

Selection of contents of this newsletter:

- *Opinion:* Impaired Millennium Development Goals?
- *Discussion:* People with disabilities excluded from Millennium Goals? 8 responses to a discussion statement
- *Milestone:* DCDD's 5th anniversary
- *And more:* Newsletter column *Made to measure* / DCDD members interviewed *Terre des Hommes* / DCDD update

Impaired Millennium Development Goals?

Why the Millennium Development Goals will fail if they are not inclusive ...

The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were declared by the United Nations (UN) in 2000 as a policy approach for combating poverty. Five years later, last September in New York, the UN members' heads of state met to make up the balance: are we on track to reach the goals set for 2015? But are disabled people included in the MDGs? In this article a plea is made for an inclusive approach to the MDGs.



The problem with the MDGs

Few people expect the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be reached, especially after the presentation of the first data from 2000-2005 and the UN's lukewarm response to it during the New York Summit (September 2005). In spite of the optimistic tone of the reporters, who emphasised the great progress made in Asia, scepticism generally dominates. Life expectancy has actually gone down in most African countries and in most former Soviet countries too, clearly illustrating a health situation which is deteriorating.

*The Millennium Development Goals are doomed to fail if large groups in every society are excluded from poverty alleviation policies and measures.
Photo by WorldBank (Enabling children with disabilities in the Philippines)*

The question is, whether one can expect to achieve the MDG goals just by setting policy targets, without ensuring full political commitment, funding and the inclusion of people in their own development processes. If people are excluded from development processes, then MDGs will only be words on paper. If development included disabled people too, then the world would have a much better chance of reaching the goals that have been set for 2015.

DCDD's primary practical objective is to ensure that disability receives all the attention it deserves on the development aid agenda, both at the political level and in society at large. Employing a variety of means DCDD aims to:

- Increase support for emancipation and integration of disabled people in development programmes and disaster relief.

- Clarify the relationship between disability and exclusion, and instigate action.
- Strengthen the role of disabled people's organisations in reducing poverty.
- Stimulate exchange and bundling of knowledge and experience among development workers, service providers and active persons with disabilities.

Disability in the MDGs?

Ten percent of the world's population is disabled (WHO) but where are their interests included in the MDGs? Disability and/or disabled people are not mentioned in any of the 48 indicators of the MDGs. Poverty is first and foremost about exclusion and not just about economic issues. Those who are excluded from their own society are the ones who are really poor. Yet the issue of exclusion is hardly addressed. The MDGs should address issues of exclusion and marginalisation in order to make real progress to achieve any of the MDGs. But the MDGs today tend to be de-politicised and technocratic.

Are MDGs inclusive?

Disability was not properly addressed in the New York Summit declaration made last September (*) nor in the strategies designed for achieving the MDGs. It is, however, wrong to assume that disabled people will benefit pro-rata from general poverty reduction policies. When policy makers say they 'mainstream' disability in policies, benefits for disabled people remain invisible. In reality, people with disabilities today are a disproportionately larger group in the poorer parts of all societies. An inclusive approach only works when it gives specific attention to people whose position or circumstances make them more vulnerable.

In the MDGs there are several areas where specific measures are needed. For example, in realizing educational goals there is a lot of attention given to how girls progress but, in absolute numbers, there are just as many children with disabilities who are excluded from primary schools. Recent research suggests that people with disabilities run a higher risk of HIV infection, yet in prevention campaigns disabled people are not accounted for. Information campaigns targeting deaf or blind people are rare. In Box 1 (see page 4) the most relevant MDGs and their relationship with disability are described.

The problem of not being heard

Disabled people are economically excluded from pro-poor growth, there is social exclusion from education and health and they have a weak political voice. The weak political power of disabled people is of great concern. Disabled People Organisations (DPOs) are consulted for poverty alleviation measures in only a few cases. When they are consulted the narrow social focus of disability policy on social protection measures decreases and the broader, empowering economic focus increases (this suggests empirical evidence from studies of PRSPs-, poverty reduction strategies papers). Consequently the role of disabled people is analysed more in terms of listing human potential.

Disabled people have the potential of contributing to development processes if specific aspects of their disability are recognised and if their capacities and abilities are accounted for. Ignorance, neglect and - even worse - denial of this make disability a human rights issue.

In the majority of development programmes, statements referring to disabled people (if any consideration of disability is made at all) often classify all disabled people as being unable to work and in need of social protection, welfare and medical rehabilitation. In the worst cases, people with disabilities are classified as groups that cannot or do not contribute to the economic labour force. This language and classification is unjust, stigmatising and discriminating. It should be replaced with language that recognises specific needs, capabilities and the role of society in breaking down barriers.

