



**LOMBARD ODIER**  
LOMBARD ODIER DARIER HENTSCH

# A Donor's Guide to Disability





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“ The true measure of any society can be found  
in how it treats it's most vulnerable members. ”

— Mahatma Gandhi —

created in collaboration with



# introduction

Welcome to the Donor's Guide to Disability

Disability transcends national boundaries and cultural norms and has emerged as a significant challenge in our complex globalised society.

The data is clear: according to the World Health Organisation, more than 1.3 billion people – one-sixth of the global population – have a significant disability. This figure lays bare the multifaceted nature of this reality, demanding an understanding of everything from physical obstacles to social exclusion, limited access to services and ingrained discrimination.

This guide explores the many dimensions of disability worldwide. From the African continent to Asian megacities and from rural Latin America to the metropolises of Europe, we encounter the diverse and shared realities of people with disabilities. We illuminate existing disparities while celebrating the innovative efforts and progress already made.

Ensuring people with disabilities have full access to all goods and services in our society must remain a priority.

Handicap International is an independent and impartial aid organisation that works alongside people with disabilities in situations of poverty, exclusion, conflict, and disaster. Our aim is to respond to their essential needs, improve their living conditions, and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights.

Outraged by the injustices faced by people with disabilities and vulnerable populations, Handicap International aspires to a world of solidarity and inclusion, enriched by our differences, where everyone can live in dignity.

Since 1982, Handicap International has implemented complementary prevention, detection, case-management and support actions around the world, responding to specific challenges, from rehabilitation to maternal and child health, and from mental health to psychosocial support, inclusive education and vocational inclusion.

By working with people with disabilities around the world, Handicap International also bears witness and makes their voices heard through advocacy with nation-states and international bodies in order to engage governments in more inclusive action. This has led to significant advances in protecting people and limiting the causes of disability in conflict zones worldwide, including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 1997, known as the Ottawa Treaty; the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2008,





known as the Oslo Treaty; and the Dublin Political Declaration in 2022. In recognition of these efforts, Handicap International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.

Since the founding of Lombard Odier over 225 years ago, the families leading the bank have consistently been involved in philanthropy and have shared their experience with clients. Fondation Philanthropia, which celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in 2023, facilitates clients' philanthropic engagement. The Foundation offers its donors a philanthropic, financial and legal framework for creating a bespoke project.

In this guide, Handicap International and Lombard Odier shed light on the realities of people with disabilities worldwide, focusing on vocational inclusion and access to healthcare, education and culture. Together, we celebrate global progress in this field, reflect on projects that leave no one behind and outline the journey that still lies ahead.

Freely accessible to all partners and philanthropists, this guide aims to deepen understanding of the realities of people with disabilities worldwide and help us respond to their essential needs.

We hope this informative guide, a first step in understanding the challenges faced by people with disabilities, will inspire potential donors to make a significant contribution towards building a more inclusive society.

We are very grateful to everyone who has played a role in this joint endeavour.



**Christophe Wilhelm,**  
President of the Board of Trustees,  
Handicap International Switzerland



**Denis Pittet,**  
Managing Partner, Lombard Odier Group  
and President, Fondation Philanthropia

## What is disability?

According to the World Health Organisation, an estimated 1.3 billion people – 16% of the global population – experience a significant disability. The number of people with disabilities is growing due to longer lifespans and the greater prevalence of noncommunicable diseases, including chronic conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. External factors such as conflicts and natural disasters have also contributed to this rise. The trend is more marked in developing countries, as almost 80% of people with disabilities live in low-income countries.<sup>1</sup>

Disability is complex and goes beyond personal factors such as health and impairment. According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006, “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”<sup>2</sup>

Global prevalence of disability is greater for women than men. In low- and middle-income countries, women comprise some three-quarters of people with disabilities. Girls and young women with disabilities, particularly women with intellectual disabilities, face up to ten times more gender-based violence than those without disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

Since there are many types of disability, people with disabilities are not a homogenous group. Some disabilities are innate, such as those caused by congenital anomalies, but most are acquired later in life due to accidents, chronic illness, or ageing. Some disabilities are visible, while others are not.

**Figure 1: Six general types of disabilities**



**Physical disability** is the partial or total loss of function of the upper and/or lower limbs.



**Vision impairment** is the partial or total loss of sight. Globally, 2.2 billion people have some degree of vision impairment.<sup>4</sup>



**Hearing impairment** is the partial or total loss of hearing and can cause problems with speech. An estimated 2.5 billion people worldwide will be living with some degree of hearing loss by 2050.<sup>5</sup>



**Intellectual disability** is a term used when a person has difficulties understanding or has certain limitations in areas such as learning, knowledge, thinking, memory or concentration.



**Psychological disability** is a personality dysfunction that negatively affects a person's behaviour or social relationships, including chronic depression, neurosis and psychosis.



Lastly, **disabling illnesses** such as respiratory, infectious or chronic diseases can lead to a range of impairments.

*Source: Humanity & Inclusion; World Health Organisation*

While impairment refers to problems with a person's bodily function and structure resulting from a health issue, disability has a broader meaning. It encompasses impairments; limitations in everyday activities, such as an inability to use the toilet; and a restricted ability to participate in social life, such as difficulties in finding a job, going to school or using public transport. People with disabilities, in theory, have the same right to participate in every aspect of life. However, obstacles like prejudice and inaccessible environments make it more difficult for people with disabilities to participate in society as equals.

People with disabilities are more likely to experience inequalities in developing countries. They generally have lower educational attainment and poorer health, and experience higher rates of unemployment and poverty, than people with disabilities in rich countries. Nearly 82% of people with disabilities in developing countries live below the poverty line.<sup>6</sup> Poverty and disability are part of a vicious cycle, particularly for women and older people, and can result in unsafe or unhealthy living and working conditions and difficulties accessing healthcare, which can increase the risk of illness and disability.

People with disabilities face multiple forms of exclusion and discrimination, which mostly take the form of severe restrictions on their access to services such as healthcare, education, justice, police and social services. These services are essential to lead a dignified and fulfilled life and, in some cases, simply to survive.



To break this vicious cycle of poverty and disability and remove the obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in the social, economic and civic life of their communities, we must work towards building more inclusive societies that leave no one behind. Inclusion goes beyond integration by creating a society that accepts everyone and respects their uniqueness. This society values differences as an asset, accommodates specific needs and adapts to each individual.



## health

When we promote and build inclusive public health systems, we actively work towards a future where “no one is left behind.” Using disability as our lens, we advance the right to health and well-being for all marginalised populations, paying particular attention to people with disabilities throughout their lives and in every setting. We strive to eliminate disparities and promote equity.

In this first chapter of our in-depth study of the global disability landscape, we explore the healthcare challenges faced by people with disabilities.

The right to health is systematically denied to people with disabilities, no matter the nature of their impairment. The weight of health injustice and inequality falls most heavily on people with disabilities, particularly women, children, and older people. They face greater healthcare needs, encounter more obstacles to accessing services, and often lack adequate health coverage. These factors create a vicious cycle by worsening health outcomes. People with disabilities are three times more likely to be denied healthcare, four times more likely to be treated badly in the health system and twice more likely to be burdened with exorbitant healthcare costs.<sup>7</sup>

As a result, people with disabilities globally lose an estimated 10 to 20 years of life compared to people without disabilities.





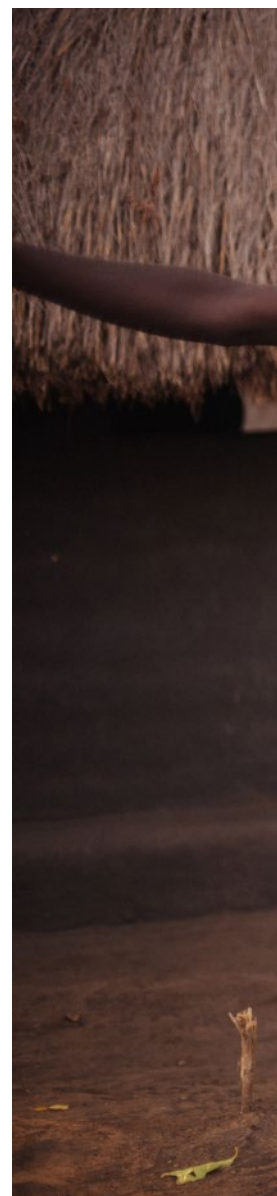
## Disability as an inequality factor

The cornerstones of inclusive healthcare transformation globally include ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare for people with disabilities and removing obstacles that have historically excluded them. Securing health equity for people with disabilities hinges on actively pinpointing and dismantling the inequalities that obstruct their path to better health. The conditions in which we are born, grow up, live, work, and age fundamentally impact our health. Achieving health equity, therefore, means ensuring everyone has the rights and access to the essentials that shape daily life: income, social protection, education, job security, diet, and housing.

