÉ

Les enfants handicapés pris dans les déplacements de population font face à de nombreux obstacles qui empêchent l'accès à leurs droits fondamentaux. Cet article vise à décrire quelques approches et principaux résultats de *Growing Together*, un projet de développement inclusif de l'enfant destiné à promouvoir la participation égale au jeu pour les enfants handicapés et leurs aidants et à améliorer la qualité de vie des enfants. Les conclusions montrent que la participation dans des activités ludiques inclusives avait l'avantage de favoriser le droit de participation égale des enfants et d'améliorer leur qualité de vie perçue.

RESUMEN:

Los niños con discapacidad que viven en entornos de desplazamiento se enfrentan a muchas barreras para acceder a sus derechos básicos. El propósito de este artículo es describir algunos de los enfoques y resultados claves de *Creciendo Juntos*, un proyecto de desarrollo infantil inclusivo cuyo objetivo es promover la participación igualitaria en el juego para los niños con discapacidades y sus cuidadores y mejorar la calidad de vida de los niños. Los resultados muestran que la participación en actividades inclusivas basadas en el juego tuvo el beneficio de fomentar el derecho de los niños a la participación en igualdad de condiciones y mejorar su calidad de vida percibida.

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Being Excluded From Your Own Future: Examples From Refugee Children With Disabilities in the Gaza and Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Stephanie Schramm/Bilge Menekse

This article describes the main activities and findings of two interventions in inclusive psycho-social support and inclusive education on empowering children with and without disabilities in the Gaza Strip as well in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. In both contexts children with disabilities are among the most at-risk but face several barriers accessing services provided through humanitarian actors and service providers. To tackle barriers, a comprehensive approach must be envisaged – which means including children with disabilities, their parents, and the wider community actively into the intervention and at the same time decreasing barriers to services. In one context, the creation of a model of an inclusive structure or programme (e.g. child friendly space) which can be replicated by other actors, can be an effective way of demonstrating disability inclusion.

Forgotten in Humanitarian Interventions – Protracted Crisis and the Exclusion of Children with Disabilities in Education, Health, and Protection Interventions

2019 marked the year with the highest number of refugees and displaced people: 79,5 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to war, violence, persecution, and other emergencies (UNHCR 2020). The Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) is actively responding in the Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh and the Gaza-Strip, Palestine. Currently, the camps in Cox's Bazaar make up the world's largest refugee camp (Yeasmine 2019) with about 900,000 forcibly displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) (UNHCR et al. 2020:70), whereas in the Gaza Strip 1.9 million people including 1.4 million refugees registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) are locked-in as result of one of the world's most long-running conflict.

Since 25th August 2017, extreme violence in Rakhine state, Myanmar has driven

people across the border into Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh. Currently, “[a]round 919,000 Rohingya refugees live in southern Bangladesh, most of them in the vast and teeming camps and settlements that have sprung up in Cox's Bazar district, close to the border with Myanmar” (UNICEF 2018:11). Living in the camp settings, Rohingya refugees face additional threats. They live in congested sites that are poorly equipped to deal with monsoons, the services provided by humanitarian community does not meet all their demands and needs and the massive influx of refugees has increased the burden on the already poor host communities in Cox's Bazaar. Similarly, the blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israeli security forces, and the intra-Palestinian division, in turn, have progressively worsened the economy and living conditions. This has resulted in one of the world's highest unemployment rate, continuing food insecurity and restricted access to basic public services such as health and education.

Additionally, in both cases the humanitarian response plans are underfunded,

Peers, teachers and mentors increased positive attitudes towards children with disabilities.

leaving refugees without access to basic services such as health, education, and Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

In addition, according to the rapid assessment conducted in 2017 in Cox's Bazaar by the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) and Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) and in the aftermath of the conflict in Gaza-Strip 2014 it was found that persons with disabilities have not been sufficiently considered in the (humanitarian) responses (CDD/ASB 2017).

Among those forced to flee their homes, around half of them are under the age of 18 and 15% constitute children with disabilities according to the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, while the data disaggregation according to sex, age, disability is lacking. Many children are severely traumatised by what they have seen and experienced due to the conflicts in Myanmar and Gaza-Strip. In both contexts, children and in particular children with disabilities face a dire situation given the level of attitudinal barriers such as cultural stigma. Other barriers (environmental and institutional) limit their access to adequate health, protection, and education services.

In the Gaza Strip, many children with and without disabilities have witnessed at least three Israeli military offensives (2009, 2012, 2014) while the blockade is still ongoing. Children are resorting to negative coping mechanisms: dropping out of school, early marriage for girls and increasing violent behaviour in schools, in home and communities. The devastated infrastructure and overwhelmed services lead to an even grave environment for children with disabilities alongside the cultural stigma they face in daily life. Access to functioning health and education services for children with disabilities remains limited due to barriers such as limited accessibility and lack of transportation, technical skills as well as equipment for early detection. About half of children with disabilities (43%) aged 7-17 in Gaza were not enrolled in education in 2017 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2019). These factors compound with the lack of adequate financial support

to purchase assistive devices due to the economic crisis in Gaza increases the social isolation of children with disabilities. The psychosocial burden of this fragile and violent setting on children with and without disabilities has an immense impact on their well-being. According to a recent assessment on child protection conducted by Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) in March 2020, living in fear every single moment has significant psychological stress on children and their families. Around 69% of children with and without disabilities aged from 6-17 years reported their fear and anxiety of any type of escalation. The psychological burden on children with disabilities can be seen in the case of deaf children, for instance, who are afraid of losing their hands or arms which would prevent them from communication. Children who are blind or visually impaired do not know where to flee during Israeli airstrikes, are afraid of moving towards the targeted area without recognising it.

Being deprived from a normal life leads to serious mental health conditions for children with and without disabilities in Gaza Strip. The assessment also revealed that 44% of the children do not express themselves when being in fear, and 40% of the children do not ask for help when needed. In addition, it shows that girls hesitate more to ask for help. Moreover, the assessment indicated that 56% of the surveyed children react aggressively when they feel angry. Alarmingly, domestic violence has been another major harm, children have been facing, leaving them in a crossfire between violence due to the blockade and at home behind closed doors. ASDC's study revealed that 52% of surveyed parents reported to use violence against their children in their daily interactions while these figures reached 64% against children with disabilities.

1.2 million people in Cox's Bazaar are in need of humanitarian assistance, among them 638,000 children (UNICEF 2019:7). Education provides children with life skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviours that foster critical thinking, empathy, and the ability to build communities. They are enabled to understand their rights and responsibilities, while the absence of education has lifelong consequences and increases the vulnerability of children. However, 97% of children aged 15 to 18 years in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh are not attending any type of educational facility. There have been barriers identified that prevent children from attending school, like socio-cultural barriers (23%) (UNHCR et al. 2020:70). The lack of accessible facilities, inclusive teaching materials as well as lack of knowledge among teachers increase barriers for children with disabilities to access education and protection services (ibid.). Currently, between 10%-40% of children with disabilities are less likely to attend any learning facility (ibid.). The rapid assessment conducted 2017

Currently, between 10%-40% of children with disabilities are less likely to attend any learning facility.

in Cox's Bazar stresses that "[s]ome children with disabilities interviewed had been told by school-teachers that they could not attend school or child friendly space because of their disability" (CDD/ASB 2017).

With the exclusion from humanitarian interventions, the situation of children with disabilities is further deteriorating due to the lack of access to education, basic health services, adequate living conditions, basic nutrition, and a safe environment. This in turn, increases their risk and likely to be affected by poverty. The situation of conflict adds another challenge to break the cycle of poverty and disability. This is a specific burden children with disabilities in conflict settings face.

Comprehensive Approach Towards the Provision of Inclusive Mental Health, Education and Protection Services

Based on the identified gaps, CBM has been providing the following interventions in response to the two cases presented:

1. Strengthening the psychosocial well-being of children with and without disabilities and their families¹ by improving their participation, communication, and treatment through access to inclusive (early) childhood development programmes as well as improving their parent's communication skills and safeguarding.
2. In Bangladesh, supporting children to attend school and further education in the camp and host communities through piloting inclusive child friendly spaces and mainstreaming inclusion in education² as well as provision of health and rehabilitation services and psycho-social support for children with and without disabilities

Given the volatile security environment, children do not perceive the Gaza Strip as a safe place. Through inter-linked activities, ASDC has been following a holistic approach for the provision of psychosocial activities in safe spaces. In order to provide accessible and inclusive safe play centres for children with and without disabilities³, five child centres consisting of indoor and outdoor play and

recreational areas across the Gaza Strip were (re-)constructed accessibly and child friendly.