If disabled people are mentioned at all, they are almost always subsumed under the general category of "vulnerable groups" – usually as an illustrative example. The danger of this categorisation is that there is little or no engagement with disabled people or disabled people's organisations and thus this could create potentially more barriers to achieving inclusion.

(article continued on page 3)

Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development (DCDD)

Address: P.O. Box 3356
3502 GJ Utrecht
The Netherlands

E-mail: dcdd@dcdd.nl
WWW: www.dcdd.nl

Tel.: +31.30.291.67.11
Fax: +31.30.297.06.06

Colofon

The DCDD newsletter is produced by an editorial committee.

Members of the committee are:

Truus Jonker, Letty Darwish, Christina de Vries, Aartjan ter Haar, Ria Scheele, Petra Jorissen. Mark Raijmakers is the DCDD newsletter editor.

(continued from page 2)

Dutch development co-operation and MDGs

In Johannesburg, in 2004, NGOs met to work together in a campaign against poverty, 'Make poverty history'. Dutch NGOs also participated in this campaign within the Netherlands Platform Millennium Goals (**). The worldwide campaign was quite successful in raising the profile of the MDGs and making poverty a media issue in Western countries. But here again, disability is not an issue that is focused upon. The Dutch government emphasizes a human rights approach in the MDGs and, for example, stresses the need for qualitative indicators besides quantitative indicators in the measuring process, which I can agree to. But the government was not willing to put disability on the agenda of the New York summit, because, according to the answers given by the Minister for Development Cooperation in response to parliamentary questions, there are no or insufficient data about disability.

How can the vicious circle be broken?

Poverty and disability are locked together in a vicious circle and poverty reduction can only be successful if specific disability issues are addressed. We have no hope of achieving the MDGs if no specific attention is given to disabled people and development programmes are not made inclusive. How can we reach this goal of inclusiveness? I would like to discuss four strategies.



1) Raising awareness about practical issues

Development organisations and governments know little about disability; together with existing widespread prejudices and stigma this creates an important barrier. General agencies think working with disabled people requires skilled knowledge and expertise that they don't have, and so they forget about disabled people all together. Awareness-raising should, of course, focus on combating discrimination but, in the case of development agencies, practical information should be promoted too. Easy practical solutions that facilitate the participation of disabled people are effective in overcoming many barriers. A lot of the measures taken to reach the MDGs need only a little adjustment to be barrier-free and promote equal participation. Perhaps the disability movement should focus more on these practical solutions instead of the ethical arguments that currently dominate its discourse?

2) More disability advocacy is needed

The voice of people with disabilities is not heard at the level of decision-making about the MDGs. There are several initiatives and attempts to highlight disability issues but, in general, international disabled people organisations (DPOs) lack influential representatives, for example, at the UN summit in New York this September. In Box 2, a description is given of several initiatives. Lack of political power at decisive levels is a structural feature of DPOs; nationally and internationally they are not sufficiently empowered to have a say in (international) decision-making. Disabled people

are the ones who have the knowledge and experience to share with development organisations about how best to facilitate their inclusion.

(article continued on page 5)

Disabled people have the potential of contributing to development processes if specific aspects of their disability are recognised and if their capacities and abilities are accounted for.
(Photo by WorldBank)

Box 1: Disability and the Millennium Development Goals

Part of the Millennium Declaration of the UN in 2000 were the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which consist of 8 goals. The overall goal is to halve absolute poverty (the proportion of people living on less than US\$1 per day) by 2015. Below are listed some, but not all, of the main points regarding the relevance and importance of addressing disability in the attainment of each of these goals.

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Of the estimated 600 million plus people with disabilities worldwide, 70% live in developing countries and, according to UN statistics, 82% live below the poverty line. The World Bank estimates that people with disabilities comprise about 17% of the poorest of the poor.
- Disability affects not only the individual, but also their families and communities, e.g. child carers of disabled family members who are not able to attend school. The lives of 25% of the population in poorer regions of the world are believed to have been impacted by disability - this represents a significant burden on the potential of productive human capital.
- As many as 50% of disabilities are preventable and directly linked to poverty.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- United Nations studies show that only 2-10% of children with disabilities in developing countries receive an education.
- The United Nations Centre for Human Rights estimates that only 2% of people with disabilities have access to rehabilitation and appropriate basic services.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- Women with disabilities are often doubly disadvantaged because of their status as women and as people with disabilities, and thus they represent one of the most marginalised groups in society.
- Women with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than women without a disability.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

