

REPORTING ON

Disability



Developed by



Supported by



Reporting on Disability *beyond stereotypes* ▶

A Guide for Journalists

Booklet 1: Reporting Tools



Contents

Why you should Read this Guide	4
Practical Guide for Journalist in Reporting about Disability	10
Reporting on disability and assistive technology as a project	14
Solutions for Journalists	22
Reporting on person with disability who requires assistive Aid	28
Human Rights and Call for Action	30
Relevant sources and resources	36

Image source:
<https://www.futurelearn.com/>



Why you should Read this Guide

The media reporting on disability and rehabilitation in general and Assistive Technology (AT) in particular are far and few. In majority of instances, the story turns into pity or heroic representation. It hurts the disability community as the perspective on disability has changed in many ways. We the media personnel should take care of the sentiments for whom we are reporting.

We need to understand that disability is not someone's individual failure; majority of causes of disabilities- pre-birth defects, early-age malnutrition, unhygienic living conditions, accidents and professional hazards, and old age are beyond the control of individual.

For instance, what is happening on our roads is not a series of unlucky inevitable accidents but rather a public health crisis that is taking a catastrophic toll not only on the victims but on societies as a well. Moreover, it is the environmental barriers which converts physical impairment into a disability, and rehabilitation is not a social issue, but is a right based issue.

Major links missing with the News Stories on Disability

Disabled people come in all shapes and sizes, from wheelchair riders, to people with psychological disabilities, those with chronic illness, from deaf to blind, diversity is intersectional, and media must reflect this. As a journalist, you must dig beneath and understand the complexity of the disabled community.

We have witnessed how assistive technology and devices have restored the functionality of person with disability, particularly in field of sports and hospital care. Time has come to emphasize that the assistive

devices are not only simply a decorative belonging for the persons with disabilities, but an essential aid to their functionality- enabling

them for education, work and social inclusion. Making ATs accessible to all and everywhere must be brought on the priority agenda for the policy makers.

Moreover, with launch of SDG, United Nations and WHO steers a far-reaching dictum that the efforts and outcomes



of development must not leave anyone behind, and the disability communities rightly demands 'nothing for us, without us'. We, the journalists, being a crucial link between community and policy makers, are bound by the responsibility to incorporate the right perspective and nuances of disability, rehabilitation and assistive technology, while reporting a story.

As a Journalist, you have the opportunity to showcase the story of disables in its proper perspective.

Journalists should be more careful while reporting about the person with disabilities. The representation matters. If actual person with disability are not accurately portrayed in the media, the public will never understand disabled lives, experiences and various other aspects of their lives.

As a journalist, we have the opportunity to turn these stories in a proper perspective to educate and increase public awareness and ultimately to influence government-authorities, policy-makers and other stakeholders to take the necessary steps towards the betterment of disabled community.

And finally, we have to keep in mind that

reporting on disability should have representation of person with disability in all activities of reporting - in front of and behind the cameras, in characters, in actor, in director, in writers and more.

Why is it important to report Disability in the MAINSTREAM MEDIA?

The media - television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet, social media and other forms - play an important role in influencing public opinion and attitudes. The choice of words, images and messages can determine perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. It can also define what does or does not matter to individuals and the world around them.

How persons with disabilities are portrayed and the frequency with which they appear in the media has an enormous impact on how they are regarded in society. While there are some disability-specific media programmes, such as television documentaries, disabled people rarely appear as part of mainstream programmes. When they do appear, they are often stigmatized or stereotyped, and may appear as either objects of pity or super heroic accomplishment and endurance. Including them in regular programmes on television and radio in addition to other types of media helps provide fair and balanced representation and break down barriers to acceptance and create better understanding about disabled persons.

These Guidelines are intended for all people working as editors, journalists, broadcasters, producers, programme makers and presenters who want to increase and improve the portrayal of people with disabilities in the media. It is also relevant to people working as web editors, content managers of social media platforms, and on interactive multimedia products.

Portraying women and men with disabilities with dignity and respect in the media can help promote more inclusive and tolerant societies. Why is this important? First, of the WHO regions, the South- East Asia Region has the second highest prevalence rate of moderate disability (16%) and the third highest prevalence rate of severe disability (2.9%) *. Second, as a group, they are often subjected to discrimination or exclusion from basic services such as health, education, training and work opportunities. As a result, people with disabilities experience poorer health, lower educational achievements, and have fewer economic opportunities and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities. Third, in many countries, disabled persons often lack access to information about policies, laws and improvements in programmes and services that directly affect them. This knowledge gap perpetuates their exclusion from mainstream social, economic and political life.

Promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities requires the recognition of all people as full members of society and the respect of all their rights. Inclusion also involves ensuring the participation of people with disabilities in all basic services available to the general population and the removal of barriers – *physical, attitudinal, legal, regulatory, policy, lack of information in accessible formats* – that prevent them from fully participating in society. Promoting equality of opportunities and access to services and information for people with disabilities is also critical to strategies for reducing poverty, a shared objective of the international community.



