



**LIGHT**  
FOR THE WORLD



**POLICY**

# Disability Inclusion in Community Development



## **Global situation**

Disability Inclusion in Community Development is defined as a multi-sectoral approach for the inclusion of women and men and girls and boys with disabilities in their local communities. It is a development strategy for inclusion, rights protection and promotion, and poverty reduction.

Light for the World's work on Disability Inclusion in Community Development uses the community-based rehabilitation (CBR) approach described in the CBR guidelines of the World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNESCO and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC). The CBR guidelines address the inclusion of persons with disabilities in five areas, as shown in the CBR matrix (Figure 1).

CBR has given guidance over the last four decades, in order to achieve disability inclusion on a community level. From a low-cost solution to help women and men and girls and boys with disabilities in rural areas, it developed into a concept addressing a broad range of topics relevant for persons with disabilities in the fields of inclusive health, disability inclusive education, economic empowerment and social inclusion.

The philosophy of CBR has changed from the idea that the individual should be rehabilitated to fit into his/her environment to the vision of an inclusive society where women and men and girls and boys with disabilities have equal rights to participation. This means that communities must change in order to better accommodate vulnerable groups and marginalised members. This evolution of the CBR approach led Light for the World to conceptualise the work done in this field as "Disability Inclusion in Community Development".

Over the years our work on Disability Inclusion in Community Development has developed from a strategic focus to become the backbone of our organisational strategy. While our organisational profile in disability inclusive development (in various topics) is growing, our community initiatives provide practical experiences on how we can make inclusive development work.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) further show the relevance of Disability Inclusion in Community Development to realise the rights of persons with disabilities on a community level and to encourage local and national governments to implement their global commitments. Disability Inclusion in Community Development is underpinned by the principles of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as two additional principles:

### **Networking**

Disability Inclusion in Community Development can only work through collaboration, lobbying, and the support of others to ensure that communities are inclusive of women and men and girls and boys with disabilities.

### **Empowerment**

The collaboration, participation and support of persons with disabilities (and their associations) are at the core of Disability Inclusion in Community Development, so that they become the agents of change for inclusion in all aspects of life.

Important for reaching disability inclusion on a community level is the "twin-track" approach to interventions (Figure 2).