- The mortality of children with disabilities can be as high as 80%, even in countries where the overall under-five figure for mortality is below 20%.
- 1 in 10 children are born with, or acquire, a disability.
- For every child killed by armed conflict, three are injured or permanently disabled. Over 10 million children are psychologically traumatised by armed conflict.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- As many as 20 million women a year suffer disability and long term complications as a result of pregnancy and childbirth; hence, approximately every minute, 30 women are injured or disabled because of childbirth.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Disabled people run a higher risk of HIV infection because of their weaker socio-economic position; they also have less access to HIV-prevention information and run a higher risk of sexual abuse.
- The estimated annual global burden of malaria is 1.1 million deaths, 300-500 million cases. About 1 in 10 children suffer from neurological impairment after cerebral malaria, including epilepsy, learning disabilities and loss of coordination.
- Each year, 1% of the global population is infected with tuberculosis, and 5-10% of those infected become sick or infectious and can develop disabilities (e.g. epilepsy).

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Poor environmental quality is directly responsible for about 25% of all preventable ill-health in the world, with diarrhoeal diseases being the leading cause.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- The inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream services is important, along with specialised interventions where necessary and would constitute a twin track approach to disability in all development activities.

DCDD update, October 2005

Moving up the learning curve – inclusive development today

With this title DCDD published a new brochure. In it examples of good practice from projects working in inclusive development are described. These examples help to make the inclusive approach more practical and provide guidance for making development work more inclusive. DCDD wants to contribute to a better understanding of what inclusive policies and practices are in development co-operation. Inclusive policies and practices integrate and include people with disabilities in all areas of daily life. Six institutional members of DCDD agreed to contact their Southern NGO

partners working in the area of disability to provide material for this brochure. In this way we are able to describe practical examples coming from projects which are working towards a more inclusive society; from India, Indonesia, Thailand, Tanzania and Uganda. The information was gathered by asking for specific information using a questionnaire. In December DCDD will publish a brochure on basic education and disability.

Policy plan of DCDD for the coming years

At the DCDD's members meeting the policy plan of DCDD for the period 2006-2010 was discussed. The policy plan can be downloaded from www.dccd.nl?2666 (Nederlands: www.dccd.nl?2662)

(continued from page 3)

But many disabled people themselves, especially in low-income and developing countries, have very low expectations of advocacy and struggle with low self-esteem and power, stemming from the lack of education and stigmatisation in their communities. There is an urgent need for donors to address the issue of mobilization and the emancipation of people with disabilities more effectively.

3) Recognition of disability as a 'crosscutting' issue

Disability is actually a cross-cutting issue affecting all sectors, although most NGOs and governments are not convinced of this. Disability is, however, not something to be found only in social protection schemes or medical rehabilitation work. Disabled people have rights to education, employment, poverty reduction and environmental programs and positive contributions to make, if they are given the explicit opportunity of participating. Disabled people are also affected by developments in all sectors, although at present, this goes largely unnoticed. Erratic and small-scale projects targeting localised groups of disabled people will continually fail to make sustainable differences if disability is not recognised as a cross-cutting issue. DCDD advocates a twin track approach: a focus on inclusiveness by integrating disability into broad sector development policies, with tangible, measurable effects for people with disabilities, and a specific focus on people with disabilities in disadvantaged situations when needed.

4) Data and monitoring

The progress of the MDGs is monitored by using indicators. Currently there are very few examples of programs where disabled people are included as potential stakeholders and/or beneficiaries, and yet almost all the programs should affect them. Future mapping exercises, stakeholder analyses and other program monitoring systems should routinely include and involve disabled adults and children, their needs and potentials.

First steps to getting disability into the MDGs?

I hope it is clear from this article that disabled people are not likely to benefit from all the efforts given to the MDGs. Not only because they are not a part of it, but also because the designed development strategies towards the MDGs, are not an inclusive process. The MDGs are doomed to fail if large groups in all societies are excluded from poverty alleviation policies and measures. Although I believe that disabled people organisations (DPOs) should manifest themselves more at higher political levels in order to gain influence on the global development agenda, the road towards effective lobbying is a long one and is not always effective.

Results in the short term might be expected if advocacy is directed towards the design and implementation of development programmes themselves at local and national levels. Both development programme initiators (governments, NGOs) and DPOs share a joint responsibility here. DPOs should make sure they are included in the steering of programmes and they should contribute in a more practical and result-orientated manner. Also governments and development NGOs have the ongoing duty to consult all stakeholders. In particular by consulting disabled people and making participation a truly reciprocal process will contribute towards a sustainable and measurable development of the whole society for each and everyone of its' members.

Mark Raijmakers

*This article has also been published online:
www.dcdd.nl?2812.*

Notes

(*) In article 129 of the draft resolution of the New York summit is mentioned that is recognized "the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed full enjoyment of their rights without discrimination". Also in this article 129 is referred to a new 'disability' convention: "We also affirm the need to finalize a comprehensive draft convention on the rights of persons with disabilities."