We must offer direct, intersectional assistance to people with disabilities (considering disability, gender and age) while simultaneously building the capacity of stakeholders working to advance their rights. While the right to health for people with disabilities has been enshrined in international frameworks for years, until very recently, neither the disability rights movement nor global health stakeholders prioritised making this right a reality. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified existing health inequalities for people with disabilities, thereby serving as a wake-up call for disability rights organisations and helping them recognise the urgent need to advocate for equal health rights for the communities they represent and support.

## An inclusive approach to health and the environment

We cannot achieve better overall health for people with disabilities and other marginalised groups unless we actively address environmental issues. We must consider not only the environmental factors that potentially impact human health but also how healthcare systems themselves can contribute to global warming and pollution. By taking these steps, we can minimise healthcare's potential environmental footprint, ultimately safeguarding the long-term health of the communities we serve. This aligns with the "do no harm" principle.



The current vision of global health inclusivity is considerably limited, if not altogether absent. However, the disproportionate risk and impact of global health issues on people with disabilities and vulnerable groups is a daily reality. This approach, along with projects that recognise the interconnectedness of the environment and health, marks a significant step towards prevention by ensuring a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, considered as a fundamental human right.

These case studies showcase initiatives that are improving health outcomes for people with disabilities globally.



# 3D printing of prostheses in Uganda

## Background

Over 30 million people with disabilities in low-income countries need a prosthesis or orthosis. These devices are critical for mobility, enabling their users to participate in social life, education and employment. High costs, limited production and a lack of trained personnel leave 85-95% of those who need these devices without them. In Africa, there is only one production unit for every two million people on average. Western countries average a much lower ratio, with 200,000 to 400,000 people served by a single unit.<sup>8</sup> People living in conflict zones or remote areas face a complete lack of access.

3D printing presents a potential solution to these problems. Handicap International promotes the use of this innovation in a variety of settings, including humanitarian crises, development programmes and refugee camps.

## Real-world example: 3D printing in Ugandan refugee camps

Conflict and drought in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo have fuelled a surge in refugees fleeing to Uganda since 2016. Uganda is now Africa's largest refugee host, and the local population grapples with extreme resource scarcity. In comparison 2022, the average daily wage in Uganda was CHF 2.24.<sup>9</sup>

Handicap International initiated a 3D pilot project in 2019 in two locations in Uganda's West Nile region. It has successfully lowered costs and broadened access to rehabilitation services for refugee populations.

## Project Description

Handicap International's innovative approach combines 3D printing and telemedicine to guarantee access to rehabilitation services. It utilises computer-aided design technologies and 3D printing to produce personalised devices.

In isolated areas, Handicap International deploys portable 3D scanners. Healthcare workers trained by the organisation's experts scan the limb of the patient who needs an orthosis (splint) or prosthesis. Once scanned, the 3D images are sent directly to a 3D printer to produce a personalised device. After printing, the prosthesis or orthosis is assembled and delivered to the beneficiary.

The device can be produced remotely without the patient needing to be present. This process is particularly well-adapted to people in isolated regions or with limited access to rehabilitation professionals. A 3D-printed prosthesis can be produced in one day, compared to eight days for hand-made devices, and costs less than a hand-made alternative.

Since 2019, Handicap International's 3D-printing and telemedicine pilot project has underscored the advantages of this approach over traditional production methods, in terms of both technical capabilities and resource efficiency.

## 3D printing of prostheses in Uganda

### Outcomes

By 2026, this project aims to produce devices for over 1,400 refugees living in Ugandan camps and host communities.

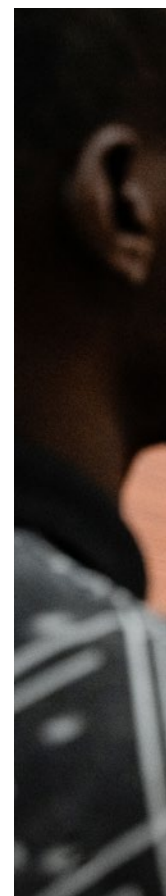
The 3D-printing process has a very positive impact on patients. It takes less time to personalise the device, reduces the cost of travelling to the rehabilitation centre and improves patient case-management. New assistive technologies make a big difference to people's lives, especially for children and people living in low-income countries. Children fitted with devices may see an increase in their lifetime earning potential of up to CHF 100,000.<sup>10</sup>

These solutions can be implemented without the need for extensive healthcare infrastructure. They require less equipment to produce than conventional prostheses and orthoses. The Ugandan project can therefore be a springboard for scaling up 3D printing across the globe.

For more information:



[www.handicap-international.ch/fr/pays/ouganda](http://www.handicap-international.ch/fr/pays/ouganda)

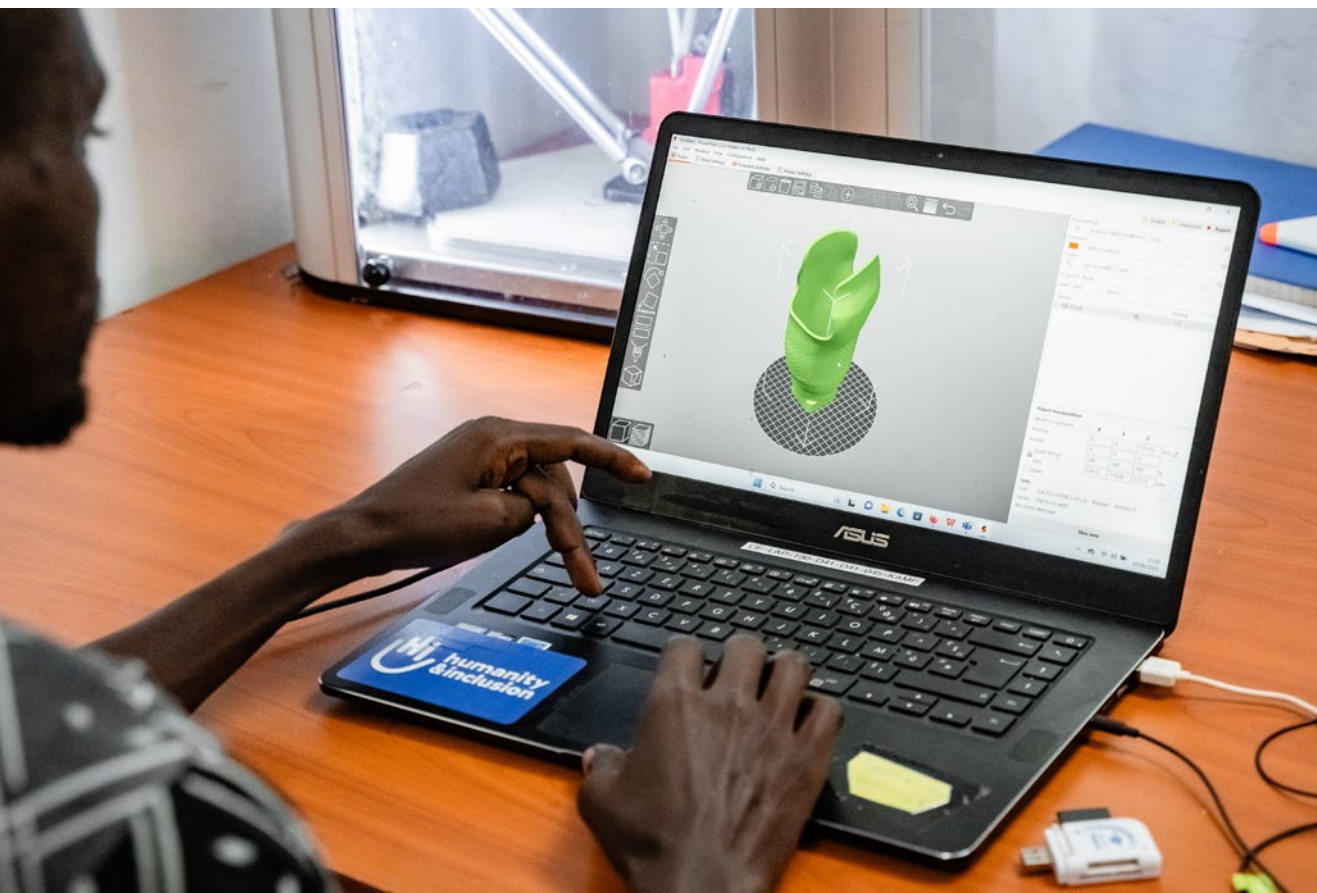


## Donor Opportunities

Following the project's successful pilot and operation phases, Handicap International now aims to raise **CHF 600,000** to fit 1,400 people in Uganda with assistive devices, train local partners to autonomously use 3D-printing technology and expand access to this innovative solution across Uganda.