With the aim of reducing post-traumatic symptoms, stress, and other burdens such as feelings of guilt for having fled and left their relatives and friends, about 1,000 children have been receiving structured psychological, individual and group sessions in these accessible child centres. Within the sessions different techniques are applied, such as free drawings, expressional art, psychological movement games, storytelling, and relaxation.

Moreover, around 3,000 children with and without disabilities have been participating in inclusive play activities that have educational and recreational purposes and enable an equal participation of children with and without disabilities as well as their parents. The inclusive play activities include psychodrama exercises, storytelling, drawing, and sports activities and are accompanied by slogans on child rights and rights of children with disabilities. For instance, the drawing of a mural at the Gaza port jointly by children with and without disabilities was implemented with the message to respect the rights of children with and without disabilities while the title of the event was *I am not alone*.

Based on ASDC's monitoring and evaluation⁴, these types of activities help children to better cope with stress, overcome their fears and shyness, build self-confidence, improve their communication skills, and develop tolerance and acceptance towards other people in an inclusive and child friendly setting. At the same time, parents learn how to improve their communication with their children. In addition to this, the activities are supplemented with child-led produced play materials that are designed by children with and without disabilities. These play materials include accessible chess, adapted snake and ladder, and adapted puzzles.

Furthermore, the provision of life-skills training and inclusive recreational activities to more than 500 children with and without disabilities has ensured a deeper understanding of disability and inclusion,



acceptance, team building and teamwork, leadership, participation, and cooperation. Children with and without disabilities were engaged in camping activities, touring, cultural competitions, football games and cooking. This, in turn, has enabled children with disabilities to be more self-confident and having a better understanding about basic life skills such as problem solving, communication, and leadership.

Based on the identified needs, the CDD and CBM designed and constructed an inclusive child-friendly space (CFS) in 2018 in a Rohingya Camp in Cox's Bazar, with the goal of ensuring that children, including children with disabilities, had access to leisure activities and a learning environment (CBM et al. 2019:42).



Additionally, CDD and CBM supported UNICEF and its partners to address existing barriers. Children with and without disabilities were screened and identified to be enrolled in the centre, where they had access not only to recreational activities, but also to clinical assessments and rehabilitation services, as part of CDD and CBM's multi-disciplinary approach towards providing inclusive health services (see *ibid.*:42f.). Through referrals it was possible to access physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, psycho-social support services as well as eye or ear assessments. Consultations with children with disabilities and their parents were held around the design of the space, the signage, and other ideas on how to remove barriers. In addition, a CFS Management Committee was established, to ensure feedback of caregivers and children with disabilities is constantly addressed. To improve the capacities of teachers, CBM and CDD trained them in inclusive facilitation. This piloted CFS, serving as a model for mainstreaming actors, has been shared with the protection cluster of the UN to foster learning across organisations. As stigma around disability is widely spread in society, discussions with parents but also the wider community have been envisaged. Champion celebrations or inclusive sports and culture competitions for all children have been conducted in different camp areas as well as the host communities.

In partnership with UNICEF, teachers were supported to develop individual education plans for children with disabilities, to support them achieving their learning goals. Therefore, a variety of trainings for teachers has been offered. Learning centres as well as CFS were made accessible, and CDD/CBM supported the identification of children with disabilities to increase their enrolment. With this project peers, teachers and mentors increased positive attitudes towards children with disabilities. The physical layout of UNICEF learning centres and CFS considered the needs of children with disabilities. Through the connection of CFS and rehabilitation, assistive devices are reported to help children attending learning centres and CFS (see CBM 2020:2).

Key Learnings/Messages

Despite the challenges occurring in conflict environments, the findings show that an inclusive approach based on a clear inclusion strategy in the respective sector, ensures that services are accessible and needs of children with disabilities can be met. This includes mainstreaming disability and child protection at individual, family, and community level.

Limitations of both projects were:

- The ongoing conflict in both cases hampers a full achievement of a functioning and inclusive society.
- The elimination of attitudinal barriers within the society can't be achieved during the project lifetime.
- Development of a new intervention in a new context, lead to an underestimation of timely and financial resources needed, to decrease existing barriers and mainstream disability inclusion in collaboration with humanitarian partners.
- Mainstreaming disability requires the willingness of organisations to implement recommendations and adopt approaches accordingly.
- The ongoing blockade of the Gaza-Strip is further increasing psycho-social stress on people with and without disabilities.

Although in different contexts, both projects in Cox's Bazaar and the Gaza Strip have shown similar key learnings on how to include children with disabilities in the health, protection, and education sectors in situations of conflict:

- Measuring the inclusion of children with disabilities means that qualitative indicators are necessary.
- Positive impact of a model like the CFS on mainstreaming actors.
- Ensuring a participatory planning process from the beginning so that beneficiaries including people with disabilities, partners, and other relevant stakeholders are included, and barriers are tackled.

- Recognising that the disability movement and individual needs of people with disabilities are not homogenous.
- For the realisation of inclusive services for all children each component of respective system needs to be considered and addressed (e.g. transport, parents, caregiver, regulations).
- Data collection should be conducted according to gender, age, and disability.
- Addressing intersectionality means participation of girls and women with disabilities to meaningfully address gender related barriers.
- Connecting main areas of intervention meaningfully with other service providers (e.g. education and rehabilitation) to ensure continuous inclusion of children with disabilities.
- Applying resources and standards available such as IASC Guidelines, Humanitarian Hands on Tool, Humanitarian Inclusion Standards or UNICEF Guidance.

NOTES

- 1 The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).
- 2 The project is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office.
- 3 The project is being implemented by Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) in cooperation with the four child centres: Nawa for Culture and Arts Association, SOS children's Village- Palestine-Rafah, Tamer Institute for Community Education, Union of Health Work Committees-AL Assria Community Center.
- 4 To measure the impact of these measures, ASDC's psychosocial specialist and M&E Officer are conducting surveys focussing on 1. the self-esteem and self-confidence 2. problem solving skills, 3. communication and social inclusion as well as 4. emotional resilience. Besides the pre-and post-surveys with the children before and after the interventions collected and analysed by ASDC's M&E Officer, an observation tool is used by the psychosocial specialist to report the improvement of the children's wellbeing. Moreover, focus group discussions take place with the children's parents after the interventions to receive the parents' feedback about the changes in the children's behaviours and psychological well-being.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Artikel beschreibt die Hauptaktivitäten und Ergebnisse von zwei Interventionen in den Bereichen integrative psychosoziale Unterstützung und integrative Bildung zur Stärkung von Kindern mit und ohne Behinderungen im Gaza-Streifen sowie in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesch. In beiden Kontexten gehören Kinder mit Behinderungen zu den am stärksten gefährdeten, sehen sich aber mit mehreren Hindernissen beim Zugang zu Dienstleistungen konfrontiert, die von humanitären Akteuren und Dienstleistungsanbietern angeboten werden. Um Barrieren zu überwinden, muss ein umfassender Ansatz ins Auge gefasst werden – dies bedeutet, Kinder mit Behinderungen, ihre Eltern und die breitere Gemeinschaft aktiv in die Intervention einzubeziehen und gleichzeitig die Barrieren für Dienstleistungen abzubauen. In einem Kontext kann die Schaffung eines Modells einer inklusiven Struktur oder eines inklusiven Programms (z.B. kinderfreundlicher Raum), das von anderen Akteuren übernommen werden kann, ein wirksames Mittel sein, um die Integration von Menschen mit Behinderung zu demonstrieren.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article décrit les principales activités et constatations de deux interventions de soutien psychosocial inclusif et d'éducation inclusive relative à l'autonomisation des enfants, handicapés ou non, dans la bande de Gaza ainsi que dans le district de Cox Bazaar au Bangladesh. Dans les deux cas, les enfants handicapés figurent parmi les personnes les plus vulnérables, mais se heurtent à de nom-

breuses barrières dans l'accès aux services fournis par des acteurs humanitaires et par des prestataires de services. Il sera nécessaire d'envisager une approche intégrée pour aborder le problème de ces barrières. Cela signifie l'inclusion des enfants handicapés, leurs parents et le reste de la collectivité dans l'intervention, et aussi la réduction des obstacles aux services. Dans un contexte, la création d'un modèle de structure ou de programme inclusif (par exemple, les espaces amis des enfants), qui pourrait être appliqué par d'autres acteurs, peut être un moyen efficace de démontrer l'inclusion des personnes handicapées.

RESUMEN

Este artículo describe las principales actividades y resultados de dos intervenciones de apoyo psicosocial y educación inclusiva para empoderar a los niños con y sin discapacidad en la Franja de Gaza y en el Bazar de Cox (Bangladesh). En ambos contextos, los niños con discapacidades se encuentran entre los más arriesgados, pero se enfrentan a varias barreras para acceder a los servicios prestados por los agentes humanitarios y los proveedores de servicios. Para superar las barreras, hay que contemplar un enfoque integral, lo que significa incluir a los niños con discapacidad, a sus padres y a la comunidad en general de forma activa en la intervención y, al mismo tiempo, disminuir las barreras a los servicios. En un contexto, la creación de un modelo de estructura o programa inclusivo (por ejemplo, un espacio para los niños) que pueda ser reproducido por otros actores, puede ser una forma eficaz de demostrar la inclusión de la discapacidad.