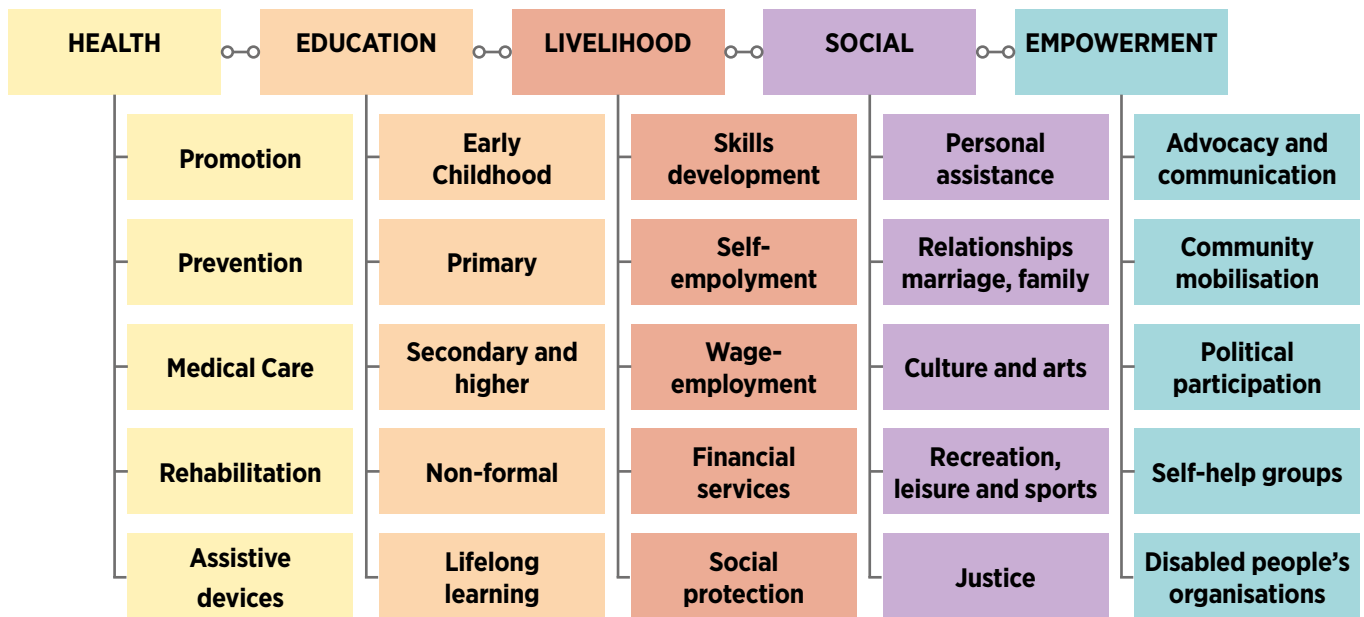


Fig. 1: CBR Matrix

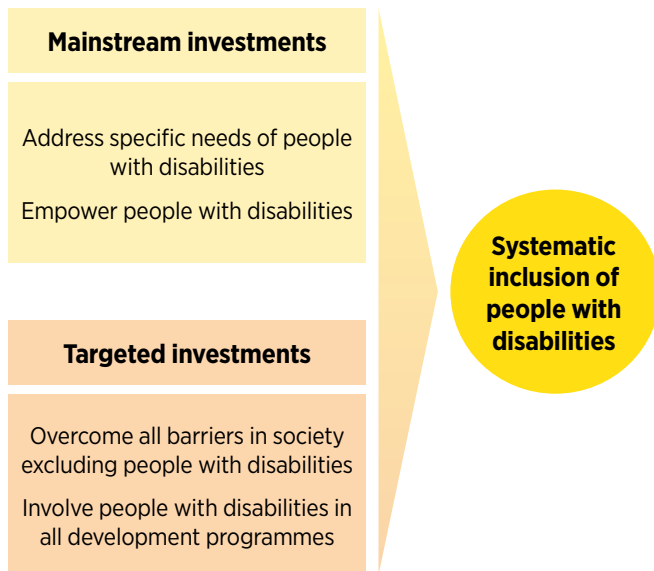


Fig. 2: Twin-track approach

## Geographical focus

Disability Inclusion in Community Development plays an important role in the Light for the World country strategies of **Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Mozambique**. In these three focus countries, Disability Inclusion in Community Development is implemented through the following strategies:

- **Local partners** who implement Disability Inclusion in Community Development.
- Working with **government** on national, regional and local level on disability inclusion.
- Strengthening the community link of other Light for the World initiatives working on inclusion such as: Disability Inclusive Education, Economic Empowerment, Inclusive Health and DPO Empowerment.

The Disability Inclusion in Community Development approach is also applied in the partner countries **South Sudan, Bolivia, North-East India** and **Papua New Guinea**.

## Our approach

### Light for the World works in three thematic areas:

- ◆ Health with a focus on Eye Health and Rehabilitation
- ◆ Disability Inclusive Education
- ◆ Economic Empowerment

### And two cross-cutting strategies:

- ◆ Disability Inclusion
- ◆ Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In February 2017, the WHO launched the campaign **Rehabilitation 2030**<sup>1</sup>. This call for action aims to improve rehabilitation services in low- and middle-income countries. Although the campaign does not target women and men and girls and boys with disabilities specifically, the success of the campaign is important for Disability Inclusion in Community Development initiatives by making rehabilitation services more widely available on community level.

Disability Inclusion in Community Development is **embedded in all these focus areas**, through the strategies described in the Theory of Change (figure 3) to make sure women, men, girls and boys with disabilities are enabled and included in all community services and structures.