**CHF 9,000** covers the cost of a 3D printer.

**CHF 48,000** provides orthopaedic fitting and rehabilitation follow-up for 350 children among the project's beneficiaries.



# Discovering Hands - transforming a disability into a talent and thereby promoting women's health

## Background

Breast cancer is a global challenge for health systems. Every year, 1.7 million women develop breast cancer, and for 500,000 it is fatal. The most important prerequisite for curative treatment is optimal early detection. At the same time, 2.2 billion people around the world live with visual deficiencies, and those with severe impairments often struggle to find employment.

Discovering Hands is a social enterprise, founded in Austria by Dr. Frank Hoffmann, which trains visually impaired women to become Medical Tactile Examiners (MTE). They use their superior sense of touch to perform tactile examinations of the female breast according to a standardized procedure in order to detect cancerous tumours.

In Austria alone, around 5,700 new cases of breast cancer are registered every year and 1,600 women die from it. This means that breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer-related death in women. At the same time, there are around 12,000 blind or severely visually impaired women of working age in Austria, of whom only around one in five has a job.

Discovering Hands addresses both of these problems and offers a unique solution and win-win situation never before seen in Austria. Austria is the first country headquarters of Discovering Hands and is regarded as a blueprint for the global roll-out. After a successful study phase, a social enterprise was established two years ago in Vienna.

## Project Description

Discovering Hands Austria is responsible for both the training and employment of the MTEs. Discovering Hands Austria is organized as a limited company which employs the MTEs.

MTEs take a 10-month training course consisting of theoretical instruction followed by a 3-month internship at a medical facility. The qualification curriculum focuses on the practical performance of tactile examinations of the female breast. In addition, participants learn the necessary theoretical medical basics (anatomy, physiology, pathology and patient-oriented communication).

After successful completion of the training, Discovering Hands Austria offers MTEs a workplace for carrying out tactile examinations and training in self-examination. The MTE work in gynecological practices and radiology institutes. The services are also offered in companies throughout Austria as part of occupational health management. Discovering Hands Austria is responsible for acquisition and coordination with all work locations.

# Discovering Hands - transforming a disability into a talent and thereby promoting women's health

## Outcomes

Discovering Hands enables labour market inclusion and the possibility of a more self-determined life for women with visual impairments. It also creates a new, inclusive perspective and society's perspective on disability changes drastically. A disability becomes a talent and pity becomes respect.

In addition, the MTEs are able to detect breast cancer at earlier stages than radiologists can, thereby increasing survival rates and lowering treatment

costs. Women of all ages are given an additional opportunity for early detection (self-empowerment). Awareness and motivation for early detection is increased and fears and mental barriers are overcome.

The particularly low-threshold offer of examinations by the MTEs has the potential to reduce language and cultural barriers and thus also reach women from migrant backgrounds or who are far removed from the healthcare sector.



## Donor Opportunities

Discovering Hands empowers blind women, helping them to become qualified and paid professionals in the medical field, while improving the quality of healthcare available to the community.

A total of **CHF 120,000** is needed annually to support this game-changing initiative:

- **CHF 24,000** will go to securing the next training and internship positions (totaling 1,000 hours) for five blind women;
- **CHF 36,000** will be used to equip new workstations (IT hardware & software, examination tables, advertising material);
- **CHF 60,000** will contribute to the yearly remuneration of four MTEs already qualified and working (average monthly salary of EUR 1,700 gross for 25 hours of work), so that this innovation can be successfully implemented in the healthcare sector in the long term.

In doing so, donors support the only social business in Austria that employs people not *despite* their disability, but *because of it*.

For more information:



**discovering  
hands**  
tactile diagnostics

[www.discovering-hands.at](http://www.discovering-hands.at)

# Project for Education in Rehabilitation for Francophone Africa (PERAF)

## Background

Communities living in the Francophone Africa region, in Northern Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo, continue to be severely affected by armed groups and communal, socio-economic, and political tensions. In a region weakened by the impact of COVID-19, the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the climate crisis, people with disabilities face a double vulnerability in situations of conflicts and humanitarian crises.

That is why access to sustainable physical rehabilitation services and care, as well as the social inclusion of people with disabilities, are necessary. Rehabilitation helps people recover and reintegrate their community more quickly, shortening the time they spend in hospitals, in addition to improving their health and well-being.

Yet, the overall Francophone Africa region critically lacks trained personnel, prosthetists, orthotists, and

physiotherapists. There are only 51 trained prosthetists/orthotists, 481 physiotherapists and one school delivering an internationally recognized diploma, the *École Nationale des Auxiliaires Médicaux* (National School of Medical Auxiliaries) of Lomé, Togo (ENAML). Skilled professionals are essential to deliver quality rehabilitation services and orthopedic devices, such as prostheses, orthoses, and wheelchairs.

The Project for Education in Rehabilitation for Francophone Africa (PERAF), led by the International Committee of the Red Cross, will primarily serve four countries (Mali, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic), with impacts in six others (Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad). Over 1.3 million people in these countries are in dire need of physical rehabilitation, and over 2.5 million more need wheelchairs or assistive devices.

## Project Description

The PERAF is a five-year initiative and is part of a broader physical rehabilitation program in the whole Francophone Africa region. It aims at developing a trained workforce and increasing the number of professionals in affected countries, with longer-term objectives:

- › **To ensure sustainable and expanded access to quality physical rehabilitation services and assistive devices** for people with disabilities affected by conflicts.
- › **To train and equip local practitioners with the knowledge and know-how** they need to serve the specific needs of people with disabilities. Trained professionals provide good services throughout their career, ensuring a lasting legacy for the project.
- › **Promote and strengthen inter-university collaboration in the field**, which will contribute to building a stronger and more resilient rehabilitation sector in the region.

The PERAF will help deliver advanced training to physical rehabilitation professionals and students in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and other parts of

West Africa, who are expected to be pillars for the development of the rehabilitation sector.

- › In **Togo**, the main partner and host is ENAML. With expert advice, equipment, materials, and funds, the project will help strengthen ENAML's curriculum to meet international standards (both bachelor's and master's degrees), provide scholarships, and modernize its facilities to provide a better working environment. The ambition is that ENAML becomes **a regional training center** for future teachers in prosthetics and orthotics (P&O) and serves local P&O professionals and physiotherapists in a sustainable and decentralized manner. The only country on the African continent where this currently happens is Tanzania.
- › In the **other countries of the region**, the ICRC will rely on a well-established network of 24 physical rehabilitation centers and six hospitals. The project will expand its international dimension with World Physiotherapy, Human Study, the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics, and the World Health Organization, among others.

# Project for Education in Rehabilitation for Francophone Africa (PERAF)

## Outcomes

The project has shorter and longer-term impacts for the region:

- A pair of trained prosthetist-orthotists (P&O) and physiotherapists can assist up to **300 people with disabilities per year**.
- The upgrade of ENAML, which currently accommodates 20 students per year, will benefit **200 future professionals** (100 P&O and 100 physiotherapists). This means that **30,000 people with disabilities will receive physical rehabilitation services** over 5 years.
- Sponsorship of **50 additional students** in other conflict-affected countries, who will serve up to an additional **7,500 people with disabilities**.
- An **expanded skilled workforce**, which can train others and contribute to building stronger national health systems for the sustainable delivery of rehabilitation services.
- ENAML is **financially sustainable** and supported by demand for its rehabilitation education offering.

For more information:



ICRC

[www.icrc.org/en/disability](http://www.icrc.org/en/disability)



## Donor Opportunities

- › **With CHF 55,000** you can provide full scholarships for 5 physiotherapists per year (fees, subsistence allowance, transport, accommodation, laptop).
- › **With CHF 500,000** you can support the training of 20 prosthetist-orthotists at the bachelor level or 18 at the master's level.
- › **With CHF 1,000,000** you can contribute to improving the training program delivered to all future professionals in the region (curriculum design, equipment purchases for the school...).



## access to education and culture

The impact of disability extends beyond healthcare, shaping how someone learns, engages with culture, experiences the world around them and, ultimately, accesses opportunities for fulfilment. In this second chapter of our overview of disability, we explore two critical issues: inclusive education and access to culture. These two interrelated areas are vital to creating a genuinely inclusive society.

### Inclusive education: a basic right

Education is a basic right that enables everyone develop their abilities and reach their full potential. It helps raise people out of poverty, level inequalities and shape the citizens of the future.

The right to education is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Education is also included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations members. This agenda aims to ensure equal access to education and vocational training in an appropriate learning environment.

