

**GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**  
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION NO. 58 FROM 8 TO 28 JULY 2010

**PROMOTING INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES**

Proceedings and topic available at:

[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS\\_Disability\\_and\\_FS.pdf](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/PROCEEDINGS_Disability_and_FS.pdf)

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**I. ISSUES RAISED**

Members discussed the level of inclusion of peoples with disabilities in food security and agricultural development projects and acknowledged the important role people with disabilities play in providing for their own and their relatives' livelihoods. Numerous examples from various countries were shared, shedding some light on the way these people are actively contributing to global food security.

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**II. DISABILITY AND POVERTY ARE INTRINSICALLY LINKED**

People with disabilities are in many cases still the poorest of the poor. All too often are they destined to endure a life in poverty and are excluded by society and their own families from actively contributing to their communities' wellbeing with detrimental impact on the food security situation and their own morale and dignity. Hunger and insufficient food also creates or helps conditions affecting physical and mental development perpetuating the issue.

In many developing countries, persons with disabilities are rarely represented in national and local bodies, such as Parliaments, Councils, Political Parties and mainstream Civil Society organizations. Further, their issues are seldom explicitly taken into account in the national and local government budgets. In many cases, law's protecting these people are either completely absent or not enforced, meaning that the human rights of people with disabilities are often neglected and overlooked.

This general neglect causes these people to be often not included and their specific needs ignored in agricultural development programmes and policies.

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**III. WAYS FORWARD**

Recently, we can see a move towards a human rights based approach to disability – particularly following the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities that came into force in 2008. It marks a paradigm shift in how disability is viewed, from people with disabilities as objects of charity or medical intervention, to people with rights and control over their own lives, decisions and futures.

In this light some excellent examples of progress are being made, as more and more often the importance of including these people in food security projects is realized.

The European Union has recently adopted disability as a cross cutting issue giving opportunities to include people with disabilities in regular Food Security programmes.

Numerous successful projects have shown that people with disabilities are able to participate in meaningful agricultural activities. Some go as far as suggesting that people with disabilities are the world's untapped resource and that their inclusion is of paramount importance for global food security.

While different programmes employed different approaches, almost all identified the lack of opportunities and resources as one of the main constraints for people with disabilities to live a productive and dignified life. In order to improve on this, programmes should aim at giving them access to training and inputs and governments could consider giving disabled people priority in agriculture grants. Of course the nature of peoples' disabilities is very different and training needs to be adjusted accordingly. In general, however, when working with people with disabilities it is important to keep the following in mind:

- |                               |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| • Type of disability          | • Attitude  |
| • Negative cultural practices | • Education |

- Supportive environment
- Every one is a possible candidate for disability
- Peer support

Programmers should also look into the different environments peoples with disabilities live in. With an estimate that 60% of the world's population will be living in urban areas by 2030, gardening, fruit tree growing, livestock keeping and handicraft should be focussed upon.

Some necessary elements for projects to be successful could be identified

- Holistic approaches to planning,
- Expertise of previously trained people with disabilities
- Create partnerships eg with the leadership and facilitation of FAO
- Emphasis on the full value chain of agricultural produce
- Government has a role to play in developing policies that support and facilitate a good supportive, incentive-driven environment for agricultural projects that are run and managed by persons with disabilities and their families.

In order to measure the success and consolidate the results it would be useful to develop some index to determine the level of inclusion of people with disabilities in food production and income generation and their access to food.

In the end, it is important to realize that no programmes or policy developments will be successful if they do not involve people with disabilities themselves. Not until institutions, the state and the society at large appreciate that everyone can actually contribute to the improvement of food security in our communities by involving them more and more, they will still continue hanging on the thin line of poverty.

#### **IV. EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS INCLUSIVE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

A restaurant chain in Nepal employs deaf youths as restaurant waiters, gives them skills and puts signs in the restaurants for customers to cooperate with them by sign language. They are motivated and happy to work. (Kanchan Lama)

In 2006 the European Commission co-financed 12 European NGOs in implementing a Project titled "making development inclusive". The project has just been reapproved (20110-2011) and it will be implemented by the International Disability and Development Consortium. (Simonetta Capobianco)

In 2009, seven Bangladeshi organisations in cooperation with 3 Dutch NGOs (ICCO, The Leprosy Mission and Dark & Light) started the Food Security Programme for Ultra Poor Women in Gaibandha, Bangladesh. This 5 year programme, supported by the European Union, aims to reach 40.000 ultra poor households. Dark & Light and the Leprosy Mission joined the consortium to make sure that persons with disabilities and/or Leprosy are included in the Food Security Programme. The local organisations Centre for Disability and Development and Leprosy Mission Bangladesh provide training to the project staff on how to include persons with disabilities in the income generating and agricultural activities. Besides that, persons with disabilities receive the necessary rehabilitation services. Results are promising: during the first year 9% of the households included in the programme had a disabled family member. The percentage is expected to rise. Women with a disability or with a disabled family member get priority in the selection process. (Paulien Bruijn-Rietveld)

German NGO Terra Tech entered partnership with a centre for children and youth with physical and mental disabilities in Tver / Russian Federation in 1996, thanks to EC's TACIS-LIEN-programme. Main tasks were the training of Russian staff and implementing vocational training in wood and metal processing for a group of youth with disabilities.