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Making Disability Inclusion a Local Planning Task – Implications for International Development Cooperation

Lars Wissenbach/Isabella Bertmann-Merz

Persons with disabilities are particularly affected by various barriers. It is the social and physical environment where these barriers take concrete shape, and where local planning approaches have to manage the implementation of inclusive structures based on the CRPD. The local level is where activities take place that sustain us physically, socially, etc. It comprises shared places where the co-existence of people has to be managed. This article discusses the relevance of local governance and planning towards inclusive cities and human settlements in the context of international development cooperation.

Introduction

This article aims at investigating the relationship between participation (rights) and the State's responsibility towards the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the local level¹, where the realisation of the provisions takes place as a very concrete encounter between the State and its citizens. Ideally, a variety of service offers and support structures at the local and regional level should provide suitable opportunities for citizens to actively take decisions and shape their life career by selecting those options that are most valuable for them. But not only does the realisation of this right and freedom of choice require the mere availability of services and support structures, also their accessibility and affordability is decisive. The latter aspects are of specific relevance for persons with disabilities, who are particularly affected by social, environmental and cultural barriers.

The CRPD highlights the relevance of all governmental levels to translate the Convention's provisions into practice. Current

international policies like the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the *UN New Urban Agenda* address these provisions by calling for inclusive planning processes at regional and local levels. However, the State's responsibility at the local level regarding the systematic implementation of inclusion and participation as a cross-sectoral task, especially on the basis of the CRPD, has not received much attention so far in the international development discourse². In addition, a combination of approaches towards human rights issues (including disability inclusion) and decentralisation efforts or questions of governance, local development and planning³ have hardly taken place to date in both research and practice (see for example Boucher et al. 2015; Handicap International 2009; UNDP 2004). Our contribution will link those areas by focussing on the role of decentralisation and local governance with regard to the implementation of article 19 (Living independently and being included in the community) and article 32 (International cooperation) of the CRPD.

Disability and Place

The CRPD states that “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (UN 2006: article 1). The fact that disability arises from the interaction between a person and her/his physical and social environment moves the latter aspect into focus. It is a person’s physical and social environment where barriers take concrete shape. Article 9 of the CRPD therefore obliges states parties to

“take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas”

in order to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life (UN 2006: article 9). The human rights-based approach to disability reflects a shift from regarding persons with disabilities as recipients of charity, medical treatment, and special services towards defining disability as an evolving and dynamic concept taking into account environmental, social and cultural barriers (UN 2006). In addition, it acknowledges disability as a part of human diversity and calls for social inclusion and an “enhanced sense of belonging” in its preamble (UN 2006; see also Bielefeldt 2009: 4 ff.). Thus, the CRPD provides a framework for the right to participation of persons with disabilities, including in the community (article 19). As has been mentioned, current international policies and strategic frameworks like the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the *UN New Urban Agenda* have picked up on the CRPD definition of disability. These frameworks therefore call for new and innovative concepts that reduce multidimensional complexities of the interrelations between individual impairments and environmental barriers which impact the opportunities of social participation. Hence, it is those interdependencies which have to be made describable and workable.

Decentralisation and Local Planning

Decentralisation⁴ has been highlighted as a development goal and a key aspect of state modernisation for decades of international development cooperation. Allowing closer contact to the citizens, it is widely recognised as an approach to making governance more responsive to local needs and preferences. Thus, decentralisation is often regarded as a means to solving social, spatial, and economic

inequalities and enhancing social cohesion (see for example Bardhan & Mookherjee 2015; Kersting et al. 2009; Romeo 2012). Bardhan & Mookherjee (2015) argue that at the same time, large-scale federal development projects directed from national level often lack adequate sensitivity to local community needs and concerns, and treat people living in poverty as objects of the development process instead of involving them into the planning and implementation.

With respect to inclusion and disability, activities in the field of development cooperation often focus either on the development of legislative or policy frameworks or at the provision of disability specific services, lacking a more general perspective on the potential and relevance of local governance and planning processes and responsibilities of local governments as such. It therefore seems to be worth taking a closer look at local governance processes in order to discuss how development measures can adequately address the needs of people, which enfold practical reality and require response in their local communities in the first instance. The provisions of the CRPD address all government levels of states parties. Romeo (2012) emphasises the conceptualisation of local autonomy that turns local governments from *objects* to *subjects* that are able to actively shape top-down processes by a *push from below*. Routed in this perspective, the *local* does not refer to the *where*, but to the *who and the how* of development (Romeo 2012: 2). This directs the attention on questions concerning the potential of active roles that local governments can and should play with regard to the implementation of the CRPD.

Different historically evolved welfare traditions, legal and policy frameworks have an impact on the policy fields that local authorities are responsible for. Today, local governments across the globe exert a decisive influence over the living conditions and quality of life of a nation’s citizen. In most of the world’s countries, public-sector goods and services are provided by regional and local governments and authorities, or with their involvement. This applies e.g. to basic education, health services, mobility, housing, water supply, waste disposal or disaster risk management. These public-sector goods and services are key for the quality of life of the local population including those inhabitants with disabilities. In 2015, subnational governments were responsible for 59.3% of total public investment throughout the OECD area and for almost 40% worldwide (OECD 2018).

Local governments are meant to work towards social equality and poverty reduction (Kersting 2009) as well as collective public well-being. The role of local planning systems and practices can be seen as helping local entities to work out how to manage collective concerns about the

Recent developments in the field of international cooperation call for renewed attention to the role of local governance in development and emphasize the role of local governments and local communities for processes of inclusion and public well-being.

qualities of shared spaces and local environments (Healey 2006). The implementation of legal and policy provisions for the inclusion of persons with disabilities is thus to be seen as an inherent part of local planning within the framework of local governance and the responsibility of local governments. Affecting more and less complex sector-specific and cross-sectoral planning tasks, such planning processes require a certain amount of resources including administrative capacity and expertise at local level regarding community planning as well as service and infrastructure development.

However, evidence suggests that higher-level governments often devolve responsibilities for social services to the lower level, without corresponding devolution of funds, personnel, and knowledge. This can lead to *unfunded mandates* on social responsibilities for local governments, restricting their capacities and preventing them from implementing social policies (see Bardhan & Mookherjee 2015; Kersting 2009). When it comes to disability inclusion, even in countries with a strong legislative and policy framework and where disability is mainstreamed into decentralisation policies, the implementation capacities of local governments regarding disability inclusion often remain limited (see for example the case of Ghana⁵).

Making Disability-Inclusion a Local Planning Task

The most crucial challenges related to the CRPD are those related to its implementation in a multi-level approach. States Parties are expected to fulfil the requirements by legal processes, which are gradually transferred into policies and practices trickling down from national

to sub-national levels. A lack of opportunities for inclusion manifests itself in social and physical barriers, which take shape in the concrete living environments and thus in the place-based communities people live in. Communities, whatever their form, are the realm in which social reproduction occurs. Even in postmodern fragmented and differentiated form, and despite a rapidly growing mobility, digitalisation and globalisation in the past decades, the communities of most people remain relatively place-based (DeFilippis & Saegert 2012). That is, communities are the sites for our housing, education, health care, daily convenience shopping, and the other activities that sustain us physically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically (ibid.). This rooting of people in places has significant impacts on people's personal development, as well as their inter-personal social networks and relationships. People who share a space together build a common set of experiences, that, when accumulated over time and in different parts of life, form much of the basis of people's support networks in their daily lives (ibid.). And even though place-based communities are no homogeneous realms of people with completely shared interests or perspectives, they build historically rooted, politically, and ecologically defined spaces in which individuals, households, and groups contest and cooperate with each other to manage individual and collective concerns about the qualities of local environments.

Opportunities for inclusion open up through access, on an equal basis with others, to the social and physical environment, to transportation, to information and communication, including information and communication technologies and systems, and to other public facilities and services at the local level. Moreover, inclusion becomes real when suitable opportunities for people open chances to realise their right to actively take decisions and shape their life career by selecting those options that are most valuable for them, embedded in the reciprocal relations between people with similar but also with unlike interests and ways of life from which local communities arise.