Around the world, children with disabilities are:

25%

less likely to  
attend early  
childhood  
education

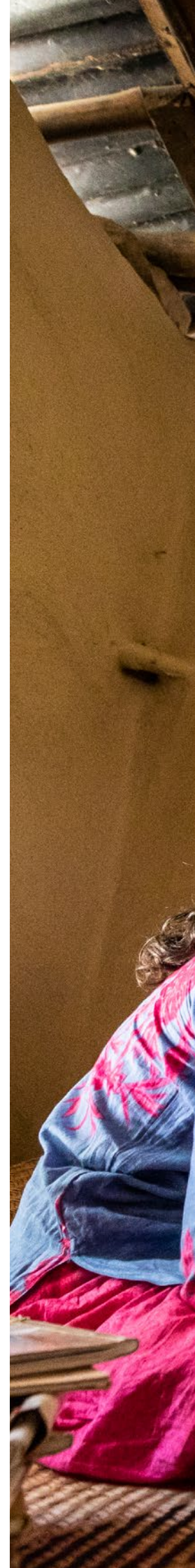
49%

more likely  
to have never  
attended  
school

27%

more likely  
to be out  
of upper  
secondary  
school

Source: [UNICEF report "Seen, counted, included"](#)





Many children regardless of disability remain excluded from the classroom, despite progress in recent decades. In 2020, an estimated 258 million children, adolescents and youths, or 17% of the global total, were not in school.<sup>11</sup> Of these children, those with disabilities were 49% more likely than their peers without disabilities to have never gone to school.<sup>12</sup>

This is particularly the case in low- to middle-income countries, where one in two children with disabilities are not in school.<sup>13</sup> Children with sensory, physical or learning disabilities are two and a half times more likely to have never been to school than other children.<sup>14</sup>

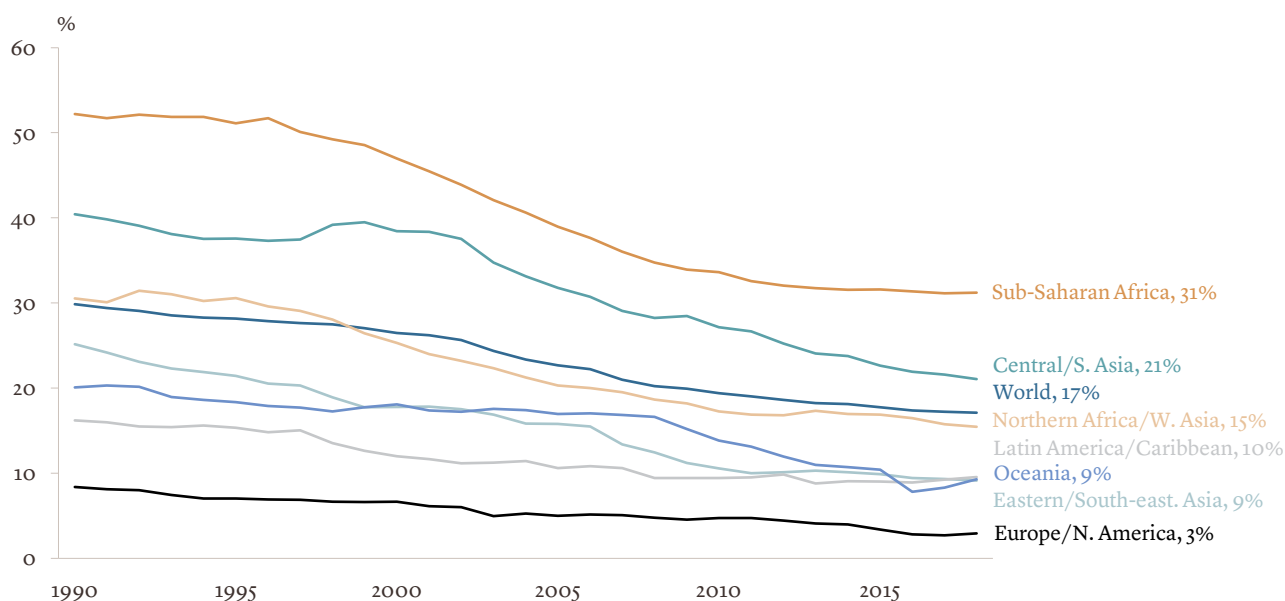
There are several obstacles to education.

The most obvious are the physical obstacles, such as the distance between school and home in rural areas or the lack of access ramps for children in wheelchairs. Then come those obstacles related to the teaching environment, such as school textbooks inaccessible to visually impaired students. Finally, discriminatory beliefs and behaviours towards children with disabilities may negatively impact school attendance.

Solutions include identifying obstacles, adapting the school environment, targeting marginalised groups with specific support

**Figure 2:**  
**250 million children, adolescents and youths are not in school**

a. Percentage of primary- and secondary-school-aged children not in school, by region, 1990-2018



Source: UIS database. GEM Statlink: [http://bit.ly/GEM2020\\_fig1\\_3](http://bit.ly/GEM2020_fig1_3)

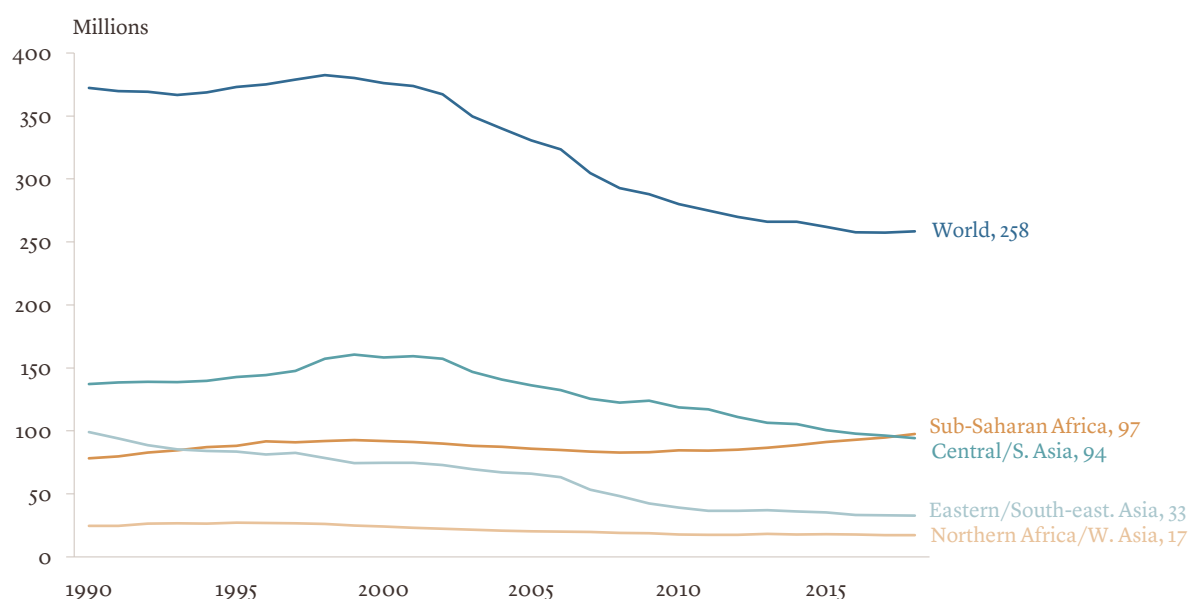
measures, training education staff in inclusive teaching methods and raising awareness across society. However, the lack of an inclusive education policy is revealing: only about 40 % of low- and middle-income countries have education budgets for children with disabilities.<sup>15</sup>

Inclusive education recognises that each student learns differently and has unique strengths. It works to ensure that everyone has access to quality education that responds to their needs and enables them to succeed. This presupposes the

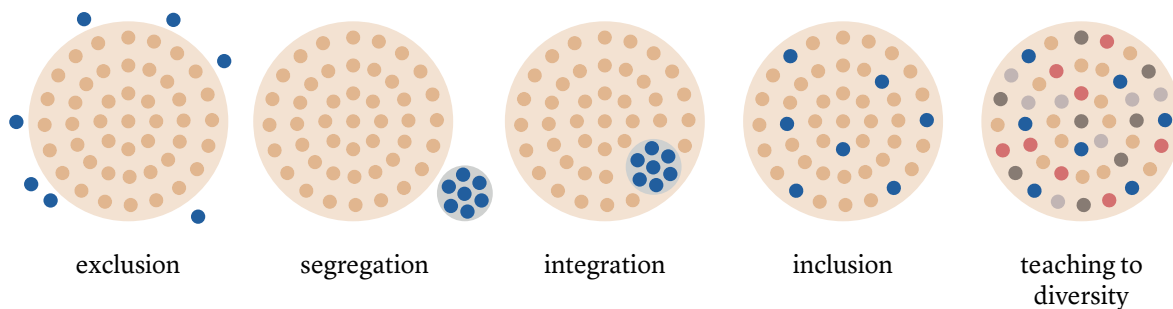
full participation of students with disabilities.

Inclusive education means that all children study in the same classrooms, with additional resources provided to meet the needs of children with disabilities. It is the opposite of a segregated system, when students with disabilities are educated in separate environments, or an integrated one, when learners are placed in mainstream education settings with no adaptations to help them succeed.