All trainees completed the training successfully with varying degrees and concrete skills obtained, depending on the specific disability. A number of the trainees could be transferred to some employment after the completion of the training enabling them to contribute to the survival of their family for the first time in their life. After this successful "pilot experience", the project was expanded and more vocational

trainees trained with funds from other (private) donors (2 German foundations). Areas of training now also included gardening and sewing. (Stefan Hagelueken)

“Survival Yards” in Niger is an innovative programme working together with persons with disabilities, their families and communities. Careful selection and training of clients and families, is a key to encouraging innovation in developing a 25mx25m “survival yard”, with well and simple watering canals. Just inside the fence, essential to protect the yard from livestock, a border of productive bushy trees is used to create a micro-climate against harsh winds off the Sahara. Gardening and trees (fruit and other), provide vegetables, fruit to eat and sell, fodder for livestock, firewood and therefore the means and incentive for people with disabilities and their families to stay in their communities. (David Lewis)

FAO started in Asia around 1998 a unique technical project approach towards empowerment of disabled farmers as self employed food producers. The introduction training was followed by a technical program focused on mushroom production complementary to daily (rice/cattle) farm activities. Mushroom production was selected because of its less demanding and flexible production process, yet the setup was fully professional aimed at production for the local market. The Government played a leading role but the chosen market drive was basis for the project success and many mushroom enterprises continued on their own beyond project duration. Subsequently a group of disabled producers established an informal school for mushroom training open to the public. FAO produced two very popular training manuals. (Wim Polman)

The constitution of the Republic of Uganda states that persons with disabilities have a right to respect and human dignity and the state and society shall take appropriate measures to ensure that they realize their full mental and physical potential. People with disabilities are represented in all levels of governance from Local council I to V and have representation in parliament. The Sustainable Agriculture for People with Disabilities Programme (SAPWD) complements these government efforts. The programme in Pallisa and Sironko districts in Uganda reaches 333 direct beneficiaries. The programme promotes sustainable organic agriculture and improved animal management coupled with training on social development aspects. It identifies groups of people with disabilities and develops their capacity through training and farm visits. Household members are encouraged to participate in the trainings and to support implementation of the project activities. After completing their training, the trainees are provided with livestock of their choice. Ownership of property is an important element of the programme. People with disabilities can then participate in sustainable agriculture and integrated animal management. They grow a variety of food crops and vegetables using composite manure from the livestock greatly increasing their productivity, making them food secure and fully integrated in the community. (Joyce Lambuli)

The Secretariat of the Africa Decade of Persons with Disabilities (SADPD) is an African knowledge-based organisation working in partnership with the AU, African governments, CSOs and DPOs to promote inclusive development and human rights for people with disabilities in issues linked with environment, climate and natural resources. (Kudakwashe Dube)

## V. REFERENCES

FAO, A handbook for training of disabled on rural enterprise development  
[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fsn/docs/FAO\\_disabilities\\_2003.pdf](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/FAO_disabilities_2003.pdf)

FAO, Enhancing Opportunities in Agriculture for Disabled People. Guidelines for Getting People Involved  
[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fsn/docs/GuidelinesDisabledPeopleAgricJuly06.pdf](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/GuidelinesDisabledPeopleAgricJuly06.pdf)

GTZ, Disability and Development  
<http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/06-0868.pdf>

Further relevant FAO publications

[http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/publication\\_browse\\_detail.asp?divisionID=67&categoryid=311](http://www.fao.org/world/regional/rap/publication_browse_detail.asp?divisionID=67&categoryid=311)

Mainstreaming Disability in development cooperation

IDDC project financed by the European Commission to break the cycle of Poverty and Disability in developing countries

[www.make-development-inclusive.org](http://www.make-development-inclusive.org).

International Disability and Development Consortium

[www.iddcconsortium.net](http://www.iddcconsortium.net).

Christian Blind mission

[www.cbm.org.au](http://www.cbm.org.au)

Foundation Dark & Light

[www.darkandlight.org](http://www.darkandlight.org)

World Vision Germany

<http://www.worldvision.de>

Le Jardin de Survie, Survival Yards

[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/fsn/docs/Le\\_Jardin\\_de\\_survie\\_au\\_Niger\\_CBM.doc](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Le_Jardin_de_survie_au_Niger_CBM.doc)

Lazy Susan for wheelchair gardening

[http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/home\\_blog/2009/06/lazysusan-garden-universal-design-wheelchair-bound-gardener.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/home_blog/2009/06/lazysusan-garden-universal-design-wheelchair-bound-gardener.html)