Taking a closer look at provisions made by the CRPD, it becomes evident that many of them address issues which are directly linked to public-sector goods and services provided by local governments and authorities, or with their involvement. Many policies and investments needed to implement these provisions are in shared responsibility across levels of government and might not be realised without the engagement of the local level and its responsibilities for the provision of public-sector goods and services. These include, amongst others, disaster risk management (Art. 11), housing and community life (Art. 19, 28), education (Art. 24), health services (Art. 25), mobility (Art. 20), habilitation and rehabilitation (Art. 26), participation

in political and public life (Art. 29), or participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sports (Art. 30).

Social communities (for example the family and the neighbourhood) as well as non-governmental organisations of different kinds often have an important role as far as support for persons with disabilities in the community is concerned. In addition, approaches such as Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR)⁶ and the respective collaboration between governmental and non-governmental actors can make an important contribution. However, the State's responsibility at the local level regarding the systematic implementation of inclusion and participation, especially on the basis of the CRPD, has not received enough attention so far. This can for example be seen with regard to UNDP's Integrated Framework to Support Local Governance and Local Development (UNDP 2016) and other strategy papers, which do not refer to disability rights or inclusion. And on the other hand, specific disability strategies do not adequately take into account topics such as decentralisation, local governance and planning at community level.⁷

Based on the centrality of the immediate physical and social environment with regard to the elimination of barriers and the provision of participation, it is the local level that plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between inclusion theory, respective policies, and practical opportunities for people with disabilities to make use of their rights. A local governance viewpoint opens new perspectives for planning processes towards equal opportunities for all citizens and enhanced well-being as well as the development of approaches and measures that are sensitive to local contexts. In many instances, local communities and local governance provide a relevant framework for processes of planning relevant to social inclusion and public well-being. This suggests a high potential of local planning approaches to better meet the requirements and objectives of higher-level development strategies and the provision of the CRPD. The role of local planning systems and practices can be seen as helping place based communities work out how to manage their collective concerns about the qualities of shared spaces and local environments (Healey 2006: 3-4). Local planning should not primarily be a task of politicians and planning experts which implement desk-based solutions to local community challenges and needs, but a participatory and learning oriented process based on dialogue and communication which ideally includes representatives of all disparate groups sharing space and co-existing in local entity. However, even in such participative processes, the political leadership of local governments is of major importance. There is no question that local authorities are not the only actors in the local space, and often not even the most powerful ones. The concept

of local governance refers to collective action at the local level and is considerably shaped by "[...] informal norms, networks, community organisations, and neighbourhood associations in pursuing collective action" (Shah & Shah 2006: 1-2). Multiple and diverse power structures take effect in complex causal networks and networks of relation including local government structures. But, due to the key tasks of local politics, local governments are to be recognised as "the principal legitimate agent of the local development process" (Romeo 2011: 5) when it comes to promoting and coordinating local development and planning. It is therefore necessary to recognise the functioning of local politics as an important prerequisite of participative local planning which allows cross-sectoral and sector-specific activities to impact the people living in a community, including those with disabilities. Local parliaments compose the centre of political power in local communities and based on the responsibilities with regard to collective public well-being, it is the formal decision of the local parliament through which local development strategies acquire binding force.

Local communities, under local government coordination, have the potential to enable cross-sectoral planning processes towards the inclusion of particularly vulnerable groups fostering the implementation of respective international, national, and regional legislative frameworks and policies. However, it cannot be assumed that such requirements and guidelines automatically diffuse from national to the sub-national levels, triggering respective change process in local communities. On the contrary, realising this potential of local government and local planning requires the *push from below* Romero (2011: 2) describes. The implementation of the CRPD at the local level thus needs pro-active initiation followed by local commitment and a formal decision of the local parliament for adaptation. Besides the commitment of local community stakeholders, making disability a local planning task requires theoretical approaches and concepts, which guide the process of taking over inclusion as a cross-cutting quality feature of all local planning activities. While the CRPD gives a definite mandate to the local level and defines important spheres of activity, further guidance is needed in order to conceptualise these provisions and to translate them into practical implementation. Such concepts and implementation approaches have to adequately address the important role of the social and physical environment in order to enable individual autonomy and at the same time to create practical opportunities to achieve a good living together in communities on a liberal basis. For local governments, this opens opportunities towards making inclusion a guiding principle for different sector-specific and cross-sectoral areas of local planning (see

Rohrman et al. 2014; Schädler 2017; Wissenbach 2019).

Outlook: Inclusive Local Planning and International Cooperation

Recent developments in the field of international cooperation call for renewed attention to the role of local governance in development and emphasise the role of local governments and local communities for processes of inclusion and public well-being. The commitment to *leave no one behind* is a key feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN 2015b). The idea that no goal should be met unless it is met for everyone is well established in the new goals. SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” highlights the need to focus more sharply on local communities and local governance with regard to a more participative development planning which gives special attention to and actively includes those in vulnerable situations like women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. SDG 11 has recently set a strong impulse to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and the UN New Urban Agenda, adopted in late 2016. Through its adoption, governments have committed to provide basic services for all citizens as well as to ensure that all citizens have access to equal opportunities and face no discrimination. The Agenda makes fifteen references to persons with disabilities, including a stand-alone paragraph. States parties commit to facilitate access for persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment of cities, in particular to public spaces, public transport, housing, education and health facilities, to public information and communication, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and rural areas (UN 2017). As outlined above, in many instances, these provisions fall within the direct competence of local governments and are important areas of sector-specific and cross-sectoral local planning. The CRPD dedicates a high level of importance to the environment in which people create their life careers. This is why approaches and activities aiming at mainstreaming the inclusion of people with disabilities should focus more sharply on stakeholders that are politically responsible for the design and development of these living environments. Disability inclusion is thus to be understood as an issue of cross-cutting local planning.

The planning mandate for the local level and its relevance has not yet been recognised in international cooperation. While partner countries increasingly base their policies and national strategies on the CRPD, implementation of its provisions at the local level is only successful

to a limited extent. So far, the focus of development actors in the field of disability mostly seems to be on legislative and policy frameworks at national and regional level on the one hand, or on specific services for persons with disabilities on the other hand. Based on the above discussion of the importance of local communities and the potential of local governments to mainstream disability inclusion in local level planning processes and to coordinate participative activities towards the inclusion of people with disabilities in their place-based communities, international development stakeholders could pay more attention to disability mainstreaming in the fields of decentralisation, urban and rural planning, and local governance. In many cases, the disability inclusion development discourse has not yet reached the professional-level debates of such sectors in the field of international development cooperation.⁸

Around the globe, local authorities face quite similar challenges when it comes to the implementation of the CRPD – albeit based on different development paths. Referring to the aspect of emancipation and self-determination of local governments concerning the implementation of the CRPD, the growing field of decentralised development cooperation⁹ offers opportunities for mutual learning and cooperation of local governments on disability-inclusive local planning and coordination. For the field of international development cooperation, complying with the provisions of the CRPD and objectives of current international development policies and strategies with regard to disability inclusion requires to introduce disability inclusion as a cross-sectoral planning task for all levels of governments. To this end, it will be crucial to broaden the disability inclusion discourse to the fields of decentralisation, urban and rural planning, and local governance. Based on the above discussion on local government responsibilities, making inclusion a local planning and coordination task requires additional awareness and capacities of local governments.

NOTES

- 1 By using the term *local level*, the present article refers to a politically defined territory and its population. More specifically, this includes cities, districts, towns, villages, or a grouping of villages which form a sub-provincial entity with a democratically elected representative leadership, a local council with budgetary powers and a local administration.
- 2 This was concluded based on an assessment of the consideration of disability inclusion within sector policies and strategies of bi- and multilateral development stakeholders in the fields of decentralisation, urban and municipal development, and local governance. The assessment draws on policy and strategy papers of members of the Development Partners Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance (see <https://delog.org/>

web/about/members/). While most of these policy and strategy papers address concepts of poverty, vulnerability and inclusion, disability is only addressed by very few and disability inclusion is not addressed as a cross-sectoral local development issue, except by the UN New Urban Agenda (UN 2016). Moreover, the statement is based on an assessment of the consideration decentralisation, urban and rural planning, and local governance topics in disability-specific policies and strategies of bi- and multilateral development stakeholders. Therefore, the assessment considered key disability-related strategy and policy documents of member organisations of the Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network (see <https://gladnetwork.net/members>). The results show that while some actors more or less clearly indicate the importance of the local level when it comes to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling basic rights of persons with disabilities, the majority of those cases refer to civil society activities and service provision. Some highlight the importance of practical opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in local level decision-making processes (see e.g. JICA 2015; DFID 2018). While the papers assessed show a couple of examples for effective cooperation with local authorities and public stakeholders in sector-specific planning and implementation of services on the local level, hardly any clear reference is made to cross-sectoral coordinating responsibilities of local governments and administrations with regard to the implementation of the provisions made by the CRPD. A clear definition of the mandate and obligations of local governments with regard to the CRPD could only be found in a submission on CRPD Article 19 (the right to live independently and be included in the community) to the CRPD Committee by the International Disability Alliance (see IDA, 2015).