(* *) The Netherlands Platform Millennium Goals has its own website (in Dutch): www.maakhetwaar.nl

Box 2: Make poverty reduction inclusive

Some initiatives to make the MDGs more sensitive to disability

- In May 2002, UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) adopted the "Biwako Millennium Framework", in it a detailed description of how disability can be operationalized for the MDGs. (www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/bmf/bmf.html)
- Inclusion International has analysed the MDGs and reformulated the goals in such way as to make them relevant to people with disabilities. (www.inclusion-international.org/en/ii_priority_areas/mdg/index.html).
- The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) in 2003 adopted a resolution about disability and the MDGs (www.acfid.asn.au/about/policies/disabilities).
- Disability India Network (DIN) has launched a worldwide campaign to sign a "Petition for appropriate inclusion of disability in the MDGs" (www.disabilityindia.org/mdg.cfm)

Made to measure

Strange things are happening in the world; reality is often stranger than the wildest fantasy. Over the last few days, I have heard all kinds of messages about poverty alleviation through the media. Hopeful messages as well as messages that have made my stomach churn.

At the end of May I heard that the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and the World Health Organisation are going to combine their activities in the field of illnesses such as diabetes and cancer, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. To this end, Dutch Minister Hoogervorst and Dr. Lee Jong-wook, Director-General of the WHO, have recently signed an agreement during the annual World Health Assembly. The Ministry will make no less than 18 million euros available for the period 2005-2008. It is to be hoped that these 18 million euros will contribute to Millennium Goal No. 6: Reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Another media message I heard was that a number of rich countries will cancel debts owed them by poor countries. That is good news, isn't it?!

In the Netherlands, more and more frequently the churches are called upon to relieve the needs of poor Dutch people, in particular, chronically ill people and people with disabilities. It is true that many Dutch people who are chronically ill or disabled do not live on a dollar a day, but they are gradually sinking below subsistence level, a Protestant minister said on the radio. They may have been dependent on minimum benefits for years and now their own contributions to health insurance keep rising all the time. *'Shouldn't the government put this on the agenda?' a journalist asked a politician from the liberal party, VVD, in an interview. 'Well, no,' the politician answered. 'Structurally, nothing needs to change, it is simply a matter of some MADE-TO-MEASURE WORK here and there. In fact, there is no problem at all.'*

MADE-TO-MEASURE is a fine phrase, it can serve any purpose, but, in my experience, it rarely leads to anything substantial. A very different MADE-TO-MEASURE idea comes from America, where radio evangelist Andrews recently launched a new, jubilant, Christian initiative: the campaign Lose it for life!

Or, lose weight with God on your side. Many Americans are overweight, or obese, to use a more respectable word. They do not like this;



Petra
Jorissen

they are unhappy and regard themselves as being disabled. Indeed, obesity is a curse and a disability, minister Andrews agrees. He is convinced that man should look just like God, who, after all, created man in his image. And it is a well-known fact that God was neither obese nor disabled. People who are obese can call minister Andrews – the conversation will cost them three dollars per minute – for encouragement, a stimulus to continue along their heavy road: losing weight. His telephone is red-hot all day long. Some people – the more affluent, most probably – call the Lose it for life line three times a day for the coaching they badly need, or just to say how few calories they consumed that day. *'It gives them something to hold on to, a sense of trust'*, says the radio evangelist. Mr. Andrews is rubbing his hands. Okay, he may be extremely busy, but the dollars are pouring in, all for a good cause. Mr. Andrews wants to expand abroad so that people worldwide could call the Lose it for life line. In due time - everybody will be looking like God. That means, not just being slim, but also being happy and living longer. Shouldn't be a problem! How gladly I would like to call minister Andrews, to ask him if he could choose a different purpose for spending his piles of dollars on, but Mr. Andrews is always engaged. Actually, I would rather call God to ask him for his idea of 'man in the image of God', and his opinion of the phrase MADE-TO-MEASURE.

Petra Jorissen

This column is also published online at: www.dccd.nl?2813. The Dutch original text can be found at: www.dccd.nl?2757.

Petra Jorissen is a freelance publicist, trains service providers and clients in health care. She's is a member of the editorial board of the DCDD Newsletter, and writes columns for the newsletter. Petra is a wheelchair rider.

The Millennium Development Goals cause great debate worldwide, also in this 11th DCDD newsletter. This article is a collection of eight responses to a discussion statement on the MDGs, from Asian countries and from Dutch development NGOs.