**b. Number of primary- and secondary-school-aged children, adolescents and youths who are not in school, globally and in selected regions, 1990-2018**



Source: UIS database. GEM Statlink: [http://bit.ly/GEM2020\\_fig1\\_3](http://bit.ly/GEM2020_fig1_3)

**Figure 3: Continuum of inclusion**

Note: From *Implementing inclusion in BC's public schools: Report on the June 14, 2017, Inclusive Education Summit* (p.3), by Inclusion BC, 2018 ([https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Implementing\\_Inclusion\\_Education.pdf](https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Implementing_Inclusion_Education.pdf)).

Source: [Global State of Inclusion in Education 2023](#)

Inclusive education is far from the dominant model: at present, laws in 25% of countries provide for education of students with disabilities in separate settings, 10% in integrated settings and 17% in inclusive settings, with the remainder opting for combinations of segregation and integration.<sup>16</sup>

### The transformative power of education and culture

Culture — art, literature, music or all other fields of artistic expression — is an essential part of human life. Unfortunately, people with disabilities often face obstacles to participating in these cultural experiences.

International bodies have previously attempted to remedy this situation. In 1993, the UN adopted a resolution on access to culture for people with disabilities.<sup>17</sup> It recommends that States take all appropriate steps to enable that people with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual

potential and have access to cultural venues and content.

In 2006, this text was supplemented by the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. States Parties to this Convention “recognise the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life.” People with disabilities should have access to culture comparable to the rest of society and “have the opportunity to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit but also for the enrichment of society.” Nevertheless, people with disabilities are still among the groups most likely to experience discrimination. Initiatives to promote social inclusion through culture remain limited.

In spite of these challenges, inclusive education and cultural access have the power to transform people’s lives.

Inclusive education has a positive long-term impact. People with disabilities who have been educated are more likely to find work and be economically independent, which benefits society as a whole. According to the World Bank, excluding people with disabilities from educational and other opportunities may lower a country's GDP by 3-7%.<sup>18</sup>

While setting up an inclusive education system requires investment, it is less costly than funding a separate system.<sup>19</sup> Inclusive education also has a positive impact on all learners because students benefit from a variety of teaching methods. Lastly, it promotes acceptance and diversity while reducing fear and prejudice, laying the foundations for a more open and egalitarian society.

Access to culture helps to forge positive identities, break down stereotypes and promote social inclusion. By highlighting these aspects, we explore how these key areas can help build a fairer and more inclusive society, as shown by the following case studies.

# Education for children with disabilities in Jordan

## Background

Jordan is one of the most stable countries in the Middle East. Despite having an average rating on the Human Development Index, Jordan faces many challenges. People with disabilities, particularly those living in rural and remote areas, are among the most vulnerable groups.

11.4% of Jordan's 2.4 million children aged between 5 and 14 have a disability.<sup>20</sup> Most are excluded from any form of education. Besides the local population, 22.9% of Syrian refugees, or 140,000 people, are disabled.<sup>21</sup>

Handicap International responds to this situation by applying its proven inclusive education strategy. The organisation works to ensure that children with disabilities have access to an appropriate education. HI's teams help schools welcome pupils by adapting furniture and building access where necessary, training teachers to respond to the specific needs of children with disabilities and raising the disability awareness of pupils and the community.



## Project Description

This project aims to provide access to early childhood education for Jordanian boys and girls with disabilities aged between four and six who are not in school. It is targeted at children with disabilities who have Jordanian and Syrian nationality.

Handicap International's inclusive education strategy has four main strands:

- › **Assisting** children with disabilities and helping parents support their children's education. This includes improving children's physical autonomy, helping parents enrol their children in school, training parents in best education practices, informing them of existing medical services and organising medical consultations.
- › **Helping** schools become more inclusive and develop action plans that consider the needs of students with disabilities, particularly by supplying school equipment and ensuring premises are accessible.
- › **Increasing** the number of teachers who receive training in inclusive education and building their skills.
- › **Encouraging** the authorities to take into account inclusive education and incorporate it into their annual action plans and budgets.

# Education for children with disabilities in Jordan

## Outcomes

Handicap International's teams in the governorate of Zarqa work to provide boys and girls with disabilities aged between four and six who do not attend school with access to early childhood and primary education. Since the project launched, it has already served 50 children.

The project aims to ensure children with disabilities benefit from quality education in Jordan. This entails fully considering inclusive education and promoting it at each stage of its implementation in Jordan, from the current exclusionary practices to identifying and assessing children, enrolling them in school and ensuring they continue learning and advancing.



For more information:



[www.handicap-international.ch/fr/pays/jordanie](http://www.handicap-international.ch/fr/pays/jordanie)



## Donor Opportunities

A donation of **CHF 22,000** would:

- › Integrate 10 children with disabilities into a school to give them a quality education;
- › Provide 20 children with disabilities with appropriate medical follow-up for one school year to ensure they continue their education under optimal conditions.

A donation of **CHF 35,000** would enable 87 traveling teachers to receive training in targeted student support.

A donation of **CHF 60,000** would cover:

- › The cost of making a school accessible, including installing access ramps;
- › The school fees of 44 children with disabilities for one school year;
- › The orthopaedic fitting of 1,200 children, allowing them to return to school.

# Strengthening inclusive and sustainable education for children with disabilities in Bangladesh (RISE-Bangladesh)

## Background

Bangladesh is a developing country in South Asia with a population of 170 million. The prevalence rate of disability in Bangladesh is not known for sure but is largely considered to be in the range of 7-9%. A significant number of these people are school-age children.

In comparison with other Bangladeshi children, the share of children with disabilities enrolling and continuing education in mainstream schools is significantly lower. Only 40.6% of primary-school-aged children with disabilities (ages 6-10) actually attend primary school. The dropout rate of children with disabilities is significantly higher than the overall rate, and the figures are worse for girls and adolescents with disabilities.

Several factors contribute to limited inclusion and continued education by children with disabilities in mainstream schools. These include negative attitudes; inaccessible school environments; bullying by peers; limited skills and knowledge of inclusive education on the part of the education system; lack of teaching and learning materials for children with disabilities; unavailability of data disaggregated by gender and disability; no education support at home level, especially for children with moderate and severe disabilities; and limited access to therapy services and assistive devices.

The project will be implemented in a sub-district of Bangladesh, where there is limited opportunity for education of children with disabilities.

## Project Description

The Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) was established in Bangladesh as an NGO in 1996. The vision of CDD is “an inclusive world where all people with disabilities live with dignity.” CDD has partnered with Handicap International since 1997 and is one of Handicap International’s Strategic Partner Organisations.

CDD specialises in addressing barriers that limit people with disabilities from accessing development opportunities. The organisation has years of experience, network linkages, technical skills and resources, particularly in the area of inclusive education.

CDD has planned an ambitious project that will unfold as follows:

- ▶ A kickoff workshop will be conducted to inform the local stakeholders of the project and to discuss the process of their meaningful engagement. CDD will conduct people-centric barrier and enabler analyses to understand the challenges and opportunities that exist in schools and communities. Contextualised inclusion plans and accessibility assessments specific to each school will be designed and implemented, with contributions from healthcare professionals, school

representatives and people with disabilities.

- ▶ All teachers at these schools will receive training on Inclusive Education (IE) – Universal Design for Learning (UDL).<sup>22</sup> They will continue to receive technical support after the training from CDD’s professionals. UDL learning kits for all children will be provided to the schools. There will be orientations and engagement with local education authorities to gain their support, as well as training on disability issues and supporting students with disabilities for peer students, including student councils.
- ▶ Educators will also work with children and their parents on home-based education support. Children with disabilities will receive therapy services and assistive devices to improve their mobility and functional capacity.
- ▶ A few months prior to school enrolment, the project will conduct participatory mapping of school-age children with disabilities living in the school’s catchment areas. The families of identified children will be encouraged and supported to enrol children with disabilities and keep them in school.

# Strengthening inclusive and sustainable education for children with disabilities in Bangladesh (RISE-Bangladesh)

## Outcomes

10 schools will have improved inclusive environments, fostering the education of children with disabilities along with their peers.

3,000 school children and 1,000 community members will have enhanced awareness on disability issues.

100 students with disabilities will have improved learning opportunities in inclusive schools and pre-school home-based education.

80 teachers, 15 education officers and 100 parents will have knowledge and skills on how to support children with disabilities in an inclusive education environment.

70 children with disabilities will have improved mobility and functional capacity through therapy and assistive devices, enabling them to participate meaningfully in schools.

For more information:



Bringing hope, dignity and meaning to life

<https://cdd.org.bd>



## Donor Opportunities

The budget to implement the project and achieve the mentioned outcomes is **USD 100,000**.

