



HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

About... Handicap International

"Handicap International is an independent and impartial international aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster.

Working alongside persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, our action and testimony are focused on responding to their essential needs, improving their living conditions and promoting respect for their dignity and their fundamental rights."

www.handicap-international.org

About... this brief

Author
Anne LEYMAT

Editor
Handicap International
Technical Resources
Division (DRT)
Knowledge Management
Unit
14, avenue Berthelot
69361 Lyon cedex 07
France
publications@handicap-international.org

Editing and layout
Stéphanie DEYGAS
Michael GUY

This policy brief is an introduction to Handicap International's 2011 policy paper on inclusive employment. It provides an overview of Handicap International's activities in this sector. We would encourage you to read the full version of the policy paper available at:

French version:

http://www.hiproweb.org/uploads/tx_hidrtdocs/InsertionProfessionnelleDC05.pdf

English version:

http://www.hiproweb.org/uploads/tx_hidrtdocs/InclusiveEmploymentPP05.pdf



Equal opportunities for decent work

Key messages

Handicap International conducts its inclusive employment activities in a variety of settings with disabled adults and other vulnerable people of legal working age and/or their families.

These activities target people who are excluded from economic life and who face considerable barriers to employment.

Priority is given to motivated individuals who have appropriate professional aims which are consistent with their environment and life circumstances.

A special focus is placed on women and young people on account of their greater vulnerability in this area and their key role in improving the living conditions of their families.

Key figures

➤ People with disabilities constitute approximately 15 % of the global population, equating to 470 million people of working age (*Source: World Health Organization*).

➤ Less than 20% of people with disabilities are currently in work (*Source: International Labour Organization*).

➤ 20 % of poor people are disabled (*Source: World Bank*).

➤ 82 % of all people with disabilities live beneath the poverty line on less than a dollar a day (*Source: World Bank*).

➤ The exclusion of people with disabilities from the workplace deprives societies of an estimated US\$ 1.37 to 1.94 trillion in global annual loss of GDP (*Source: International Labour Organization*).

➤ Between 0 - 0.5% of clients of microfinance institutions are people with disabilities (*Source: Good practices for the economic inclusion of people with disabilities, Handicap International*).

Why take action in the field of inclusive employment



Definition of Decent Work

Decent work is characterised by the following six factors:

- **Opportunity to work:** every individual who wishes to work should be in a position to find employment,
- **Voluntary work:** it must be freely chosen,
- **Productive work:** adequate remuneration for the worker,
- **Fairness at work:** no discrimination at work or when seeking employment,
- **Safety at work:** health and social protection,
- **Dignity at work:** respectful treatment of workers.

These six constituents of decent work pertain to everyone, and especially to the poorest and most vulnerable groups. Since the majority of people with disabilities are disadvantaged, their employment prospects need to be improved.

(Source: International Labour Organisation)



Article 27 of the CRPD

“States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities.”

Importance and context

Although access to employment is now recognised as a fundamental right, people with disabilities still have considerable difficulty gaining access to the workplace.

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), large-scale action is needed to give people with disabilities the chance to obtain productive and decent work.

The aim is to promote a society where **employment opportunities (self-employment or salaried employment) are accessible for all and founded on principles of equal access, equal treatment, integration and retention in employment.**

In the majority of countries where Handicap International works, development levels are low and the economic sector poorly structured, providing few opportunities for salaried employment. As a result, self-employment is often the only option for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, as well as for the rest of the population.

In addition to its **economic function**, decent work also engenders **social recognition** and **psychological well-being**. There are large numbers of adults or young adults of working age wishing to develop or redevelop an adapted professional activity.

Why take action?

There are now legal instruments covering the right to work, including the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, specifically **article 27**. Yet people with disabilities continue to be excluded from the workplace.

This exclusion imposes a heavy financial burden on the family, the community and society as a whole. It prevents people with disabilities from fulfilling their aims with dignity. Just like everyone else, most people with disabilities aspire to employment as a means of participating in society, contributing to the development of society, and independently meeting their own needs and those of their families.

It is therefore important to build societies that enable everyone to fully exercise their right to work and to access the wide range of skills (positive attitudes, technical knowledge, know-how, etc.) needed to ensure sustainable access to decent employment.

How Handicap International works in the field of inclusive employment



The Disability Creation Process

The social model of disability also applies to people with disabilities who are excluded from economic life.

The purpose of Handicap International's actions is to foster successful inclusion in a way that is in keeping with ethical criteria (free choice) and psychological, cultural and economic requirements, thus enabling the people concerned to participate fully in society.

Our actions will seek to match the supply of work with the demand by enhancing individual aptitudes and adapting job requirements and inclusive employment services (training centres, microfinance institutions, employment agencies, etc.).