People with disabilities excluded from Millennium Goals?

There is a great debate taking place as to whether the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be reached or not. In general, scepticism dominates. What is certain, however, is that if disabled people are excluded from development processes, then the Millennium Development Goals will only ever be words on paper. According to World Bank figures, 17% of all people with an income of less than one dollar are disabled or suffer from a chronic disease. However, none of the MDG indicators mentions people with disabilities. It cannot be proved that there is a mainstreaming effect for people with disabilities. A so-called inclusive approach will not work if no specific attention is given to this group of people who are in a disadvantaged situation. If development included disabled people as well, the world would have a much better chance of reaching the goals that were set for 2015.

Author: Aartjan ter Haar. This article can also be found online at www.dcdd.nl?2816.

Discussion statement:

**"Without specific attention being paid to people with disabilities
The Millennium Development Goals will not be reached."**

Exclusion will become a greater burden

"Poverty reduction and improving the quality of life for all the people in Asia and the Pacific has become the overarching objective of the World Leaders. Unfortunately this goal is unlikely to be achieved because disability, which is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, has not been included in the Millennium Development Goals. People with disabilities are among the poorest of the poor, especially women and children with disabilities. They are also among the most vulnerable, deserving special attention because their standard of living falls far below the poverty line and their capacity for participating in economic activities can be severely limited by disability. To exclude people with disabilities from the Millennium Development Goals will have a negative effect on social and economic

development. It will place a burden on every country throughout the world. A development, in which all groups, especially people with disabilities, are not mainstreamed in economic, social, political, and cultural development activities, will make people disillusioned and frustrated."



Ngy San, Program Manager for Disability Action Council in Cambodia. Email: ngysan@dac.org.kh

The wearer of the shoe knows where it pinches

"The MDGs are quite ambitious and broad-based and thus have a tendency to tackle issues halfway. Unless specific attention is paid to people with disabilities, the threat remains that these goals will not be realised. Whilst the goals talk about eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, we, the disabled, remain the poorest of the poor all over the world. It is ironic to try and reach these goals without paying attention to



us. It is only the wearer of the shoe who really knows where it pinches, hence the need for our support. Let the disabled take a leading role in finding lasting solutions to their own problems. We are still discriminated against in educational systems. Infrastructure and social systems make it hard for us to participate actively in the development processes. No focus has been paid to fighting HIV/AIDS amongst disabled people. Giving specific attention to people with disabilities in the implementation of the MDGs will inject expert knowledge from us to scale up the efforts towards meeting the target goals by 2015. Nothing about us - without us!"

Fredrick Ouko, Co-ordinator at Kenya Disabled Action Network. Kenyadisabled@hotmail.com

(continued from page 7)

Do the disability check

“When the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were formulated by the United Nations, the member states were looking for minimum standards of the quality of life of poor people. Unfortunately in these MDGs, people with disabilities are not mentioned at all. This means discrimination from the development process by the UN and its member states. For me it really is a shame to see these thought patterns in world leaders, policymakers and peace builders. There is a vicious relationship between poverty and disability. Addressing this should have been one of the main tasks of the MDGs. No-one’s life should be turned into a disabled one because of poverty, and no-one should become poor anymore because of disAbility. The MDGs should be for all, otherwise a whole group of people will be excluded. disAbility experts or disabled people should be involved in all the steps, so that,

in the Millennium Development Goals, special attention can be given to the mainstreaming of disadvantaged groups. Documents like the millennium goals need be judged or checked as to whether they are disability sensitized or not.”



Shahidul Haque, Chief Executive of SARP (Social Assistance and Rehabilitation of the Physically Vulnerable) in Bangladesh. Contact by email: shaque@bd.drik.net. Read a larger reply by Shahidul Haque in the Word document to be downloaded from www.dccd.nl?2816.

People, not averages



“Without improving the lives of disabled people, achieving the Millennium Development Goals is not possible. But the problem with the millennium goals is that they are about averages and do not differentiate between different groups of vulnerable people. For

governments and donors eager to show results to their tax payers, it is tempting to go for the quick wins. But if averages may then rise, this by no means implies that the situation of the worst-off has improved. Those who are amongst the most difficult to reach and who need the most

attention, such as many disabled people, are often not visible in the Millennium Development Goals graphs. From a human rights perspective – which is, after all, where the millennium goals originated from - this is totally unacceptable. So the millennium goals are helpful, as they show the urgent need to reduce poverty, to provide more and better aid, to promote fair trade and to increase debt relief, but policy makers need to be constantly reminded that MDGs are about people, not about averages.”