- 3 This article uses the term local development for development that “leverages the comparative and competitive advantages of localities and mobilises their specific physical, economic, cultural, social and political resources” (Romeo 2012: 3), in a participatory process for which the local government takes primary responsibility.
- 4 Given a huge variety of definitions focussing on different aspects of decentralisation processes, this paper uses the term to denote devolution of political decision-making power including freely programmable resources to the local level.
- 5 Ghana’s National Decentralization Policy Framework (2015-2019) (Government of Ghana 2015a) and the National Decentralization Action Plan (2015-2019) (Government of Ghana 2015b) highlight the development and implementation of local level strategies and plans on disability and call for capacity development of local government authorities do so in line with their mandates. While the devolution of disability related funding to the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies was realised through the Disability Common Fund within the framework of the District Assemblies Common Fund, so far it seems to remain limited in scope and effects. For a discussion on the Disability Common Fund see Adampsey et al. (2018) and Agyire-Tettey & Naami (forthcoming

- 2019).
- 6 Community-based rehabilitation (CBR), initiated by the WHO in the 1970s and in the beginning directed towards an increased access to rehabilitation services, has become a multi-sectorial and multi-dimensional practical approach with the aim of enhancing social inclusion.
- 7 See note 3.
- 8 This was concluded based on an assessment of the consideration of disability within respective sector policies and strategies of members of the Development Partners Network on Decentralisation and Local Governance (see <https://delog.org/web/about/members/>).
- 9 Decentralised development cooperation describes partnerships of local authorities from different countries with the possible inclusion of other territorial actors, like civil society, private sector, schools, health care, and universities (see for example Marta & Akhmouch 2017).

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Menschen mit Behinderungen sind von verschiedenen Barrieren besonders betroffen. Es sind das soziale und physische Umfeld, in dem diese Barrieren konkrete Gestalt annehmen, und in dem lokale Planungsansätze die Umsetzung von inklusiven Strukturen auf der Grundlage der UN-BRK bewältigen müssen. Die lokale Ebene ist der Ort, an dem Aktivitäten stattfinden, die uns physisch, sozial usw. unterstützen. Sie umfasst gemeinsame Räume, an denen das Zusammenleben von Menschen geregelt werden muss. Dieser Artikel diskutiert die Relevanz von lokaler Governance und Planung für inklusive Städte und menschliche Siedlungen im Kontext der internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.

RÉSUMÉ

Les personnes handicapées sont particulièrement entravées par divers obstacles. Ces obstacles se concrétisent dans l'environnement social et physique. C'est donc là que les approches locales de planification doivent gérer la mise en place de structures inclusives fondées sur la CDPH. C'est au 'niveau local' où les activités se déroulent qui nous soutiennent physiquement, socialement, etc. Il comprend des 'espaces partagés' où la coexistence des populations doit être gérée. Présent article traite l'importance de la gouvernance locale et de la planification en vue de réaliser des villes et des établissements humains inclusifs dans le contexte de la coopération internationale pour le développement.

RESUMEN

Las personas con discapacidad están afectadas por diversas barreras. Es el entorno social y físico donde estas barreras toman forma concreta, y donde los enfoques de planificación local tienen que gestionar la implantación de estructuras inclusivas basadas en la CDPD. El 'nivel local' es donde se desarrollan las actividades que nos sustentan físicamente, socialmente, etc.. Incluye 'lugares compartidos' en los cuales hay que gestionar la coexistencia de las personas. Este artículo analiza la importancia de la gobernanza y la planificación local para lograr ciudades y asentamientos humanos inclusivos en el contexto de la cooperación internacional al desarrollo.

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World Data Forum: Persons with Disabilities and COVID-19 Data Collection and Disaggregation Effort

On 21st October, the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities, the International Disability Alliance, World Blind Union and CBM held the event Persons with Disabilities and COVID-19 Data Collection and Disaggregation Efforts at the virtual World Data Forum. Over 400 participants attended the event highlighting the importance of data on the situation of persons with disabilities. The key overarching messages from the event included that data collection tools are available, that areas on which to collect data need to be identified and prioritised and that where no data exists, research and community-driven data should be used to complement official data for policy and decision-making.

Information:

<https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/covid19-disability-data>

Regional Workshop in West Africa on Disability Inclusive Social Protection Response to COVID-19 Crisis: a New Path Towards Inclusion

On November 4th and 5th 2020, the West Africa Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (WAFOD), the African Disability Forum (ADF) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) held the Regional Workshop in West Africa countries on Disability Inclusive Social Protection Response to COVID-19 Crisis: a new path towards inclusion. Disabled people routinely face accessibility

and attitudinal barriers, discrimination and lack of support that hinder their participation in social, economic, and political life on equal bases with others. The COVID-19 pandemic and its related socioeconomic consequences has further exacerbated those barriers, marginalisation, and inequalities. Therefore, Disabled-People's Organisations from 11 African countries - Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Togo - came together to share their knowledge, skills, and expertise as well as to develop a common DPO-led understanding on social protection inclusive of persons with disabilities. The members recommended to take advantage of the ongoing crisis for influencing the design and delivery of social protection programmes which will truly support the empowerment, inclusion, and access to services. Issues of non-discrimination and accessibility of those measures by persons with disabilities as well as adequate coverage of disability related cost and support services need to be taken into consideration.

Information:

<https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/regional-workshop-west-africa-covid-19-crisis>

Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities Present in Civil Society Meeting with the UN Secretary-General

On 2nd November 2020, the representative of the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities,

Dr. Mohammed Loutfy, presented in the UN Secretary-General Meeting with Civil Society: Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond the theme A New Global Economic Consensus to Advance the 2030 Agenda. His presentation called for a progressive increase in dedicated public resources to support the full inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families in COVID-19 response and recovery, the transparent reporting of domestic and international resource allocations for the realisation of disability rights, the adoption and systematic use of the disability marker of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to measure and monitor financing for disability inclusion, and close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in all efforts related to international cooperation and the planning, implementation and monitoring of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

Information:

<https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/economic-consensus>

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Closed its 23rd Session

The CRPD Committee closed its 23rd session, which took place from 17th August to 4th September 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this session was held online and did not include reviews of States' parties to the Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Amongst other things, the Committee took onto the impact of COVID-19 on the human rights of persons with disabilities as well as the work of Treaty Bodies, advanced in its collaborative work with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, established a working group on deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities and informed about the International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities, adopted jointly by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility.

Information:

<https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/23rd-crpd-session-closes>

Professor Gerard Quinn Appointed as UN Disability Rights Rapporteur

Irish disability law expert Professor Gerard Quinn has been appointed as the UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Professor Emeritus in law at the National University of Ireland – where he previously directed the world-leading Centre on International Disability Law & Policy – is succeeding Costa Rican lawyer Catalina Devandas Aguilar. Among his priorities, Mr. Quinn said that he will work to ensure that the voices of persons with disabilities are heard loud and clear, in global responses to general calamities caused by COVID-19, climate change and the scourge of armed conflicts. He highlighted the need for systemic change to underpin the gains of the UN Committee

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to focus attention on the cultural and structural changes needed for the Sustainable Development Goals to be attained. He is also planning to continue bringing attention to the positive contribution of persons with disabilities to peacebuilding, nation-building and development, highlighting the need to promote their active citizenship.

Information:

<https://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2020/10/08/professor-gerard-quinn-appointed-as-un-disability-rights-rapporteur/>

Recognise and Protect Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN Chief Urges, Marking International Day

On 3rd December, the United Nations was commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities calling for greater inclusion for persons with disabilities and recognising and protecting their human rights. Since 1992 the day is annually observed to promote awareness and mobilise support for critical issues pertaining to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development. Under the theme Building Back Better: Toward a Disability-Inclusive, Accessible and Sustainable Post COVID-19 World, the day's focus was put on the deepened inequalities persons with disabilities are facing during the coronavirus pandemic. Among others, UN Secretary General António Guterres called for joint work to tackle the obstacles, injustices, and discrimination that persons with disabilities experience and to achieve an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world. On top of that, stakeholders urged world leaders for a full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the *building back better* process,

especially because the last months have shown a serious lack of consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, resulting in a negatively affected COVID-19 response.

