

Doc 2.3. Including people with disabilities in TREE

In every community there are disabled people with disabilities. Some communities may have higher rates of disability than others due to lack of proper nutrition, extreme poverty, disaster or conflict or other causes. In developing countries, it is estimated that 80 per cent of people with disabilities live in rural area

The barriers to participation that those with disabilities often face is compounded by unequal gender relations, leaving many girls and women with disabilities less likely to access education, training and employment than disabled boys and men or their non-disabled peers. It is therefore important for TREE organizers, staff and partners to be aware of these barriers, examine their own attitudes towards disabled people and work to overcome barriers to the participation of them in the programme. Being aware of disability and the barriers disabled persons face is an initial step toward inclusion. The following describes the disability considerations in each phase of a TREE programme

Institutional organization and planning

Phase 1 of TREE involves institutional organization at the national and local levels and building local partnerships and their capacity. Some of the disability considerations at this stage involve the following:

- ensuring the positive attitudes and disability expertise of organizers and/or staff and otherwise building capacity;
- including disabled persons in the design, organization and planning of TREE;
- providing for inclusive and accessible planning meetings and processes;
- selecting appropriate partners;
- planning for disability considerations through the programme, including in budget allocations

Identification of economic opportunities and training needs assessment

Phase 2 of the TREE process involves conducting a variety of socioeconomic surveys to determine market opportunities and training needs assessment of the target group or groups. Participatory community-based activities are the foundation for discussions and decision making about the type of training that will be provided.

Some of the disability issues as this stage of the process involve the following:

- conducting an assessment or securing one that may have been done already to determine what organizations, government entities or informal groups already operate in the community with regard to disability;
- conducting effective outreach to make sure that disabled persons are fully involved in the process;
- preparing and disseminating inclusive and accessible surveys that disabled persons can complete or respond to directly with the help of others;
- ensuring that disabled persons and their needs and concerns are represented in community profiles and market demand assessments;
- including disability issues in feasibility surveys;
- ensuring that meetings and other stakeholder activities are accessible and accommodating to people with disabilities.

Effective outreach for involvement and community assessment

Rely on local advisers, DPOs and others identified in the assessment of disability organizations and resources to make sure that outreach is appropriate to the disabled persons in the community.

The following are some general points to keep in mind:

- Sometimes disabled persons do not want to self identify because of negative stereotypes or a failure to identify themselves as disabled. It may be necessary to use terms like difficulty with walking, seeing, hearing, or other functional terms to identify disabled persons rather than to use the term disabled.
- Family members and others, especially in some rural areas, may still hide or keep disabled persons in the home.
- Consult local offices of government ministries and agencies responsible for disability, which often have surveys of disabled persons. Keep in mind that these data can often be inaccurate, especially if it is collected based on the persons who apply for services since many disabled persons do not self-identify or seek services due to past discrimination or general discouragement.
- Make sure that all outreach efforts use a variety of methods and media – radio, word of mouth, print and others. Encourage word of mouth dissemination of all materials and make it known that disabled persons are encouraged to apply.
- With input from local disability advocates, consider holding meetings of stakeholders of just disabled or work through DPOs, if they do not usually take part in mainstream community activities.
- Make sure that the community assessment tools are designed in such a way as to determine the types of disabled persons present in the community or target area, since this will have an impact on the services that might be considered (e.g. what is the incidence of mobility impairments, blindness, amputations related to landmine accidents, intellectual disability, etc.?). Using local categories of disability will make it easier to locate and compare data within the country, if the data recognizes types of impairments.
- In the community assessment, consider issues that will be particularly relevant to disabled persons, for example, the accessibility of infrastructure such as local markets or the transportation options.
- Be sure that key informants include people knowledgeable about disability issues and shop owners and entrepreneurs with disabilities.
- In conducting the key informant interviews, it is suggested that disabled persons with various types of disabilities and representing different genders, age groups and other demographic dimensions are included to the extent possible. While most of the questions that apply to other stakeholders will also apply to disabled persons, it is important to ask about specific disability related barriers they may face.