Ellen Verheul, Project Leader at Wemos, The Netherlands. Contact by email: ellen.verheul@wemos.nl

Averages lead to deterioration

“Cordaid does not entirely support the discussion statement because there are many different factors which play a role in attaining the millennium targets, not just giving specific attention to people with disabilities. We believe that a specific focus on people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups of people is necessary to enable these groups to participate equally in society. Unfortunately there isn’t a specific Millennium Development Goal aimed at improving the living conditions and the position of vulnerable groups in society. Generally, the Millennium Development Goals have been formulated as improvements of the national averages. This can even make the situation of the poorest and most vulnerable groups deteriorate, because policymakers may decide to exclude the

groups that are most difficult to reach in their attempts to achieve the MDGs. It is an important shortcoming of the millennium targets that they can be achieved without giving any specific attention to handicapped people. It is, therefore, necessary to reformulate the millennium targets so that these targets must also be achieved for at least half of the poorest and most vulnerable groups of people.”

Rens Rutten, Policy Officer of Cordaid, the Netherlands. Email contact: rens.rutten@cordaid.nl



(continued from page 8)

Supporting policy is required

"There is nothing wrong with the way that the millennium targets are formulated in themselves. They focus efforts made in the development sector and make the concept of poverty alleviation more concrete and tangible. This makes it clear publicly that there is still a lot to do. But time and time again it becomes clear that there are groups of people who are not reached by regular poverty alleviation programmes. These groups may be older people, minority groups or women but also, and all too often, people with disabilities. Where the millennium targets speak of 'halving' of 'reducing', it is the most vulnerable groups who will lag behind. That is why VSO Nederland believes

Education, disabled women and child mortality

"It was probably assumed by the architects of the Millennium Development Goals that combating hunger and disease, illiteracy and child mortality, HIV/AIDS and gender empowerment would somehow also include in its net the 1 billion people with disabilities who escape all other development programmes because of their lack of a voice. Logically it would

seem that if hunger was eradicated, if health was for all, if education knew no discrimination, then the disabled would automatically receive their just place in society. The risk of poverty is the tip of the iceberg and not the base of the pyramid! A social protection framework



Disabled children and positive attitudes

"In the whole process around the Millennium Development Goals, the focus of attention has not always been on those people who are the most difficult to include with regard to the goals. Extra effort is needed to reach out to the most marginalised, and more importantly to help to change this imbalance for them – now and also after 2015. This can be reached by giving them special attention during the years leading up to the attainment of the millennium goals, and also by making the global society aware of the fact that some groups are easily overlooked. One of the most important groups which is easily overlooked is disabled people, and especially disabled children. Plan Nederland recognizes the importance of including all children, and especially the most marginalized, in development processes. In our programmes we are starting to

that interventions aimed specifically at these target groups also must be supported. It is only in this way that they can be reached and can profit from the intended improvements. However relevant it is in itself that the millennium targets can be realised for people with disabilities, without supporting policy aimed directly at these groups, they will not profit from the outcome of all the efforts made."



Henk Hofsté, Head of the Programme Department at VSO Netherlands. Email: info@vso.nl

would thus have to be set in place to ensure that support is equitably provided for society's poorest and most vulnerable members. Suggested inclusions: education, since approximately 98% of children with disabilities in developing and/or poor countries are out of school, women with disabilities who face dual discrimination, and infant and child mortality since the risk of death 'in utero' and after birth is greatest for those with disabilities. Without specific mention, this would escape the attention of implementers."

Madhumita Puri, Director of the Society for Child Development in India. Contact by email: madhumita@disabilityindia.org. Read a more extensive reply by Madhumita Puri in the Word document to be downloaded from www.dccd.nl?2816.

recognize the importance of paying special attention to the access of disabled children, to the development of a positive attitude towards disabled people and to enhancing the capacity of communities to include people with a disability."

Carlien Huijsmans, Programme worker for policy development and project work at Plan Nederland, The Netherlands. Contact by email: carlien.huijsmans@plannederland.nl. Read a more extensive reply by Carlien Huijsmans in the Word document to be downloaded from www.dccd.nl?2816.



DCDD members interviewed

Terre des Hommes: advocating children's rights worldwide

Terre des Hommes is a development organization which supports almost 300 projects in South America, South/South East Asia and East Africa. These projects are in the fields of education, health, and socio-economic development and are focused on children. Terre des Hommes also campaigns for the rights of children worldwide. This year (2005), it celebrates its 40th anniversary. Jennifer de Boer, Children's Rights Policy Officer, was interviewed.

What is their strategy? Jennifer de Boer explains: We do not implement projects ourselves but work through local organizations. Our strategy addresses the 3 A's: awareness, assistance and advocacy. In developing countries assistance is important, but awareness and advocacy, for instance at the level of policy makers, is important as well. We also advocate on European, international and national (Dutch) levels and raise awareness in the Netherlands.