With **USD 75,000** the project could achieve its goals at the communities of seven schools, with other activities and outcomes reduced proportionately; with **USD 50,000**, the number would be reduced to five schools.



# Access to culture for people with disabilities

## Background

Everyone has fundamental rights to inclusion and social participation. However, for 22% of people in Switzerland, these rights are limited by their disabilities.

Barriers such as inaccessible buildings, non-inclusive cultural events and limited career opportunities often exclude people with disabilities from culture.

In response, Pro Infirmis has created, managed and primarily funded the “Inclusive Culture” project. This initiative implements the goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and develops practical solutions to address the problems facing people with disabilities. Pro Infirmis is now a leading force and competence centre for cultural inclusion and is recognised by actors across the Swiss cultural sector.

The “Inclusive Culture” project engages and supports cultural partners in implementing accessibility measures, from modifying buildings to adapting content and information. A key part of Pro Infirmis’s work is that it always involves the people it supports in its activities and recognises their unique understanding of their situations.

Since 2016, Pro Infirmis has earned the trust of 90 Swiss cultural partners who rely on its support. Unfortunately, the “Inclusive Culture” project is downsizing in 2024 due to a shortage of funds. Nevertheless, Pro Infirmis hopes to continue advising cultural partners on creating inclusive environments. It also aims to extend its consulting service to other actors, such as public authorities, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all people with disabilities have access to culture.

## Project Description

The “Inclusive Culture” project, headed by Pro Infirmis, is committed to sustainable and inclusive culture for people with disabilities in Switzerland through activities that promote accessibility.

To achieve its goals, Pro Infirmis provides awareness, consulting and support services in German, French and Italian to cultural institutions. It created and manages the “Inclusive Culture” label to recognise cultural partners engaged in inclusion processes. Pro Infirmis’ specialists identify obstacles, organise awareness-raising activities, develop appropriate cultural offerings and involve people with disabilities in design and production processes.

In addition to consulting, the “Inclusive Culture” project's strengths are networking and communication. Between 2020 and 2023, the service implemented four regional network projects in conjunction with people with disabilities and cultural and social actors in Eastern Switzerland, in the cantons of Zurich, Neuchâtel, and Ticino. The projects led to the launch of autonomous follow-up regional initiatives and the creation of two inclusive culture non-profit organisations.

# Access to culture for people with disabilities

## Outcomes

By the end of 2023, the “Inclusive Culture” label had over 90 partners across Switzerland and a waiting list of over 120 cultural institutions.

The project provided institutions with a toolkit to design and implement inclusion measures. These included a guide published by Pro Infirmis, *Une visite culturelle sans obstacles* (“Barrier-Free Cultural Visits”), and practical factsheets. These free resources are available on the [kulturinklusiv.ch](http://kulturinklusiv.ch) website and enable anyone interested to take inclusive action. Pro Infirmis' partners have already implemented initiatives such as translating content into simplified language, providing audio descriptions and adapting their spaces to people with disabilities.

Despite its success, the project now faces the challenge of securing sustainable funding to support its cultural partners and ultimately build a more inclusive society for the 22% of people who face barriers to social participation.

For more information:

**pro infirmis**

[www.kulturinklusiv.ch/fr/](http://www.kulturinklusiv.ch/fr/)



## Donor Opportunities

**CHF 150,000** provides 90 cultural partners with a year of inclusion consulting.

**CHF 220,000** secures a year of consulting for 120 cultural partners as well as one networking event.

With **CHF 600,000**, the project can deliver strategic consulting to 180 cultural partners for a year, organise two networking events, develop new inclusion tools and recruit new actors, including public authorities.



# Capacity building for educational inclusion of children with disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean

## Background

There are about 19.1 million children and adolescents with disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Due to the profound weaknesses in local educational systems, as well as the discrimination and exclusion of people with disabilities in different areas of society, it is estimated that children and adolescents with disabilities in the region are 25% less likely to attend primary school, 42% less likely to have basic reading and arithmetic skills, and 49% more likely to have never attended school, among other alarming data.<sup>23</sup>

Many children with disabilities are still excluded from the education system or attend segregated schools that do not allow them to reach their full potential.

Teachers, in many cases, are not prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students, and school infrastructures are not accessible to all. This is compounded by discrimination, negative attitudes towards inclusion, and a lack of public policies guaranteeing the right to quality education for all.

Although several factors make educational inclusion a complex problem, urgent measures must be taken to change this reality. These measures will be as varied as the problems that provoke them, but they are necessary to provide systemic responses that favour the entire educational environment and its stakeholders.

## Project Description

RIADIS is proposing a project to improve the conditions for the inclusion of children with disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically, it seeks to strengthen the capacities of 15 educational establishments in three countries in the region: Colombia, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

### General objective

To promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational system of three Latin American countries through the strengthening of capacities and skills in the educational community.

### Specific objectives

1. Implement a training process for teachers in 15 educational establishments in three Latin American countries that includes the development of soft skills and management of tools for the inclusion of children in the educational environment.
2. Improve the accessibility of 15 educational establishments in three Latin American countries by eliminating barriers and providing each establishment with an accessibility technology kit.
3. Execute an advocacy campaign for the inclusion of children with disabilities

in the educational environment through participatory strategies.

The proposed work covers:

1. **Teacher training:** It involves developing a set of skills in the teaching staff of the 15 selected educational establishments. It includes soft skills and practical tools that allow them to adequately include children with disabilities throughout the educational environment.
2. **Improvement in universal accessibility:** Educational environments should aim to eliminate existing physical, technological, and attitudinal barriers. RIADIS proposes to work on improving accessibility in different spaces within the educational establishment, including by providing a kit for each establishment with basic equipment considering the different types of disabilities.
3. **Promotion of inclusion:** RIADIS proposes to develop a campaign promoting the inclusion of children with disabilities in educational establishments. The campaign would incorporate participatory strategies for the entire educational community to respond to the real needs of educational establishments and the target population.

# Capacity building for educational inclusion of children with disabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean

## Outcomes

- 225 teachers in Latin America and the Caribbean have better strategies for the inclusion of children with disabilities and have strengthened their soft skills;
- 15 educational establishments in Latin America and the Caribbean have improved accessibility conditions to favour the comprehensive inclusion of children in the educational environment;
- Three advocacy campaigns have been developed on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational system.

## Donor Opportunities

The total project budget is USD 909,000.

With **USD 47,000**, 225 teachers from 25 educational establishments can be trained in strategies for the inclusion and development of soft skills.

With **USD 657,000**, 15 educational establishments can improve their accessibility conditions to facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities in the educational environment.

With **USD 205,000**, three advocacy campaigns on inclusion and routes for educational inclusion can be developed in three cities in three countries.

For more information:



[www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/RIADIS](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/RIADIS)



## access to work

Employment is often a critical pathway to social and economic participation. This chapter therefore highlights the central role of individual autonomy in building a genuinely inclusive society.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8 aims to promote decent work and protect all workers through inclusive economic growth. It advocates the development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises and the transformation of informal employment arrangements. It also promotes training and employment opportunities for young people and individuals facing significant employment barriers, including people with disabilities, and skills development relevant to sustainable jobs.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognises the right of people 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 a work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities.





## The road to economic inclusion for people with disabilities remains challenging

According to the International Labour Organisation, an estimated 386 million of the world's working-age people are disabled. As many as 80% of them are excluded from the workplace due to unemployment, underemployment, exploitation and other factors. In most countries, people with disabilities are two to four times more likely to be unemployed than other people of working age. Women with disabilities face many significant challenges at work, including behavioural and physical barriers and difficulties accessing information. They are twice as likely to be unemployed as men with disabilities. They also spend more time engaged in unpaid care and domestic work than women without disabilities.<sup>24</sup> Individuals with intellectual and psychological disabilities are particularly disadvantaged. As a result, people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty than the rest of the population, with nearly 82% of people with disabilities living below the poverty line<sup>25</sup> on less than one dollar a day.

Since the adoption of the CRPD, the inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly their access to training and employment opportunities, has gained visibility. However, significant barriers remain (see figure 4).

People with disabilities face more limited recruitment prospects due to a lack of relevant training and skills. When recruited, they are often placed in lower-skilled positions.

Legislation and policies can perpetuate prejudices about the abilities of people with disabilities and the positions they supposedly can or cannot hold. These prejudices can limit people with disabilities to specific job categories. Some lines of work, like construction, are inaccessible to people with disabilities due to perceived safety risks.

People with disabilities have limited access to wage employment and are under-represented in companies. Sheltered employment is one alternative proposed in specific contexts to enable people with disabilities to work. It is often criticised for potentially isolating individuals from the rest of the population, particularly without pathways towards mainstream employment.