Sectoral/ market study analysis and feasibility studies

While the questions asked or data points with regard to these activities will deal with economic and market issues, disability considerations should be part of the analyses. For example, if some sectors or markets present specific opportunities for certain groups of disabled persons this should be noted. A food processing opportunity that is highly labour intensive and easy to teach, and which has been undertaken by illiterate people already, may present opportunities for certain groups of disabled persons who have not been to school.

Community Discussions

As noted elsewhere, community meetings should include all those with disabilities and their family members. Care should be taken that barriers to participation are overcome and accessibility measures are in place for communication and involvement. Organizers or facilitators of meetings should make sure that

disabled persons understand the purpose of the meeting and what transpires and that the voice and opinions of disabled people and their families are expressed and heard.

Training needs assessment

Surveys and needs assessment instruments should be available or delivered in alternative formats so that people who are blind, deaf, illiterate or lack the manual dexterity to complete such forms are included. Attention should be paid to disability barriers in accessing training – what these are and how they can be overcome. People conducting meetings and surveys should have some knowledge of disability and be sensitive to disability issues, avoid adhering to accepted local myths and stereotypes and be open and flexible with regard to disability issues.

Training design, organization and delivery

If the phases to this point have been inclusive of disabled persons, the training will naturally include some disabled trainees. Since the key points related to training were largely issues that related to all phases, the following list includes some reminders of what needs to be considered at this stage.

Preparing the training course plan

The following points should be kept in mind in planning the course plan:

- budget for reasonable accommodations or for adapting equipment, training materials and the training site, if needed;
- allow for a variety of training methods and flexible evaluation methods;
- identify support personnel within the project (a disability resource person) for trainers and trainees or identify support agencies familiar with disabled people who can provide necessary support;
- prepare materials in alternative formats as required by the types of trainees.

Identifying and Preparing Trainers

- Identify support agencies related to disability if specialized disability experience is needed.
- Select at least some trainers who have disability experience and who can share their experiences, if possible.
- Incorporate disability into the overall training of trainers that is provided.

The following is a list of skills recommended for trainers, facilitators and coordinators adapted from the ILO project *Developing Entrepreneurship among Women with Disabilities (DEWD)*. The project facilitated the inclusion of women with disabilities in mainstream women entrepreneurship programmes in Africa. Selected staff should have practical knowledge about:¹

- how physical and service environments disable people with impairments;
- the range of appropriate reasonable accommodations which can facilitate inclusion;
- appropriate practical arrangements, such as room layout;
- how to adapt and ensure the relevance of materials, handouts, exercises and other programme activities to a wide range of participants, including people with disabilities;
- how to ensure that entrepreneurs with disabilities are heard and are enabled to participate fully, especially during group work and planning sessions;
- how to ensure that extra support offered to disabled persons in the course of integrated activities do not serve to stigmatize or marginalize them further, especially women;

¹ ILO: *Count Us In! How to make sure that women with disabilities can participate effectively in mainstream women's entrepreneurship development activities* (Geneva, ILO, 2008), pp. 21-22.

- how to build solidarity, cooperation and team spirit between trainees and entrepreneurs with and without disabilities;
- how to challenge and deal in a supportive manner with the way in which the experience of exclusion and the low self-confidence of trainees with disabilities affects their participation in events and programmes (especially at the beginning of courses);
- how to address disability-related issues that arise during training courses and other events;
- how to challenge and deal with the mutual prejudices and perceptions of entrepreneurs with and without disabilities;
- the specific issues and barriers encountered by women with disabilities and how to counteract them;
- sources of materials, further reading, support and advice.

Include disabled persons and role models in the training.