Information: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1079142>

Welttag der Katastrophenvorsorge

Am 13. Oktober 2020 erinnerte Handicap International zum Welttag der Katastrophenvorsorge an das erhöhte Risiko, dem Menschen mit Behinderung im Katastrophenfall ausgesetzt sind. So zeigen Untersuchungen des Büros der Vereinten Nationen für Katastrophenvorsorge (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), dass weltweit nur einer von fünf Menschen mit Behinderung im Katastrophenfall sicher evakuiert werden kann. 75% der Menschen mit Behinderung sind nach einer Katastrophe von der humanitären Hilfe ausgeschlossen und nur 17% der Menschen mit Behinderung wissen im Vorhinein über die Katastrophenschutzmaßnahmen ihrer Gemeinden Bescheid. Deshalb gilt eine inklusive Katastrophenvorsorge als unentbehrlich. Handicap International weist darauf hin, dass regionale Behörden und Evakuierungsteams geschult werden müssen, wie sie die Bedürfnisse von besonders schutzbedürftigen Personen besser berücksichtigen können, ihnen notwendige Informationen und Hilfe zukommen lassen und sie Notunterkünfte barrierefrei gestalten können.

Information: <https://handicap-international.de/de/neuigkeiten/welttag-der-katastrophenvorsorge-2020>

73rd World Health Assembly (WHA73) Endorses Resolutions on Meningitis Control and Epilepsy, Roadmap on Neglected Tropical Diseases

Member States recommended the adoption of two resolutions on meningitis control and epilepsy at the 73rd World Health Assembly on 12th November 2020. Committee A, which focuses on programme and budget matters, decided to recommend the adoption of the first-ever resolution on meningitis, which would approve a global roadmap to defeat meningitis by 2030 – a disease that kills 300,000 people annually and leaves one in five of those affected with devastating long-term consequences. The Committee also recommended the adoption of a resolution calling for scaled-up and integrated action on epilepsy and other neurological disorders. Neurological disorders are the leading cause of disability and the second leading cause of death worldwide. The Committee further decided to recommend the adoption of a decision endorsing the new roadmap for neglected tropical diseases (NTD). The roadmap aims to achieve their targets by 2030, among other things to reduce the disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) related to NTDs by 75%.

Information: <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-11-2020-wha73-endorses-resolutions-on-meningitis-control-and-epilepsy-roadmap-on-neglected-tropical-diseases>

Inclusive Africa Conference 2020 Seeks to Promote Access to Digital Resources for Persons with Disabilities in Africa

The first ever virtual Inclusive Africa Conference 2020 under the theme of promoting digital accessibility in Africa was hosted on 8th

and 9th October by the nonprofit inABLE whose mission is to empower the blind and visually impaired through computer assistive technology. Around 500 attendees from across Africa joined in this inaugural online event intended to increase awareness of the needs and rights of people with disabilities to access digital information, including public safety, health and remote learning education that is presently inaccessible.

The Inclusive Africa Conference brought together global and local knowledgeable experts from different sectors to showcase inclusive design, mobile accessibility, and digital accessibility in primary and high school education, higher education, financial services, social media, employment and more. inABLE Executive Director Irene Mbari-Kirika emphasised that now is the right time to start formulating inclusive policies that put people with disabilities at the centre of inclusive design and will not affect their wellbeing, education and employment.

Information: <https://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2020/09/08/inclusive-africa-conference-2020-seeks-to-promote-access-to-digital-resources-for-persons-with-disabilities-in-africa/>

ArtsAbility 2020 SHIFT ONLINE

The ArtsAbility Festival, presented annually in South Africa by UNMUTE Dance Company, is Africa's premier inclusive arts festival. In its sixth year, ArtsAbility 2020 had to move to the virtual space and turned the usually six-day event to a month-long free online experience. From 3rd November to 3rd December 2020, the festival paid tribute to International Month of Persons living with Disabilities. Under the overarching theme Spaces & Homes Invasion Festival of Transmission (SHIFT) ONLINE,

it presented an exciting, innovative space for both disabled and able-bodied artists and performers, offering a plethora of performances, webinars, and creative works. Due to this year's virtual performance, ArtsAbility 2020 was able to open its doors to not only local South African creators, but also Africa and the World. Thus, the objectives were three-fold, firstly to provide exposure for those young inclusive artists who are already producing works in communities. Then, to provide a platform for collaborative works between South African, African, and global inclusive artists. Lastly, to provide learning opportunities through the Access Lecture, Inclusive Webinars, Sign Language Lessons and Integrated Dance Workshop Programme.

Information: <https://www.thisability.co.za/2020/10/29/artsability-2020-shift-online/>

Bringing Hope in Sight

The world at large was commemorating eye care month which commenced on 20th September 2020 to 17 October 2020. The main purpose of this commemoration was to raise awareness about the importance of eye health considering the prevention of blindness and treatment of avoidable causes of blindness following its symptoms and condition of the eye. The South African organisation KZN Society for the Blind has joined other institutions on the call for the people to take good care of their eyes to avoid preventable blindness. They are urging people to regularly have their eyes checked through relevant institutions because early identification of the symptoms may assist to avoid unnecessary blindness. For the period of 100 years The KZN Society for the Blind has assisted many people and is continually assisting people through its eye clinic with testing

and rehabilitation for those whom their vision cannot be restored.

Information: <https://www.thisability.co.za/2020/10/14/bringing-hope-in-sight/>

SAFMH Supports Building Communities Inclusive of Disability Rights

This year the South African government's chosen theme for Disability Rights Awareness Month (DRAM) – which runs annually from 3rd of November until the 3rd of December – is Together Building Communities Inclusive of Disability Rights. The theme reminds each of the important work that is needed to remove barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from playing a meaningful role in society and asserting their rights. According to the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD), the challenges faced by persons with disabilities, do not only deny these individuals their basic human rights, but they also prohibit persons with disabilities from partaking in personal developmental activities.

The South African Federation Mental Health (SAFMH) as an organisation that focuses on upholding and protecting the rights of people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, believes in building inclusive communities where all persons with disabilities enjoy equal inclusion in every area of their lives. SAFMH is of the view that the government needs to be accountable and increase the representation of persons with disabilities in institutions and government departments as a sign of a commitment to changing the status quo and realising building communities inclusive of disability rights.

Information: <https://www.thisability.co.za/2020/11/03/safmh-supports-building-communities-inclusive-of-disability-rights/>

Disaster Survival Guide in Braille Released for Persons with Visual Impairment in Jamaica

A survival guide produced in braille for persons who are blind or living with vision impairment was unveiled at a handover ceremony recently as part of an effort to ensure that they are not left behind when disaster strikes.

The ceremony at the Salvation Army School for the Blind and Visually Impaired marks the beginning of nationwide distribution of the booklet When Disaster Strikes Be Ready – A Survival Guide for Persons with Disabilities. The booklet provides a comprehensive guide on disaster management for persons with disabilities and explains how they should plan for each disaster and what they should do during and after a major disaster. Hence, the project is bringing practical solutions while empowering people with critical information.

Information: <https://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2020/10/23/disaster-survival-guide-in-braille-launched-for-persons-with-visual-impairment-in-jamaica/>

Turkmenistan Joins the Marrakesh Treaty and Completes Ceremony of Depositing Instrument in Geneva

On 15th October 2020, the ceremony of presenting the instrument on Turkmenistan's joining the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled of 2013, signed by the President of Turkmenistan, to the World Intellectual Property Organisation's Director General Daren Tang was held in Geneva. In the framework of the ceremony, the Permanent Representative

of Turkmenistan at the UN Office in Geneva has noted the commitment of Turkmenistan to the constructive dialogue with the respected international organisations, in particular the WIPO. The ratification by the Parliament of Turkmenistan of the Marrakesh Treaty is to serve as a vivid result of the country's cooperation with the international partners. The intensification of cooperation was underlined by both parties.

Information: <https://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2020/10/21/turkmenistan-joins-the-marrakesh-treaty-and-completes-ceremony-of-depositing-instrument-in-geneva/>

New Rules Guarantee Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Nepal

The government of Nepal has issued Rules Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities-2020 to facilitate differently-abled persons to enjoy their constitutional and legal rights. The rules make it mandatory for the concerned authorities to provide differently-abled persons with assistive devices – e.g. wheelchair, automatic speech recognition or braille display – free of cost as per the nature and condition of their disability. The rules stipulate provision of providing community support service to the persons with complete disability ('A' category) and severe disability ('B' category) to help them for their daily needs. The rules also stipulate that persons with disabilities shall be entitled to free education with residential facility, skill development training, financial package, loan from banks and financial institutions for operating business, reservation in government offices, free health service, rehabilitation and social security allowance. Earlier, the National Human Rights Commission had urged

the government to specify their obligations to protect the rights of persons with disabilities clearly in their laws and ensure an environment that would enable them to lead a dignified life.

Information:

<https://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2020/08/23/new-rules-guarantee-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-nepal/>

Thai Universities Innovate to Empower Persons with Disabilities

The National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEP), and Department of Older Persons (DOP) signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the development of the innovations for empowering the older people and persons with disabilities. The cooperation aims to help reduce the need to import the equipment for persons with disabilities and older people and make them more accessible to the target group. In the initial stage, there are a few inventions that are ready to be produced and used, for example a Non-electric Powered Standing Wheelchair or an Automatic Rotating Bed.