## Health

Disability Inclusion in Community Development projects promote healthy living and the **prevention** of impairments from disabling diseases in the community. Examples are the prevention of blindness from trachoma or early detection of leprosy, etc. At the same time, Disability Inclusion in Community Development projects provide **rehabilitation** services and link with the health system where curative and rehabilitation services are available, to increase the

functionality of women and men and girls and boys with disabilities. Better rehabilitation services in the community as promoted by the WHO Rehabilitation 2030 initiative will support **earlier detection** of disabilities and ensure that girls and boys and women and men with disabilities will get the rehabilitation services they need when they need it most. This could eventually alleviate the need for field workers to provide in-home rehabilitation, thus giving them more time to do other work. The third component of health is the **inclusion of persons with disabilities in general health services**. Here, Light for the World gives specific attention to the lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services for women, men, girls and boys with disabilities.

## Disability inclusive education

Light for the World is committed to ensuring that **girls with disabilities** have access to education. Girls are, in general, less likely to access education compared to their male peers. Girls with disabilities experience even higher discrimination when accessing education. Inaccessibility of buildings and toilets as well as poor transport systems can influence a girl's prospect of going to school. Our community-based partners support girls and boys in their early childhood development. The partners make the **link between the school, parents and the community** while simultaneously supporting the schools to form child-to-child clubs that address disability issues, and by giving practical training to the school community, including teachers and parents. They also support disability inclusive education **skills training** for teachers on topics like sign language and braille.

## Economic empowerment

Disability Inclusion in Community Development projects supports economic empowerment for adults with disabilities and for poorer families who have a child with a disability. In most cases these are single parents with a

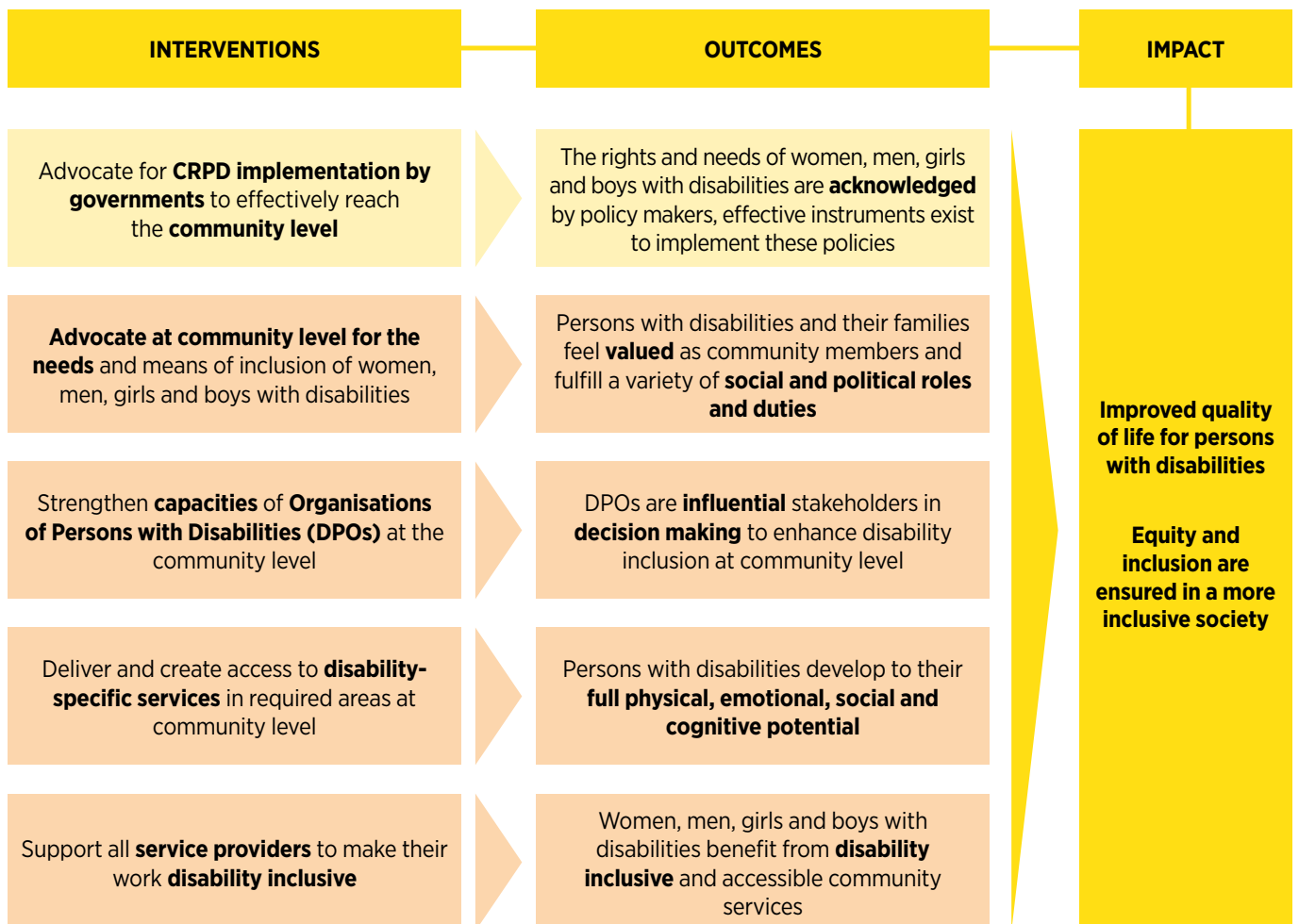
1 [www.who.int/disabilities/care/rehab-2030/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/care/rehab-2030/en/)