At a minimum, trainers should be prepared with disability awareness training to enable them to effectively include trainees with different types of disability in their classes and be supported by people who understand disability such as community based rehabilitation workers, the TREE disability resource person or some other local expert. These disability workers can help to provide advice about communicating and working with people with disabilities, and help to solve any problems that might arise between the trainer and trainee.²

Selecting Trainees

- Make applications accessible.
- Avoid stereotypes and preconceived ideas in selecting trainees with disabilities.
- Explore with the person how they might handle barriers or challenges – do not just reject a person based on the committee perceptions that the disability will interfere with the person's ability to learn and succeed.
- Discuss need for accommodation directly with the trainee – do not assume that you or the trainer knows what type of accommodation they need.
- Work with the disabled person as a partner in their learning programme and make sure that reasonable accommodation needs are explored and resolved prior to training.
- Involve family as needed and with the permission of the disabled trainee.
- Try to have several disabled persons in a training class so they do not feel isolated. This is especially true for people who are deaf and rely on sign language as a means of communication. Without other deaf trainees, they will not have anyone to communicate with and are more likely to feel isolated.
- Do not accept applicants on a token basis. Make sure the applicant wants to participate and is likely to succeed.
- If it appears that individuals may not succeed due to a lack of confidence, knowledge of what they want to do or other issues that could be addressed at another venue, bring them together with others (even if they are all disabled) with similar needs, for confidence building and career guidance and core work skills, to prepare them for training.
- Consider alternative learning structures for those for whom a regular training programme is not feasible.

² ILO: Skills development through community-based rehabilitation (CBR). A good practice guide (Geneva, ILO, 2008), p. 52.

- Consider establishing quotas for the number of disabled persons to make sure they are fully represented. However, if targets do exist make sure that trainees selected are likely to succeed and are not just filling a quota.

Curricula, lesson plans and training materials

The principles of how TREE training should be delivered – trainee centred, flexible, etc. should mean that disabled persons will benefit as well. Of particular concern in lesson planning is to consider the following:

- Format materials in ways the disabled trainee can access the information.
- Use practical approaches.
- Have flexible and alternative activities and methods of teaching to adapt to individual learning styles and communication needs.
- Plan for any assistive learning devices that may be needed (such as a Braille stylus, a simple manual tool used for recording information much like a notebook for those who are blind, large flip charts for writing, or a tape recorder for those who cannot take notes).
- Plan and allow for alternative ways of evaluating progress based on the person's impairment (e.g., give a verbal test to a blind person, a written test to a deaf person).
- Plan ahead for how to deal with a disabled or trainee falling behind the rest of the class, such as having volunteer tutors or mentors, special practice sessions, involvement of family members.

Training Delivery

Basic training methods used for all trainees will apply to most persons with disabilities. It is selection or application of these methods to those with a particular disability that is unique. In other words, people with disabilities learn through lecture and explanation, demonstration, practice and a hands-on approach, problem solving activities and assignments. Methods may need to be adapted or selected based on disability. For example, a deaf person can learn from explanation, but it may need to be written (assuming they can read), communicated through a sign language instructor or by lip reading. When this is not possible, demonstration and using creative mime techniques may be necessary. Demonstration requiring sight will not work for a totally blind person but guiding the person's hands and explaining the process will. Annex 8.4 describes various standard training techniques and how they can be applied to those with different kinds of disabilities.

Many countries are incorporating special education and inclusive education programmes into their teacher and instructor training curricula and more can be learned from national and international experts on the topic.

Conducting the Training

- Treat disabled persons as regular members of the class.
- Encourage their integration if needed and make sure they are involved in group activities and discussions, if they are not participating.
- Be aware of how disabled and non-disabled persons mix and engage; staff should encourage them to mingle so that they are not isolated or in one group.
- Assess the need for accommodations and supports if they are not keeping up.

Phase 4: Post-training support for micro-enterprises

Post-training support will ensure the success of training for disabled persons as well as for any group. Many disabled persons, depending on their prior level of social inclusion, education and training, may be able to find a job or start a business with the expected level of support. However, since disabled persons often face discrimination in hiring or securing a loan and might face many barriers related to mobility, transport,

communication and other dimensions of success, planners and organizers should consider these barriers and needs in facilitating their movement into wage or self-employment.