Information:

<https://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2020/09/18/thai-universities-innovate-to-empower-persons-with-disabilities/>

Preis für ComIn

ComIn ist ein Projekt von Handicap International e.V. und fördert die Integration von Geflüchteten und Migrant*innen mit Behinderung und chronischen Krankheiten in München. Die Mitarbeiter*innen beraten per Telefon, in den Büroräumen oder zum Teil bei Besuchen in Unterkünften und Wohnungen zu behinderungsspezifischen Themen wie auch Migrationsthemen. Dafür wurde ComIn jetzt von der Luise-Kiesselbach-Stiftung

mit dem Preis für Inklusion 2020 ausgezeichnet.

Information: <https://handicap-international.de/de/neuigkeiten/preis-fuer-comin>

Syrien. Bombardiert. Überlebende und ihre Geschichten.

2017 reiste der Photograph Philippe de Poulpiquet nach Jordanien und in den Libanon und traf dort syrische Flüchtlinge. Für seine Aufnahmen begleitete er Teams von Handicap International, die die Opfer dieses Krieges mit unterschiedlichsten Maßnahmen unterstützen. Die Bilder und Videos portraituren Menschen und ihren Alltag, der plötzlich und ohne Vorwarnung durch eine bis heute andauernde Gewalt unterbrochen wurde. Die Ausstellung gibt den Opfern eine Stimme. Sie zeigt, wie das Leben dieser Menschen durch Bombenangriffe aus den Fugen geriet – und wie sie die Erlebnisse nun verarbeiten. Die Geschichten stehen symbolisch für das, was hunderttausende Menschen in Syrien täglich erleben. Der Einsatz explosiver Waffen in bewohnten Gebieten ist eine grausame Praxis in aktuellen Konflikten, deren Opfer zu über 90 % aus der Zivilbevölkerung stammen.

Information: <http://bombardees-hi.org/de/>



Mit Gewalt oder mit Menschen?
Schutz und Perspektiven für Geflüchtete im Nahen Osten. miserereor.de/mitmenschen

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Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities/IDA/CBM

Disability Data Advocacy Toolkit

Data is critical for the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities. Without it, marginalisation is perpetuated, and the discrimination encountered by persons with disabilities around the world remains unaddressed. The goal of the Disability Data Advocacy Toolkit is to contribute to the growing global dialogue on the importance of data on persons with disabilities, providing basic knowledge on data collection, analysis, and use of data for evidenced-based advocacy. The toolkit aims at building the capacity of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations around the world, by offering simple approaches to essential advocacy skill-sets that could benefit all persons with disabilities, particularly those under-represented and in more impoverished regions.

Bezug: https://cbm-global.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DisabilityData_advocacytoolkit_accessible.pdf

United Nations

Disability Inclusion in the United Nations System

The UN has released this report on implementing its Disability Inclusion Strategy, providing a first baseline on the status of disability inclusion across the UN system. The Strategy itself was launched in June 2019 in the context of the 2030 Agenda's principle of leaving no one behind and aims to enable the UN system to support the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the SDGs, the Agenda for Humanity, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster

Risk Reduction. Besides establishing a baseline on the status of disability inclusion in the UN system, it also provides recommendations for the system, including ways to support Member States in implementing the CRPD and achieving the SDGs.

Bezug: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_disability_inclusion_strategy_report_final.pdf

OHCHR

International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006, States have committed to remove the barriers that hinder access to justice for persons with disabilities. The Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16, have reinforced this commitment. Moving forward and supporting States in the implementation of their obligations in this area, has been a priority in the agenda of the Special Rapporteur. The International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities are a practical tool to support States in designing and implementing justice systems that provide equal access to justice for persons with disabilities, in line with international human rights standards. They are a result of consultations and collaboration with disability rights experts, organisations of people with disabilities, States, academics, and other practitioners.

Bezug: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2020/10/Access-to-Justice-EN.pdf>

Humanity & Inclusion

Towards More Inclusive Practices: A Disability, Gender and Age Intersectional Resource

This Disability, Gender and Age Resource aims to support staff to better understand intersectionality. An intersectional approach reminds us of the need to look deeper at the way multiple individual characteristics and societal factors intersect to compound discrimination in any given context. This resource is split into two main sections: In the first section, the concept of intersectionality is being introduced, its use as a lens to understand vulnerability and the relevance of *context*, while the second section provides some guidance on inclusion and bias, the need to consider the wider environment, how to work with social norms, how to understand power differently, and empowerment and participation processes.

Bezug: https://hi.org/sn_uploads/document/2020-HI_DisabilityGenderAgeIntersectionality_GN09.pdf

World Blind Union/CBM Global Disability Inclusion

Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action

The World Blind Union (WBU) and CBM Global Disability Inclusion have launched the new Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action. With 10 years to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, accessibility is the foundation to building a more inclusive, equitable world where no-one is left behind in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The newly developed guide from WBU and GBM Global provides

practical support on how to deliver a wholistic organisational approach towards accessibility. It describes how to progressively achieve seven core accessibility commitments across built environments, information and communications, procurement of goods and services, training and capacity development, programmes, meetings and events, recruitment, and human resource (HR) management. The guide offers pathways to progressively realise accessibility in various contexts and organisations, recognising that users of the guide will be diverse. Jointly produced and informed by OPDs (Organisations of Persons with Disabilities), the guide can also be used to improve how accessibility is addressed and delivered by any organisation.

Bezug: <https://worldblindunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Accessibility-GO-A-Guide-to-Action-WBU-CBM-Global.pdf>

International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition

Landmine Monitor 2020

The Landmine Monitor 2020 is the 22nd annual Landmine Monitor Report. The report – focusing on calendar year 2019, with information included up to October 2020 when possible – covers mine ban policy, use, production, trade, and stockpiling in every country in the world, includes information on the impact of casualties and contamination, as well as efforts and challenges in addressing this impact through clearance, risk education, and victim assistance, and lastly, shows global trends in support for mine action. The Landmine Monitor 2020 continues to document progress toward a mine-free world, but also highlights challenges such as non-state armed groups (NSAGs) using antipersonnel mines or the lack of supporting the needs of landmine survivors and their communities.

Bezug: <http://www.the-monitor.org/media/3168934/LM2020.pdf>

Save the Children

Protect a Generation: The Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Lives

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a deep impact on children, families, communities, and societies the world over. The coronavirus is tearing children's lives apart - around 99% of the world's children have been impacted by disruptions like school closures, stretched health systems, lost livelihoods, and restricted access to nutritious food. These impacts are even harder on children that are already dealing with pre-existing inequalities, hence, children with disabilities are among the worst affected. To ensure all children's voices are heard and will be at the centre of any response to this crisis, Save the Children conducted the largest survey among children and their caregivers of its kind since the outbreak of the pandemic, taking in over 25,000 respondents (including 8,000 children) across 37 countries. The findings are captured in the latest report, giving a diverse overview of how health, nutrition, education, child rights, child poverty and child protection are influenced by the pandemic.

Bezug: <https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/emergency-response/protect-a-generation-report.pdf>

COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor

Disability Rights During the Pandemic: A Global Report on Findings of the COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor

A coalition of seven global disability rights organisations have called for urgent action by States and the international community to halt the catastrophic failure to protect the lives, health, and rights of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report presents the findings from a rapid global survey with responses from 134 countries of persons with disabilities and

other stakeholders which took place between April and August 2020. The report highlights four major themes from the survey data: (1) The egregious failure to protect the lives of persons with disabilities in residential institutions, which have become hot-spots during the pandemic, (2) widespread, rigid shutdowns that caused a dramatic breakdown in essential services in the community, (3) serious and multiple human rights violations against underrepresented populations of persons with disabilities, and (4) a concerning trend of denying basic and emergency healthcare.

Bezug: <https://covid-drm.org/assets/documents/Disability-Rights-During-the-Pandemic-report-web.pdf>

World Blind Union

COVID-19, Amplifying Voices: Our Lives, Our Say

The World Blind Union (WBU) conducted a study to examine the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed some deep structural inequalities in society. Data gathered from the study is evidencing that persons with disabilities, older persons, and persons from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds are among those hardest hit by the pandemic. While this report puts a spotlight on the voices of blind and partially sighted persons, many of the experiences shared strongly resonate with numerous other studies that are also highlighting how marginalised groups have been affected by this crisis. Through this report, WBU hopes to raise awareness on the specifics of what those challenges have meant in reality for its constituents, as well as shed light on what have been effective resilience strategies for them.