child or children with disabilities. The Disability Inclusion in Community Development partners work together with the community structures that support livelihood and poverty alleviation to include persons with disabilities and their families into their services. Where needed, special support is provided. Economic Empowerment is promoted through access to **vocational training** and **higher education**, support and advocating for the **employment** of persons with disabilities, **micro-credit** access and entrepreneur skills training, the development of inclusive village **loan and savings associations** and access to poverty reduction schemes and pensions.

## Disability inclusion

There are many examples where women and men with disabilities have fought for and received local services in the community from which they were previously excluded. Community-based workers help **families** to accept their children and see their potential but also help to change the attitudes of **neighbours and communities** towards women, men, girls and boys with disabilities living in their communities. The Disability Inclusion in Community Development approach also works with the **government structures** responsible for social protection in the community to make their services inclusive of women, men girls and boys with disabilities. For Light for the World, the **protection and safeguarding** of girls and boys with disabilities is of particular importance.

Fig. 3: Theory of Change



## Rights of persons with disabilities – empowerment and advocacy

Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs) often do not exist at a community level. Disability Inclusion in Community Development initiatives support the **development of DPOs** and support their strengthening through training on the CRPD and joint efforts to **locally**

**lobby for inclusion.** For Light for the World it is important to cover **all different types of disabilities** as well as to focus on **women's empowerment**. Apart from these official structures the activities in the community have an empowering effect on individuals with disabilities as well as on informal groups (**self-help groups**) which are created through the Disability Inclusion in Community Development initiatives.

## Implementation

### Disability inclusion in government services

In the coming five years collaboration with (local) governments will remain a focus in our strategy, as will collaboration with national ministries to make sure they include disability in their policies, implementation plans and training structures and to make sure these policies are practised at community level. Within the community, our focus is to ensure that the CRPD and its national implementation plans are recognised by local governing structures, to support persons with disabilities, help DPOs to become active as local leaders and ensure that services are available for women, men, girls and boys with disabilities.

### Rehabilitation as part of health systems

In the coming five years we will support the WHO in its global initiative, Rehabilitation 2030, to make rehabilitation part of health services in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Mozambique. By working with governments to embed rehabilitation services into their health systems, including access for people in the community to these services, we will support earlier detection and treatment of developmental delays and disabling conditions, as well as embedding rehabilitation in health care systems right down to community level.