What is the place of the disability issue in your programs?

We have three main intervention areas, one, for instance, is health and education. The disability issue is a cross-cutting issue. Disabled children are a disadvantaged group and therefore we also focus on them as a target group in our education, health and socio-economic programs.

Do you have an earmarked budget for disability?

No, we don't have an earmarked budget for disability projects. Which projects we support depends on the specific problems identified by our partner organizations. They have strong roots in their communities and address the needs of that community. At the moment, more than ten percent of our supported projects target children with disabilities.

Which Millennium Development Goals are incorporated in your work?

We do a lot of lobbying. In the Netherlands we

campaign for more attention to be given to the rights of disabled children in development cooperation, but we also lobby in other countries. In Tanzania we are lobbying for a school curriculum which will give more focus on the needs of disabled children. We also pay attention to networking. In South America and East Asia we have a network of partner organisations in order to exchange information, do research and advocate on disability issues.

Awareness raising?

In 2004 we worked on a documentary about the Paralympics which was broadcasted in the Netherlands. A good way to show what disabled people can achieve!

Your future plans?

We will continue to work for deprived children and, unfortunately, disabled children are still a part of that group. So disability remains a focus of our work.

Have you seen changes in your work in the last 40 years?

There has been a shift from charity to ensuring children's rights. For instance, education is a basic children's right. It is not an issue whether or not to give special education to disabled children. No, it is the right of every child to be educated and this is now the way we look at things. People also started to realise that disabled children can also achieve things. The Paralympics were a good example of this.

Terre des Hommes children's project in Arusha, Tanzania (photo: Sven Torfinn).



A final comment?

Disability issues do not belong to the field of charity; it is about every human being having the same rights and the right of every child to have access to the same opportunities!

Ria Scheele

*This article is also published online:
www.dccd.nl?2825*

DCDD's 5th anniversary

DCDD is celebrating its fifth anniversary this year - 2005. Proud to have reached the age of five, we held a meeting on the 8th of September at Hogeschool Leiden to celebrate this anniversary. It was here, in this very same place, in late 1999, that a small group of people first met to discuss the founding of DCDD which happened just one year later. Since that time, DCDD has grown to become a coalition of 200 individuals and organisations from the disability and services sectors and development cooperation.

Celebration

Around 120 people convened in Leiden to celebrate DCDD's first milestone. Spijker en Hamer, a theatrical company, linked the presentations by means of cabaret acts and sketches and, in interactive sessions, invited the participants to write greeting cards for DCDD's future. Josephine Sinyo from Kenya was the keynote speaker. She is the Chair of the United Disabled People of Kenya (UDPK) and a former Member of Parliament. We are honoured that she is also a member of DCDD's International Advisory Council. Ms. Sinyo inspired the participants with a fiery discourse about disability as a human rights issue. She exhorted Dutch participants with disabilities to be proud of being able to live with a disability. She noted that the situation for disabled people in the Netherlands seems to be deteriorating, whilst progress is being made in her country.

Results of 5 years

The anniversary was an occasion for presenting 5 years of DCDD activities in terms of results: what has DCDD achieved and what hasn't it achieved? The great challenge for DCDD is to find the right strategic alliances, to be able to cooperate more effectively for an inclusive development cooperation policy.

DCDD has grown considerably in five years' time, not only in terms of membership, but also, for example, with regard to the dissemination of information and the building of networks. A platform has been created where dialogue and debate can take place and where all sectors, not least people with disabilities themselves, can voice their ideas and be listened to. A quarter of DCDD's members are actively involved in volunteer groups. More than 1,000 people worldwide subscribe to the DCDD newsletter, whilst the DCDD website, www.dccdd.nl, has 200 visitors a day. Two brochures have been published in the DCDD publication series '*Towards an inclusive*

development cooperation policy'. People know how to reach DCDD for information about the interface of disability and development cooperation. In short, DCDD has succeeded in profiling itself as an organisation which provides specialised information.

Whether DCDD has been successful vis-à-vis development cooperation organisations, the main target group of its activities, is more complicated to assess. One achievement is that general development organisations have become aware of the fact that they pay too little attention to disability; a change from 'unconscious lack of attention' to 'conscious lack of attention'. But some development cooperation organisations are now prepared to review their policies in respect of people with disabilities. That is progress, because - as a DCDD study carried out some years ago revealed - in most of these organisations disability is not a subject of policy development.



At the anniversary celebration (September 8) 120 people from very different backgrounds convened to learn from each other. At the photo a small group discussion.