To facilitate inclusive employment, existing environmental barriers need to be removed, such as negative representations of disability and physical inaccessibility. Other determining factors include identifying environmental facilitators and analysing and reducing risk factors, such as malnutrition, mine accidents and the use of pesticides and pollutants.

After conducting a feasibility study, there are several possible ways of formulating the overall objective of an inclusive employment project, depending on the context and the principles of intervention to be applied.

Handicap International's Inclusive Employment department has defined **seven modalities** covering objectives, indicators, expected outcomes and activities for the **development of self-employment** or **salaried employment**.

The key activities can be divided into four major categories: advocacy, awareness-raising & information-sharing, training and support & advice. Depending on which of these activities are carried out and which are given priority, the project can have a very different impact, both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. So, these modalities should be adapted according to the local context, the stakeholders present and the issues at stake.

The modalities of intervention adopted are as follows:

- **Modality 1 - Support to set-up an income-generating activity or micro-enterprise**
- **Modality 2 - Developing businesses and the capacities of entrepreneurs**
- **Modality 3 - Promoting access to appropriate financial resources**
- **Modality 4 - Constructing a favourable environment for the inclusive employment of people with disabilities**
- **Modality 5 - Promoting access to technical and vocational training**
- **Modality 6 - Supporting job-seekers**
- **Modality 7 - Supporting employers in the recruitment of people with disabilities**

Handicap International applies its own inclusive employment policy (headquarters / programs), which gives credibility to our approach for field projects.

Carrying out our actions with a disadvantaged public calls for a range of skills and knowledge from the economic and social sectors that should be sought when recruiting project staff. These staff should also have significant experience of the project setting and the type of activities undertaken, as well as specific knowledge relative to the target public (people with disabilities, refugees, people living with HIV, etc.).

Our support to economic actors focuses on those who offer decent sustainable employment, whose economic management is sound and who provide specific support that enables people with disabilities to secure professional skills and access mainstream employment.

Support to specialised establishments should usually be seen as a transitory stage while trying to strengthen ties with mainstream actors, and not as an end in itself.



Gender issues

It is important to adopt a gender approach at all stages of project planning, implementation and evaluation. This is to ensure that the project meets the expectations of both women and men with disabilities and does not strengthen factors of exclusion.

Women are often in charge of the family budget and play a key role in improving their family's living conditions. However, experience has shown that women are still disadvantaged when it comes to developing their own business or obtaining salaried employment.

The difference in expectations and opportunities and in the distribution of salaried and non-salaried employment between women and men is partly a result of existing legal frameworks, but it is also due to factors of tradition, culture and religion.

Women with disabilities are often discriminated against because of their impairment, making them even more vulnerable.

Project methodology

The project's methodology can focus on two levels: supporting disabled job-seekers by means of **personalised social support**, which provides comprehensive understanding of the vulnerability of the individual and the family; and developing a coordinated strategy with **all economic stakeholders** to strengthen inclusive and adapted services. To foster innovation and the dissemination of good practices, Handicap International's Inclusive Employment department encourages pilot projects for raising the awareness of authorities through advocacy actions and promoting the replication of good practices.

Indicators

There are many indicators for measuring the achievement of overall and specific objectives. At global level, for instance, we can use the poverty index and, at specific level, improvements in living conditions and the quality of life, increases in income allowing people to live in dignity, increases in the economic activity's turnover and the profits of entrepreneurs, reductions in food shortages, etc.

Links with other areas of Handicap International's work

Close links are developed with Handicap International's other sectors of activity as part of a cross-disciplinary approach. Different correlations can be established between projects, at **target public level** with Rehabilitation or Health Units (people with disabilities, people living with HIV, with disabilities or chronic diseases, mine victims, etc.), or in terms of **intervention methodology and approach** (inclusive local development, personalised social support, partnerships with civil society organisations) or **specific activities** (accessibility, education, disaster risk reduction, etc.).

Inclusive employment projects can also be developed in emergency or post-emergency settings. In the wake of a natural disaster, it is important to ensure that people with disabilities are able to participate actively in economic recovery activities.



Work perspectives for 2011-2015

Handicap International has gained international renown and legitimacy as a key player in the field of inclusive employment through the promotion of its good practices among microfinance practitioners. Successful initiatives have also been undertaken in specific contexts in the field of salaried employment.

Sector-based projects built around the strengthening and dissemination of Handicap International's expertise should therefore be continued and reinforced. To do so, we need to develop partnerships with all the stakeholders in the inclusive employment sector and ensure quality requirements remain at the heart of our actions. We should also make sure we communicate on our strategies and approaches and on the positive impact of our activities on the living conditions of our target public.