### Early Childhood Development

Early Childhood Development (ECD) will be an increased focus of Light for the World's Disability Inclusion in Community Development approach over the coming years. This will be done by improving Light for the World's internal understanding of ECD and aligning plans to further develop ECD within our Disability Inclusive Education programmes. We will focus on the following:

- Strengthen skills to support all girls and boys with disabilities in reaching their maximum potential of functioning
- Support local government structures to improve services that form the pre-condition for ECD
- Support families to improve the early development of their children with disabilities
- Reach all girls and boys with disabilities and help them to develop during their early childhood (e.g. girls and boys with intellectual disabilities or who are deaf, girls and boys with communication difficulties)

In ECD, Light for the World is committed to ensuring a good balance between the two streams of the twin track approach, focusing both on the individual needs and on making the system inclusive.

## Empowerment of DPOs on a community level

In all Light for the World supported countries, Disability Inclusion in Community Development projects work with and for DPOs. In some countries, the accountability of the community work towards DPOs is stronger than in others. In the past five years we have supported DPOs to monitor the implementation of the CRPD on national level and to lobby for better implementation. In the coming five years Light for the World will take these developments to community level.

This will require strengthening of grassroots DPOs through the following strategies:

- Development of training for DPOs on the understanding of the CRPD and advocacy skills for better implementation of laws and policies on community level
- Engaging DPOs more in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of our community work
- Supporting DPOs with the right tools to monitor and influence the achievements of our Disability Inclusion in Community Development projects

## Partnerships and alliances

As part of the IDDC's (International Disability and Development Consortium) CBID (Community Based Inclusive Development) task group, we aim to build better alliances with UN agencies and make sure that global government and major donors' efforts with regard to inclusion of persons with disabilities are targeted right down to community level. Our partnership with WHO focuses on the development of rehabilitation services at community

levels and testing out modalities for it in our focus countries. Together with the CBR Global Network we support the global harmonisation of Disability Inclusion in Community Development. Within the International Rehabilitation Alliance, we lobby for the inclusion of rehabilitation on a community level as an integral part of rehabilitation services. And with the Dutch organization Enablement we work on research, training, tool development and evaluation.

## Programmatic links to other thematic areas

As a cross-cutting strategy, Disability Inclusion in Community Development links to all other thematic areas and strategies of Light for the World when it comes to implementing them on the community level, as explained in "Our approach":

- In Health, it ensures that services reach down to community level and are inclusive of persons with disabilities;
- In Disability Inclusive Education, it strengthens the

links between families, communities and schools and ensures awareness on the right to education of girls and boys with disabilities;

- In Economic Empowerment, it improves access to training, financial services and social protection and strengthens groups of persons with disabilities that engage in livelihood activities;
- To ensure the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it supports the establishment and functioning of grassroots DPOs.

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# Disability Inclusion in Community Development



## Executive summary

Light for the World is a global disability & development organisation. We break down barriers to create an inclusive society where everyone's potential is unlocked. We enable crucial eye health services and empower women and men and girls and boys with disabilities in some of the poorest regions of the world.

We focus on the poorest and hardest to reach. We concentrate on selected countries, where, according to the Human Development Index, the need is great, and where we believe that we can make long-term system change.

In these countries, we focus on reaching the most vulnerable people with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas.

### **Our thematic areas are**

- Health, with a focus on Eye Health and Rehabilitation,
- Disability Inclusive Education, and
- Economic Empowerment.

In all of our work, we promote Disability Inclusion in Community Development linked to our advocacy work on national and international levels to trigger systemic change and the sustainable realisation of the rights of men and women and girls and boys with disabilities.

Light for the World's work on Disability Inclusion in Community Development uses the community-based rehabilitation (CBR) approach described in the CBR guidelines of the World Health Organisation (WHO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNESCO and the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)<sup>1</sup>. Over the years our work on Disability Inclusion in Community Development has developed from a strategic focus to become the backbone of our organisational strategy. While our organisational profile in disability inclusive development (in various topics) is growing, our community initiatives provide practical experiences on how we can make inclusive development work.

1 CBR Guidelines, [www.who.int/disabilities/cbr/guidelines/en/](http://www.who.int/disabilities/cbr/guidelines/en/)