Planning

In planning, the same processes may be used but, keep in mind that there may be a need for more support. Building support within the community to assist the disabled person after training can be important and will lessen the requirements of TREE staff as well. Such supports or mentors could include:

- peers such as peer trainers, DPO leaders;
- mentors such as village or community leaders, both formal and informal;
- local entrepreneurs for those starting their own businesses;
- friends and family members;
- staff of NGOs involved in disability or providing community supports;
- a co-worker or supervisor, or union personnel in a formal work situation;
- other disabled persons or role models;
- others as identified by the person with a disability.

Facilitating access to wage employment

To help disabled persons secure wage employment TREE staff should facilitate the following:

- Raise awareness about the rights and potential of people with disabilities.
- Enable and assist people with disabilities to find jobs.
- Enable and assist people with disabilities to retain employment.
- Network and partner with employers, trade unions and employment service providers.

Facilitating micro-enterprise development

People with disabilities will require the same follow up and business development services as others to start and succeed in business. Like many socially excluded groups, they may lack confidence in their abilities to succeed and special encouragement may be necessary. Staff engaged in follow up may have to address some specific issues related to:

- organizing supports;
- facilitating credit;
- assisting with reasonable accommodations.

Facilitating self-help groups/cooperatives

In some instances, disabled persons may join a group or partner with others to start a business, participate in a cooperative, or work with family members. This can be a useful alternative if the trainee lacks the specific ability needed to succeed in the business and no particular alternative, such as wage employment, can be identified. Tasks can be shared and the person with a disability, and their partners or other members, can contribute based on their abilities so that all the work tasks required of the business are covered. Consider the case of Hang Hatch whose sons assisted him with getting goods to market. In another example from Cambodia, a young woman with an intellectual disability could not learn complex basket weaving tasks, so the self-help group gave her the simple products to produce that were in their range of goods. She was able to make the small and simpler baskets, participate in the group and still earn money. More skilled and capable weavers were able to devote their time to the more challenging patterns and designs.

Arranging credit

Credit can be a major problem for disabled persons. Because they are most likely to be among the poorest of the poor, they are less likely to have the necessary collateral to get a loan. Additionally, MFIs may have negative attitudes about the ability of them to reimburse a loan and may be hesitant to lend. The TREE project staff will need to work to dispel these negative attitudes and to help overcome the barriers to obtaining credit.

Many creative approaches have been developed to assist disabled people and the very poor access credit, including guaranteeing loans, establishing savings circles and others. The limited data that is available shows that they are an excellent credit risk and at least one researcher discovered that microfinance institutions found them to be among their best customers.

Reasonable accommodations

Just because a person has their own business does not mean that a reasonable accommodation may not be required for them to do their work. The following picture shows a clever reasonable accommodation that the hairdresser and the follow up staff designed together, making it possible for him to work more easily. Costs related to reasonable accommodation must be considered in the business plan of the self-employed person, including the possibility of hiring others to assist them with tasks they may not be able to do.

Disability perspectives in monitoring, evaluation and documentation

Including and counting disabled people is critically important. Too often they are assumed to be a part of groups referred to as disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized, but unless specifically noticed, they are often ignored, left out and “invisible”. For years, they have not been counted and, as a result, the message and reality has been “you don’t count”. It will take time and effort and the learning of new skills to make them count and address their needs, but now is the time to do so.

The overarching issue of monitoring, evaluation and documentation must look specifically at the issue of how disabled persons are involved in all phases of the TREE project. The process will provide a measure of accountability and documentation of the TREE experience can add to the body of knowledge regarding inclusive and participatory programming.

Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of the TREE project should include measures that address the outcome of involving disabled persons as well as the processes that were used. The goal is the participation of all segments of the community in TREE, including people with disabilities. The success of this inclusion should monitor all aspects and phases of TREE. If people with disabilities and the disability perspective are not included in Phase 1, planning and organization development, it is unlikely that the subsequent phases will be inclusive. So, monitoring must begin in the first phase and at the beginning of the project.

Monitoring and then feeding back the information into the system is a continuous process. If monitoring yields data that is not positive, the project strategies may need to be adjusted or changed and reassessed. For example, if communication methods about community meetings fail to result in disabled persons participating, the process or strategies for reaching out to them may require adjustment.