Government policy

Until a few years ago, disabled people were invisible in the policies of the Dutch government. From replies given by the Minister for Development Cooperation to questions in Parliament, it became clear last year that, within the framework of Dutch development cooperation policy, they are regarded as part of the category of vulnerable people. Quoting the Minister: "*I will continue to pay attention to this group of poor people by 'mainstreaming' in the sectors of education, health and human rights.*" There is some progress in that people with disabilities have been mentioned, but

(Continued on page 12)

(continued from page 11)

there is stagnation too, in that the word 'mainstreaming' can mean a lot or a little. Recognition as being vulnerable is one thing, visibility is another. For example, no indicators for mainstreaming have been formulated, so that everything remains rather vague. Neither have any specific measures been taken. An important reason for this is that the Ministry does not want policies for target groups anymore; so, no specific measures for specific groups of people.

DCDD advocates an inclusive policy. An inclusive society can be described as a society in which all people, including disabled people, have equal access to rights and opportunities. Ideally, an inclusive policy takes the shape of a twin-track approach: DCDD is convinced that the integration of people with disabilities can only be effective if specific attention is given to, and specific supportive measures are taken for, disabled people living in disadvantaged conditions.

Orientation towards 'the South'

In the end, DCDD is interested in the results achieved in the 'South'; specifically, whether the position of people with disabilities has actually improved. DCDD's work is however aimed at Dutch society and no money is spent directly on activities in the South. The effect of DCDD's work on the position of disabled people in the South is difficult to assess. In the next few years DCDD wants to become more important specifically for Southern disability organisations and at the beginning of 2006, DCDD will start an international lobbying venture for this purpose.

*Mark Raijmakers,
DCDD Director*

This article was also published online at www.dcdd.nl?2814, and in Dutch at www.dcdd.nl?2809. The presentations held at the 5th anniversary can be downloaded from www.dcdd.nl?2626.

DCDD update October 2005 (continued from page 4)

UN 'disability' convention

Many of DCDD's newsletter readers might know in New York national delegations and NGO's debate and negotiate about a new UN human rights convention about and for people with disabilities. DCDD has been able to send representatives to New York in August 2004 and 2005. In January 2005 DCDD will be present again. Read the report of the last attendance in August written by Lydia la Rivière-Zijdel online at DCDD's website: www.dcdd.nl?2807. Earlier this year in the Dutch parliament questions were raised on the Dutch governments's behaviour in New York. Questions and answers can be found online at www.dcdd.nl?2661 (English, selection) and www.dcdd.nl?2613 (Dutch, full).

DCDD board changes

DCDD now has a board of nine persons. The board - headed by chair Johan Wesemann - has had to say goodbye since April (DCDD newsletter 10) to Christine Fenenga and Mineke Hardeman. The board welcomes in its midst Julie Love. Julie is programme manager for Asia at Cordaid.

DCDD 2004 report

DCDD's annual report 2004 can be downloaded from www.dcdd.nl?2745 (summary in English) and www.dcdd.nl?2741 (in Dutch, full version).

New DCDD project starts

DCDD has found funding from NCDO (www.ncdo.nl) and NRF (www.revalidatiefonds.nl)

to manage a project facilitating Dutch people with disabilities to lobby political parties to ask for more attention for the position of disabled people in developing countries. In May 2007 there are parliamentary elections in the Netherlands and the goal is to get disability and development more into the political parties' programmes.

Lobby venture of DCDD starts in 2006

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has decided to fund a DCDD programme around a lobby venture which involves DCDD members and their Southern partners. DCDD will offer support and capacity strengthening for a selection of five Southern DPO's/NGO's working with Dutch development aid organisations (DCDD members), focussing on national lobbying in their respective countries. More information DCDD will publish beginning of 2006 on its website.

Top 5 downloads from www.dcdd.nl

Since publication of the last newsletter (10) in April 2005, these are the most popular downloads from www.dcdd.nl:

1. (English) Report on the DCDD international symposium 'Disability, Self-organisation and Aid', 15 November 2004: www.dcdd.nl?2414.
2. (Dutch) *Verslag studiedag Lilliane Fonds en DCDD, Cultuur en religie*, 29 november 2002: www.dcdd.nl?1672
3. (Dutch) DCDD forum 9 januari 2002, *Gehandicapt en organisaties Noord en Zuid: dezelfde strijd?*: www.dcd.nl?1119
4. (Dutch) *Onderzoeksverslag van 'de wijze waarop Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerkingsorganisaties aandacht aan 'disability' besteden*: www.dcdd.nl?2447.
5. (Dutch) *Verslag DCDD symposium 19 mei 2003, Gehandicapt en solidair*: www.dcdd.nl?1748.