**Figure 4: Barriers to accessing work for women and men with disabilities**



Exclusion from Primary and Secondary Education



Higher education and vocational training are inaccessible and exclusionary, resulting in a skill match issue



Lack of opportunity for soft skill development and lower self esteem; lack of knowledge about their rights



Stigma, discrimination, exclusionary policies and lack of accessibility prevent access to waged work



The cycle of disability and poverty results in lack of collateral to access financial services and start up capital for entrepreneurs

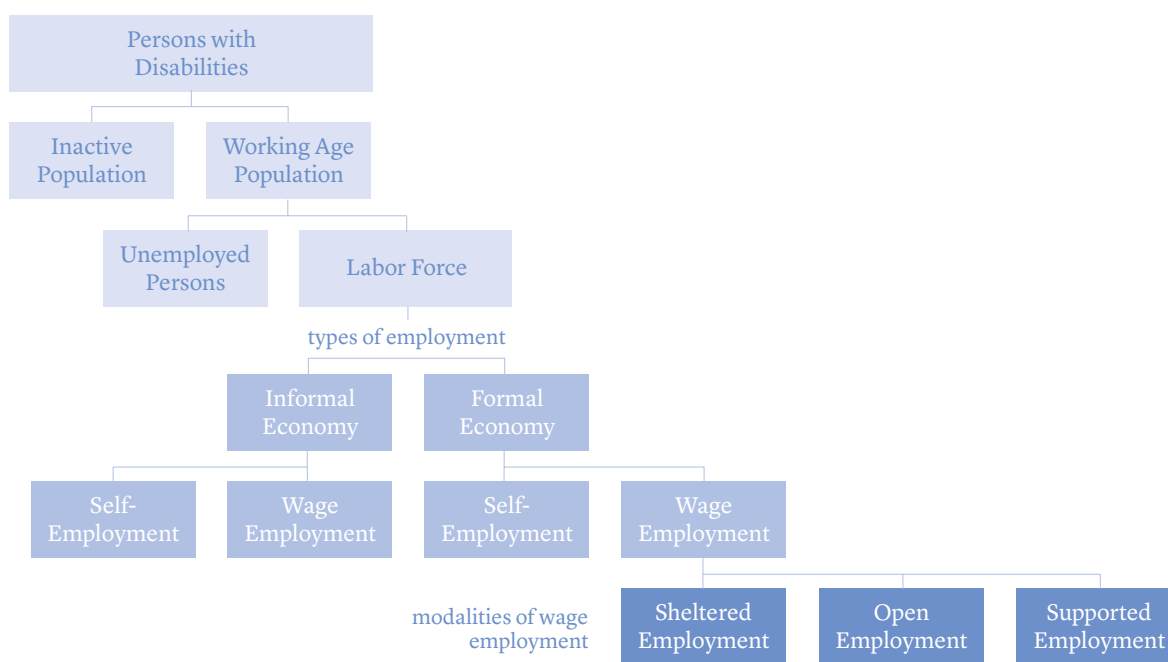


Transportation to and from work is inaccessible



Attitudinal barriers from family and community preventing access to work

**Figure 5: Key labor market concepts**



© Handicap International

The inaccessibility of public facilities, transport and services is a physical barrier for people with disabilities, preventing them from participating in social, professional and cultural life on an equal footing with other people.

Often, the only options available to people with disabilities are self-employment or work in a family business. Self-employment is often seen as an opportunity to improve the standard of living of people with disabilities and overcome barriers to wage employment.

While data is limited, evidence suggests people with disabilities receive lower average wages compared to their counterparts without disabilities. The UN's *Disability and Development Report*<sup>26</sup> points to wage gaps wider than 10% in some countries, such as

Spain, Costa Rica and the United States. This may be due to discrimination and discriminatory policies, barriers to equal opportunities, a lack of employment opportunities, or the higher incidence of self-employment or irregular employment among people with disabilities.

People with disabilities are more likely to work in the informal sector. This results in job insecurity, poor working conditions and exclusion from social protection and insurance systems such as unemployment insurance and pension funds. Therefore, people employed in the informal sector are more likely to experience precarity and be more exposed to economic difficulties in the event of health problems, natural disasters or economic recession.

## Promoting inclusive economic growth

Removing barriers to wage employment for people with disabilities is essential. It requires a comprehensive approach encompassing people and their environment, alongside various concrete measures. Among the most important is working with businesses to create inclusive workplaces. Actions to deliver this include making work environments — both the physical environment and communication tools — accessible and raising the awareness of economic actors, families and communities to challenge prejudices and change behaviours. Other essential measures include developing the vocational skills of people with disabilities, connecting potential employers to jobseekers with disabilities, and implementing a legal and policy framework to promote the wage employment of people with disabilities.

Building an inclusive work environment is essential in a transforming labour market. The following case studies illustrate how people with disabilities are able to access training, develop their skills, access vocational opportunities, and advance their careers.

# Vocational training in Morocco and Tunisia

## Background

Over the past two decades, Morocco has made reforms to strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law, notably for people with disabilities. The country's focus has shifted from protecting people with disabilities to advancing their rights.

However, people with disabilities still have few dedicated services — caregivers or building access, for example — and limited access to employment.

According to the most recent national survey, carried out in 2014, the unemployment rate was 9.9% nationally and 47.7%<sup>27</sup> for people with disabilities. The gap was even wider for women.

Besides problems entering the labour force, people with disabilities face additional barriers, such as a lack of physical accessibility, informational and communication barriers, mobility barriers and the stigmatising attitudes of support services and employers.

Unemployment continues to be a significant problem in Tunisia. According to the National Institute of Statistics, the unemployment rate was around 18% in 2020, with significant disparities due to several factors.

Despite a lack of official data, international studies<sup>28</sup> show that people with disabilities in Tunisia are, on average, three to four times less likely to be employed than the rest of the working population.

## Project Description

The "Employment and Disability" project improves access to employment opportunities for young people with disabilities by building bridges between employment actors, civil society organisations, and the public and private sectors.

Handicap International's inclusive employment strategy has four main aims:

### 1. Identify and guide young people with disabilities

Community structures refer young people and their families to employment services and organisations.

### 2. Train local public actors in disability issues

Handicap International trains and coaches local public actors to identify, guide and support young people with disabilities in the social aspects of employment.

### 3. Identify companies looking to hire new employees and help them create an inclusive workplace for young people with disabilities

This includes occupational health, human resources and management.

Specialised teams work within companies to create more inclusive workplaces. The composition of these teams varies, but they commonly include ergonomists, occupational physicians, physiotherapists, orthoprosthodontists, occupational therapists and digital accessibility experts.

A publicly funded support mechanism to finance mobility-related accommodations may also be created.

Events are organised to build bridges between the social and economic fabric of these communities.

### 4. Build the advocacy capacities of private actors to promote more inclusive employment policies

Promoting decent and inclusive work within public policy frameworks by producing communication campaigns, creating networks of organisations and developing advocacy to include disability issues in public policies.

# Vocational training in Morocco and Tunisia

## Outcomes

Expected project outcomes for the next three years:

500 people with disabilities (of whom 80% are aged 18-35 and 40% are women) receive better access to employment opportunities.

10 companies are trained in disability inclusion, with 80% of supported companies integrating workers with disabilities.

Public services and businesses are helped to include young people with disabilities in the workforce.

Entrepreneurship is fostered by funding and supporting young entrepreneurs with disabilities to create and sustainably operate businesses.

## Donor Opportunities

**CHF 15,000** would support the training of three people with disabilities for three years, equipping them with the skills to develop sustainable income-generating activities.

For more information:



[www.handicap-international.ch/  
fr/pays/tunisie](http://www.handicap-international.ch/fr/pays/tunisie)



# Employability support for young wheelchair users

## Background

Whizz Kidz is the UK's leading charity for young wheelchair users. They provide young people with the equipment and skills they need to live life as independently as possible.

Whizz Kidz vision is a society in which every young wheelchair user is mobile, enabled and included.



## Project Description

Young wheelchair users can receive support from Whizz Kidz to develop their employability skills, gain experience in the workplace and build confidence before entering the world of work. The organisation has ambitions to grow their employability support services for young wheelchair users and develop its offering across the UK.

### Employability skills days

Whizz Kidz supports companies to deliver Employability Skills Days for groups of young wheelchair users. These may be offered online or in-person and usually take place over one full day. The Skills Days offer a valuable opportunity for young wheelchair users to visit a workplace and find out more about a company or industry, as well as spending part of the day on employability skills.

### Work placements

Work placements give young wheelchair users first-hand experience of working life. During the placement, they will have the opportunity to try different industries, environments and working styles to see what interests

them. Whizz Kidz facilitates work placements for wheelchair users aged 18-25. They work with companies to set up placements to ensure they are accessible and safe for wheelchair users. Whizz Kidz offers Disability Awareness Training for staff and help plan placements, so they are of value for the young wheelchair user and the host company.