Measures of impact against which data is collected, monitored and evaluated will need to be developed for each phase. Measures with regard to disability have been suggested or implied throughout this volume but each project will need to develop specific measures based on community standards and realities.

Evaluation

From a disability perspective, TREE should ultimately be evaluated in terms of its success in building skills that result in work for the TREE participants, including disabled persons. Clearly one measure of success

will be securing a job or starting a business; another will be the increase in income the TREE participant realizes as a result. For socially excluded groups in particular, it would be useful to measure impact in other ways too, such as improved self-image, confidence, impact on the family and family life, engagement in social and community activities beyond work, and other social as well as economic dimensions.

In evaluating TREE's success with disabled persons, it will be important not only to identify participants as disabled, but to categorize them according to type and severity of disability, services and accommodations provided, as well as to record related demographic and outcome data. In this way the success of various groups of disabled persons can be assessed with regard to the types of interventions provided to assist them.³

Since TREE involves community empowerment measures, it should also examine how disability organizations, advocates and individuals with disabilities were empowered in the process and should identify processes and methods of inclusion, fostering participation and providing training and accommodations for people with disabilities in rural areas.

From the perspective of knowledge development, the evaluation of methods, processes and alternative training structures should also be considered. What were the processes and approaches that worked in reaching out to disabled persons and getting them involved in the project planning, design, assessment and evaluation? What participatory methods were most effective? What measures optimized involvement? What were the obstacles or areas of resistance among TREE organizers, partners or staff to working with disabled persons? What were the training gaps? What proved to be effective strategies in overcoming them? What training methods proved most effective with different disability groups? What were the lessons learned in follow up? What motivated employers to hire?

Documentation

Documentation has many aspects. It is critical for accountability, monitoring, feeding back information into the system for continuous improvement and evaluation. Documentation should include data collection and report writing, but it should go further. From a disability perspective, knowledge is lacking about how to effectively include disabled persons in community activities and training and employment programmes in developing countries, where resources and disability expertise are limited. Therefore, it is suggested documentation include the following:

- Citing disabled persons in the project document.
- Written policies and procedures that describe how to include disabled persons meaningfully in all aspects of the project.
- Establishing targets if needed to encourage inclusion.
- Project reports, meeting minutes, surveys, studies and analytical papers that reflect disability. If for some reason disabled persons or the disability perspective was not included, documenting why.
- If a problem, challenge or obstacle prevented the inclusion of disability, a remedy or suggestion for how to deal with it should be documented for the future.
- Describing how disabled persons were included in the design, planning, meetings, monitoring and other community involvement aspects of the project.
- Noting how disabled persons were involved in training activities and what approaches worked in addressing challenges or barriers.
- Case studies reflecting how disabled persons were included and lessons learned.

³ For more information, see ILO: *Managing Success: An Instruction Manual for the APPT Database and Management Information System* (Phnom Penh, ILO, 2008).

- Role models described and their success stories disseminated.
- Training techniques, benefits of inclusion, challenges and obstacles and how they were overcome should similarly be documented to add to the body of knowledge about how to include disabled persons in TREE.

Best practices: Inclusion of people with disabilities in TREE - Burkina Faso

In the TREE intervention in Burkina Faso, the ILO established a 10% minimum participation of people with disabilities. It is estimated that 10% of the world population is disabled, the reason why this target was proposed. Still, the local development partners selected 16% (20 out of 125) of people with disabilities; 19 are paraplegic and not able to use their legs and 1 has leprosy with almost total loss of her fingers. The community embraced the TREE opportunity to focus on its excluded members, therefore, supporting more than the requested number of disabled people to take part. In general, interventions for those with disabilities tend to be directed at groups of people with only disability whereas integrated approaches such as TREE's in Burkina Faso are less common. The integrated project and training delivery approach was successful, as building on disability awareness sessions, the group was very cohesive and the disabled beneficiaries did not even need special accommodation. Most of the disabled beneficiaries have mobility impairments, from polio or at birth. At a given stage of the discussion, women with disabilities were asked about the possibility of taking training for activities that would require less mobility, such as accounting, to which they were prompt to discard the possibility of being treated any differently from the others.