Bezug: <https://worldblindunion.org/covid-19-amplifying-voices-our-lives-our-say/>

ADD International

Action on COVID-19 Evidence on the Response of Disabled People's Organisations During Pandemic

In June 2020, ADD International conducted structured interviews with leaders from ten Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) which are participating in the Inclusion Works programme in three districts in Bangladesh to understand impact of and response to COVID-19 among DPOs. Evidence from these interviews suggest that the economic impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities has been acute, and DPOs are taking critical action. DPOs are engaging with power holders to make relief, livelihood support and information accessible to persons with disabilities. DPOs are in touch with their members, but they face barriers in doing their work during this time, and more could be done to reach the most excluded.

Bezug: https://asksource.info/sites/default/files/IW_Covid_DPO_Impact_Action_Final_0.pdf

Rajendra Prasad, Anandita Lidhoo, Tarun Lala et al.

COVID-19 Pandemic-Related Lockdown: Effects on Persons with Disabilities in India

To study the impact the COVID-19-related lockdown on persons with disabilities (PWDs), a telephonic survey of participants in four major cities of India was conducted – mainly focusing on the participants' understanding of the prevention of COVID-19, their type of disability, and extent of dependence on caregivers, along with their financial situation and food and medicine availability. The results show that the main impact of the prolonged lockdown was on mental health, limited ability to work from home, lack of access to rehab professionals or rehabilitation units, and external caregivers, along with difficulty

in repair of assistive technology devices. That is why the authors give recommendations – e.g. development of an updated national database of PWDs or establishment of tele-medicine and tele-rehabilitation services – to reduce the drastic effects from the lockdown measures on PWDs in India.

Bezug: https://www.apollomedicine.org/temp/ApolloMed17544-4407872_121438.pdf

UN Women **Sexual Harassment Against Women with Disabilities in the World of Work and on Campus**

Work remains to be done to ensure that the links between gender and disability feature more routinely in efforts to end sexual harassment. This discussion paper has been developed with the benefit of consultations with women with disabilities to place their experiential knowledge at the core of the work to end sexual harassment. This paper contributes to the development of intersectional approaches for addressing sexual harassment as it manifests in the lives of women with disabilities. It also offers advice and support for policy makers to address the urgency of strengthening efforts to end discrimination against women in the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and centring disability rights and community knowledge in work to end discrimination against women.

Bezug: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/08/discussion-paper-sexual-harassment-against-women-with-disabilities>

Human Rights Watch **Living in Chains: Shackling of People with Psychosocial Disabilities Worldwide**

In order to show the scale and scope of shackling of people with real or perceived psychosocial disabilities worldwide, Human Rights Watch conducted a study of mental health legislation,

relevant policies, and practices across 60 countries around the world. Human Rights Watch researchers interviewed more than 350 people with psychosocial disabilities, including those who were shackled at the time of research or had been shackled at least once in their lives, and more than 430 family members, caregivers or staff working in institutions, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and other mental health professionals, faith healers, lawyers, government officials, representatives of local nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), including organisations of persons with disabilities, and disability rights advocates.

Bezug: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2020/10/global_shackling1020_web_2.pdf

Disability Rights International **Crimes Against Humanity: Decades of Violence and Abuse in Mexican Institutions for Children and Adults with Disabilities**

This report documents severe and pervasive human rights violations against children and adults with disabilities in Mexico's institutions (e.g. orphanages, social care homes). The paper investigates on the socio-political reasons for the inhumane and degrading treatment and practices and furthermore, condemns Mexico's failure to enforce the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, respond decisively to known human rights violations in the institutions and change the harming situation for children and adults with disabilities.

Bezug: <https://www.driadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/Mexico-2020-EN-web.pdf>

*Keresencia Matsaure/Agness
Chindimba/Felistas R. Zimano/
Fayth Ruffin*

Looking Under the Veil: Challenges Faced by People with Disabilities in Cross- Border Entrepreneurship

Cross-border entrepreneurship is one source of livelihood that is transforming people's lives, especially those with limited resources and educational qualifications and those in need of supplementary earnings to complement meagre formal earnings. However, despite strides made to make this avenue worthwhile, this Zimbabwean study shows that hidden hindrances still persist from procedural and structural barriers from road entry point management systems. To people with disabilities (PWDs), the impact of these hidden barriers is severe to the extent of obstructing their optimum progression into cross-border entrepreneurship. This article sought to interrogate some veiled challenges in border management systems affecting PWDs' quest to venture into cross-border entrepreneurship.

Bezug: <https://ajod.org/index.php/ajod/article/view/645/1413>

*Nokuthula Tinta/Hester Steyn/
Jana Vermaas*

Barriers Experienced by People with Disabilities Participating in Income- Generating Activities. A Case of a Sheltered Workshop in Bloemfontein, South Africa

People with disabilities often participate in income-generating activities (IGAs) in sheltered workshops in South Africa. However, they face many barriers that limit their ability to participate effectively in economic activities hosted by the workshops. This qualitative exploratory single case study illustrates the barriers that limit the participation of people with disabilities in IGAs in a sheltered workshop. The results ought to be

used to develop strategies to address each barrier and promote increased participation of the individual thereby improving their quality of life.

Bezug: <https://ajod.org/index.php/ajod/article/view/662/1407>

*Judith McKenzie/Callista
Kahonde/Karen Mostert/
Heather Michelle Aldersey*

Community Participation of Families of Children with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities in South Africa

Many families struggle to support their family members with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities (PIMD), especially in low resourced settings where formal services may not be available. The adapted Family Community Participation survey, measuring perceptions of community participation, was administered to 67 primary caregivers of children with PIMD in Cape Town by community-based rehabilitation workers. The results show that barrier to participation is still widespread. Hence, it concludes that awareness raising, community support and provision of services to address barriers to community participation are needed. Families should be consulted on community issues to integrate their specific family needs into the overall needs of the community.

Bezug: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344925240_Community_participation_of_families_of_children_with_profound_intellectual_and_multiple_disabilities_in_South_Africa#fullTextFileContent

World Bank

Inclusion in Indonesia's Education Sector: A Subnational Review of Gender Gaps and Children with Disabilities

This study seeks to examine gender gaps and disability issues in education in Indonesia, and to suggest policy

actions as well as future analytical and operational work to address these differences. Field visits were conducted to uncover drivers of gender differences, as well as issues of social inclusion, and to explore policy approaches to improve learning outcomes and educational achievement for all children. Secondary data analysis shows that Indonesia has demonstrated great progress on gender parity in education. However, the national averages mask important variations at the subnational level, including variations of significant male and female disadvantage between and within provinces. Women are still underrepresented in school and government leadership positions, as well as the workforce overall. The study also reveals significant challenges and offers policy recommendations to ensure inclusivity in education for children with disabilities.

Bezug: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33943>

Veranstaltungen/Events

28.06. – 30.06.2021

WBU-ICEVI General Assemblies, Virtual Assembly

Information: <https://worldblindunion.org/blog/news/announcement-wbu-icevi-general-assemblies-28-30-june-2021/>

Kontakt: World Blind Union

M-Enabling Summit, Washington D.C.

Information: <https://g3ict.org/events/m-enabling-summit-2020>

Kontakt: M-Enabling Summit

Schwerpunktthemen kommender Ausgaben der Zeitschrift Focal Topics of Upcoming Issues

1/2021:

Covid-19 und Menschen mit Behinderungen

[Covid-19 and Persons with Disabilities](#)

verantwortlich/[responsible](#): Sabine Schäper

2/2021:

Inklusion in der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit

[Inclusion in German Development Cooperation](#)

verantwortlich/[responsible](#): Isabella Bertmann-Merz/Gabriele Weigt

3/2021:

Rechtsfähigkeit und unterstützte Entscheidungsfindung

[Legal Capacity and Supported Decision Making](#)

verantwortlich/[responsible](#): Jana Offergeld/Sabine Schäper

Interessierte Autorinnen und Autoren mögen sich für nähere Informationen und unseren *Leitfaden für AutorInnen* bitte an die oben genannten Verantwortlichen wenden.

Darüber hinaus sind Vorschläge für weitere Schwerpunktthemen willkommen unter info@inie-inid.org.

[If you are interested in contributing, please contact the respective member of the editorial board mentioned above for more information and our *Guidelines for Submissions*.](#)

[Moreover, we welcome ideas and suggestions for future focal topics which you can submit to our editorship at \[info@inie-inid.org\]\(mailto:info@inie-inid.org\).](#)

Redaktionsschluss für zukünftige Ausgaben

[Deadlines for the upcoming issues](#)

	1/2021	2/2021	3/2021
Hauptbeiträge/ Focal articles	01.11.2020	01.05.2021	01.08.2021
Kurzbeiträge/ Other contributions	01.02.2021	01.06.2021	01.10.2021

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