### Employability in schools

Whizz Kidz also offer in-school sessions which cover general employability skills, with an emphasis on accessing the workplace as a young disabled person. Students will learn about their rights during the application and interview process, searching for disability confident employers and reasonable adaptations in the workplace. Whizz Kidz aim for the young people to leave the session feeling more confident about entering employment.

# Employability support for young wheelchair users

## Outcomes

Whizz Kidz previously secured funding to fully run its employment services for young wheelchair users and, during a five-year funding period, they supported approximately 150 young people each year through employability skill days, work placements and employability in school sessions. Since this funding came to an end, the number of young people supported through these programmes has drastically decreased, as Whizz Kidz no longer has staff dedicated to the area. In 2023, the organisation supported only nine young people but the demand for this service is much greater than that.

## Donor Opportunities

Due to a lack of funding, Whizz Kidz has been unable to raise awareness of its employability offer; it is also largely focused on London-based corporate opportunities. With increased support, Whizz Kidz could widen its reach and offer employment support to young wheelchair users across the UK.

For more information:



[www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/skills-and-training/employability/](http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/skills-and-training/employability/)



To achieve this goal, Whizz Kidz would need to hire two members of staff to coordinate this service, with one focusing on the relationships with corporate companies and the other with young people. The budget to successfully run this programme would be **USD 363,000** split across three years (USD 121,000 per annum) which includes staff salaries and

additional expenses to directly benefit the young people.

With this additional support Whizz Kidz could deliver 20 work placements, 10 school-based sessions for 150 young people and 10 employability skills days for 50 young people each year across the UK.



# Vocational training in Senegal

## Background

Since gaining independence in 1960, Senegal has been a stable democracy with strong institutions. Despite a robust economy, Senegal still has one of the lowest human development rankings in the world.<sup>29</sup>

Senegal's legislative and policy framework aims to advance the rights of people with disabilities, including their right to work, which remains a national priority.<sup>30</sup> Several company networks are also committed to inclusive employment.

Despite a legal framework that promotes their employment opportunities, people with disabilities have very limited access

to decent work. Although employment data is not collected for people with disabilities in Senegal, they are estimated to be five times more likely to be unemployed than the national average.<sup>31</sup>

People with disabilities often face barriers due to stigmatising attitudes and a lack of physical accessibility. Employment services adapt their practices to provide better support, but the sustainability of these services remains a challenge.

## Project Description

Economic inclusion aims to provide people with disabilities the resources to become economically independent and recognised as equal members of society within their respective communities.

Handicap International, in collaboration with national partners, helps 350 people with disabilities access employment and provides technical support to 40 companies to become more inclusive.

Handicap International prioritises helping jobseekers with disabilities secure decent wage employment by making employment services and businesses more inclusive. It also supports entrepreneurs with disabilities to create or develop their businesses. To achieve this, Handicap International prioritises small- and medium-sized businesses in sustainable and inclusive sectors.

This three-year project covers three regions: Dakar, Thiès and Ziguinchor in Casamance.

It is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Integration, the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment, and the General Directorate for Social Action.

Handicap International trains and guides two local civil society organisations, Handicap.sn and Sama Entreprise, as inclusive employment intermediaries.

The project focuses on four areas:

- Developing a personalised training plan to assess the abilities, physical and financial barriers and training needs of each beneficiary;
- Entrepreneurial training in management, marketing, accounting and developing appropriate business plans, including courses on public speaking and innovative uses of artificial intelligence;
- Where necessary, allocation of a financial grant or access to a microcredit facility;
- Awareness-raising and training on disability inclusion for key government and civil society actors, including ministries, job centres and disabled people's organisations.

# Vocational training in Senegal

## Outcomes

Improved employability of 350 people with disabilities helped to access concrete employment opportunities.

Young people and women with disabilities are the project's primary targets, along with the mothers of children with disabilities.

## Donor Opportunities

**CHF 150,000** annually would enable the project to train and case-manage beneficiaries.

**CHF 63,000** annually would promote disability-inclusive employment policies by building the advocacy capacities of organisations and the private sector.

For more information:



[www.handicap-international.ch/  
fr/pays/senegal](http://www.handicap-international.ch/fr/pays/senegal)



## conclusion: together for inclusion

As our exploration of disability through the lenses of health, inclusive education, access to culture, and professional inclusion draws to a close, it is useful to reflect on the lessons learned. A journey of discovery filled with human stories, complex challenges, and inspiring innovations, this guide has also revealed the persistent inequalities faced by people with disabilities.

### Advocating for inclusion

Fundamental to our thinking, inclusion has emerged as the cornerstone of an equitable society that celebrates human diversity. These chapters examined various dimensions of disability and highlighted the need to overcome physical, social and systemic barriers to the full participation of people with disabilities.

Significant challenges remain. They include inequitable access to healthcare, obstacles to education and barriers to the labour market. Despite this, opportunities have emerged, and tangible solutions are taking shape, from innovative technologies to inclusive approaches and exemplary community initiatives. More than glimmers of hope, they represent the essential groundwork for building a society that embraces diversity and guarantees equal access for all.

This guide is grounded in the conviction that every person and every community can help bring about significant change. These stories of resilience, concerted effort and local innovation demonstrate that inclusion is not confined to large institutions but is also the result of individual commitment, regular awareness-raising and the power of small, incremental actions.





## Call to action: financial support for inclusion

After exploring these issues together, we invite you, the reader, to bridge the gap from observer to active participant. Financial support is highly effective in fostering the inclusion of people with disabilities. Innovative projects, dedicated organisations and local initiatives need resources to thrive and extend their reach.

Your financial support can make health programmes more inclusive, expand access to education for all, promote access to culture, and support appropriate inclusion initiatives. These investments are more than acts of generosity: they are investments in an inclusive future where everyone realises their potential and contributes fully to society.



*Prabin, 6, lives with his parents in southeast Nepal. He was born without the lower part of his right leg, and his prosthesis has changed his life.*

## Towards an inclusive future

We would like to conclude this guide with a call for concerted action. Imagine a world where diversity is celebrated, opportunities are distributed equitably and people with disabilities are fully included in every aspect of society. This inclusive future is within our grasp, provided each of us commits to it.

We hope this guide acts as a catalyst for in-depth discussions, heightened awareness and, most importantly, concrete action. Investing in the inclusion of people with disabilities means investing in a more compassionate, equitable, and resilient humanity. Together, let's turn these aspirations into tangible realities and build a world where every voice counts, every talent is valued, and inclusion becomes the norm.



*Injured as a teenager, Srey Nuch could not walk anymore. Thanks to HI, she received a wheelchair and help to launch her small sewing business.*



## Next steps with Lombard Odier Philanthropy Services

You may feel overwhelmed by all the options, but we are here to discuss your aspirations and help guide and connect you with the relevant partners. Based on our expertise in advising clients who wish to make a meaningful contribution to advance the rights of people with disabilities, we at Lombard Odier Philanthropy Services recommend you take these steps:

- ▶ **Define your philanthropic objectives** - set your priorities in terms of topic, but also geographic scope, mode of intervention and impact. This will help you find the niche that is relevant to you and the targeted issue.
- ▶ **Develop your giving strategy** - in this field, as in many, no donation is too small. Decide if you wish to help strengthen the means of action (capacity building); focus on providing more care, research or services; or promote their outcomes.
- ▶ **Marry passion with power of data** - try to balance the passion you feel for the cause with a data-based approach. It will help you select the right programme or project.
- ▶ **Collaborate and co-finance** - remember that in the case of people with disabilities, joining forces with others and co-financing are crucial. Seek interactions with existing funders platforms.
- ▶ **Share learning and achievements** - share what you learn with other like-minded donors and learn from them. Your advisor can help widen your circle of contacts in conservation circles or elsewhere.
- ▶ **Choose an asset management strategy** - if in charge of a grant-making foundation, whether focused on people with disabilities or not, discuss with your Board the opportunity to invest the capital in companies or funds that adopt approaches centered on this population or on Sustainable Development Goals.

Philanthropy Services | +41 22 709 99 40 | [philanthropy@lombardodier.com](mailto:philanthropy@lombardodier.com)  
[www.lombardodier.com/philanthropy](http://www.lombardodier.com/philanthropy)



Handicap International is an independent and impartial aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. A leading NGO in the humanitarian sector, it works in over 60 countries providing comprehensive assistance for people with disabilities, responding to their essential needs in order to improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights. Handicap International has received several international awards including the Nobel Peace Prize.

## Notes and references

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- <sup>29</sup> Senegal ranked 170<sup>th</sup> on the Human Development Index in 2021.
- <sup>30</sup> Senegal ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010 and enacted the Social Orientation Act in 2010.
- <sup>31</sup> According to data from the fourth quarter 2019 Senegal National Employment Survey (ENES), the employment rate is higher in urban areas, at 49.2% compared to 34.9% in rural areas.



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