



Fundamental Principles for Inclusive Development

Reducing inequalities and achieving equality of opportunities for all! Inclusive development aims to ensure that all human beings enjoy the same rights and opportunities. Guided by the vision of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, CBM Christian Blind Mission works to end the discrimination of persons with disabilities.

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↑ Niru Devi (30) contracted polio as a child. Since then, she can only walk a few steps. With the support of CBM’s project partner “Vikalp Foundation” she learned tailoring and is now running her own small business in the north of India.

Equal opportunities for all

CBM Christian Blind Mission views inclusive development as key to a sustainable society without barriers in which every human being can achieve their full potential. The aim is to change social structures in such a way that they are equally accessible to all people, meeting their different abilities and needs.

Inclusive development is a priority for the approximately one billion people worldwide living with a disability. They represent about 15 percent of the global population. 80 percent of persons with disabilities live in low- and middle-income countries. They are especially affected by poverty and often excluded from accessing services like education, work, or health due to barriers in their environment. At the same time, persons living in poverty are more at risk of becoming impaired, due to e.g. malnutrition, limited access to health services or the lack of social protection.

The cycle of disability and poverty



2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

To overcome poverty in all its forms through sustainable development – this is the objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015 by the UN General Assembly. 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute the heart of the Agenda to guarantee a decent life for all human beings.

Persons with disabilities are explicitly mentioned in the Agenda, e.g., in the context of access to education, the labour market or the reduction of inequalities. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda will only be considered successfully implemented when no one is

left behind in global development processes (“Leave no one behind”-principle). Indeed, the aspiration is to reach marginalised groups, such as persons with disabilities, first.

To track progress and determine further actions that are required to achieve the SDGs, globally comparable data, disaggregated by different characteristics, are essential. The Washington Group on Disability Statistics has developed appropriate tools for data collection on disability that complement existing data surveys accordingly.

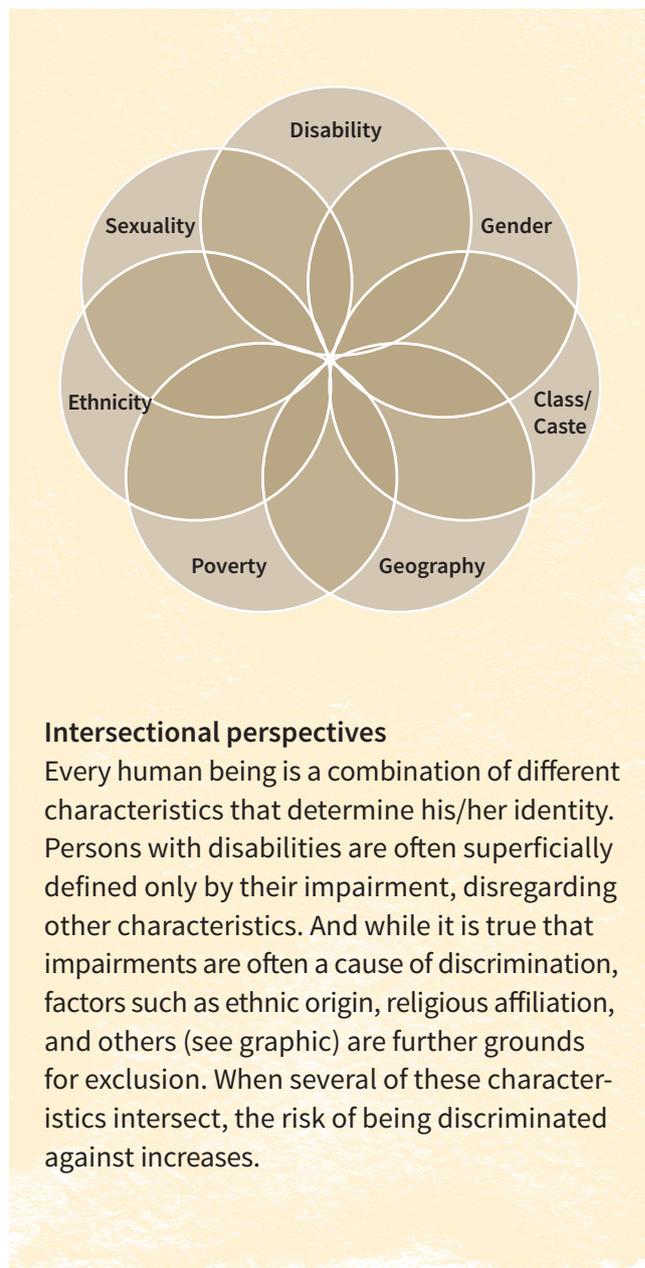
The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international human rights treaty that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006 and came into force in 2008. The CRPD specifies how universal human rights can be guaranteed to persons with disabilities. The convention is a binding human rights instrument destined to end the deeply rooted social discrimination against persons with disabilities and to promote and ensure their inclusion and participation in civic, political, economic, social, and cultural life.

The general principles of the CRPD are:

1. Respect for the inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the right to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons;
2. Non-discrimination;
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
5. Equality of opportunity;
6. Accessibility;
7. Equality between men and women;
8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

The CRPD is the first convention not to have been drafted exclusively by a group of legal experts, but with the involvement of persons with disabilities and several organisations of persons with disabilities. They successfully championed: “Nothing about us without us!”



Intersectional perspectives

Every human being is a combination of different characteristics that determine his/her identity. Persons with disabilities are often superficially defined only by their impairment, disregarding other characteristics. And while it is true that impairments are often a cause of discrimination, factors such as ethnic origin, religious affiliation, and others (see graphic) are further grounds for exclusion. When several of these characteristics intersect, the risk of being discriminated against increases.

Human rights as the foundation for inclusive development

Humankind is diverse, but all human beings are equal in dignity and rights. Global injustice and inequalities are contradictory to this and must therefore be systematically and consistently amended. Development cooperation based on human rights understands persons as right bearers as opposed to recipients of charity. States are not benefactors, but duty bearers called to respect, protect, and promote the rights of all persons. The CRPD makes this very clear: It is not the person with disabilities that needs to adapt, but rather the circumstances that need to be changed in such a way that equal inclusion is possible for all.

Twin-track approach

Implementing inclusive development requires a mindset change in development cooperation: Firstly, disability needs to be a cross-cutting issue in all development projects (disability mainstreaming) to ensure that development programmes are accessible and beneficial to persons with disabilities. Secondly, tailor-made projects are necessary that put the empowerment of persons with disabilities centre

stage, as this in turn enables persons with disabilities to catch up, and benefit from mainstream development cooperation on an equal basis with others.

The “twin-track approach” combines disability mainstreaming and targeted support for persons with disabilities. Only by linking the two tracks, can the overall objective be reached: to grant all human beings equal rights and opportunities.

To effectively implement inclusive development, certain fundamental requirements must be consistently applied:

We call for:

→ Accessibility

Ensuring that built environment, transport, information, communication, technical assistive devices, and new technologies are accessible for all.

→ Accountability

Where success or failure can be measured, the pressure on those responsible increases. It is therefore important to have transparency, clearly attribute responsibilities, collect data, and define indicators for tracking progress.

→ Participation

Persons with disabilities have the right to be consistently and effectively involved in all development processes. To ensure this, their self-advocacy organisations need to be strengthened, among other things.

→ Resources

Inclusion is often not costly at all. This is particularly true when it is part of project planning from the start. However, additional financial, technical, human and time resources are necessary for achieving inclusion.

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CBM Christian Blind Mission is an international Christian development organisation committed to improving the lives of persons with disabilities in the poorest countries of the world. CBM currently supports 540 projects in 51 countries.



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