Making it Newsworthy

Reporting on disability often stumbles in many ways. Many media stories frame disability in a negative light and perpetuate damaging stigmas. Other coverage reflects a misguided attempt to inspire, but often ends up devaluing people with disabilities in the process.

Ideally, the stories about disability should be assigned to a journalist who would bring an invaluable perspective to the reporting. As he would be responsible both for including person with disabilities in stories and for being thoughtful about the way disability is reported in media.

Think and Pitch: As per journalist *Wendy Lu* many disability related stories simply aren't worth covering, as many of the stories about person with disabilities fall into the category of so-called inspirational dictate.

Treating disabled people just as a source of inspiration simply because they have a disability reduces them to objects of other's entertainment and curiosity. It also implies that having disability is inherently tragic, and that even ordinary life experiences such as a seating with friends are extraordinary gifts for a disabled person.

When a possible story comes-up, journalists should check themselves before taking the bait; ask what can make it newsworthy!

Breaking the link between disability and poverty: Including people with disabilities in development activities

There is a close link between disability and poverty, with each contributing to the other. Poor people are more at risk of acquiring a disability because of lack of access to good nutrition, health care and sanitation as well as safe living and working conditions; and, people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty due to discrimination and barriers to participation in all spheres of society.

Inclusion in all development activities is critical to breaking this vicious cycle of poverty and disability. While much has been accomplished in these 20 years since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set out to address extreme poverty in all its dimensions, it did not focus enough on reaching the very poorest and most excluded people. In the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) it is critical that the voices of people with disabilities be heard and that action to tackle disability issues be taken.

Looking at Some Facts About Disability

The term **disability** covers a wide range of different physical, psycho-social, sensory or intellectual impairments which may or may not affect a person's ability to carry out their day to day activities, including their jobs.

Women and men with disabilities work in all sectors of the economy and in all types of roles. Many have demonstrated that with the right opportunities and adjustment, where required, to a job or the work environment, they can make a valuable contribution to the world of work.

Facts about people with disabilities

- ▶ There are over 1 billion people with disabilities in the World corresponding to about 15% of the World's population. Of the WHO regions, the South- East Asia Region has the second highest prevalence rate of moderate disability (16%) and the third highest prevalence rate of severe disability (2.9%) *.
- ▶ Disabled people are at a higher risk of poverty in every country, whether measured in traditional economic indicators relative to GDP or, more broadly, in non-monetary aspects of living standards such as education, health and living conditions. As the SEA Region is mainly rural-based economy the effects of disability are directly related with physical limitations.
- ▶ People with disabilities are frequently excluded from education, vocational training and employment opportunities.
- ▶ According to 2004 statistics, Bangladesh had only 5% of children with disabilities enrolled in existing educational institutes. In India, 48% of PWDs who live in rural areas, and 41% in urban areas have access to education. A report in 2002 shows that 68% of persons with disabilities have no access to education in Nepal. In Thailand, 68% of PWDs in educational age are provided with education; however, 25% of PWDs over 5 years old did not have access to education and approx. 60% have a highest education level below primary school.
- ▶ Disabled women are at greater risk of poverty than men with disabilities. Analysis of the World Health Survey results for 51 countries give employment rate of 52.8% men with disability and 19.6% of women with disability. Employment rate differs highly in Timor-Leste; for women with disabilities its 31.8% whereas 67.5% are men with disabilities. In Thailand 42.6% men with disability and 36.3% women with disability highlights the employment rates as per the population.
- ▶ Disability affects not only the person with a disability, but also their families. Many family members who provide primary care to another family member with a disability has often left work due to their caring responsibilities. What is more, carers and the families of people with disabilities usually experience a higher level of financial hardship than the general population (Inclusion International 2007).*

Compilation of disability-related information of South-East Asia Region countries, 2010*

	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Indonesia	Maldives	Myanmar	Nepal	Sri Lanka	Thailand	Timor-Leste
Definition of disability and person with disability (PWD)										
Disability	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Person with disability	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Legislative and policy framework										
Comprehensive disability law	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Antidiscrimination law [†]	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
National action plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
National effort to promote equity										
Employment quota scheme	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
National accessibility standard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Standardized sign language	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
ICT accessibility guideline	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	NA	No
National coordination mechanism/ focal point										
National focal point or mechanism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Information of Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not available; [†]Disability specific anti discrimination law; Source: Disability at a Glance 2010: a profile of 36 countries and areas in Asia and the Pacific.

Practical Guide for Journalist in Reporting about Disability

Tips for covering people with Different Disabilities

Use Person First Language

Emphasize the person rather than their disability. Place value on the individual, rather than the condition that he or she has. Draw attention to ability rather than disability.

Avoid Unnecessary Attention

Think of disability like race: don't mention it unless there's a valid reason. Only use descriptions of disability that are relevant to the heart of the story.

Be Neutral, Avoid Stereotypes

Avoid excessive emotionality when describing people with disabilities. Disability, like any other topic a journalist reports on, should be described using fair, objective and neutral language. Avoid terms like suffers from, afflicted with,

Remember

- ▶ Not all disabilities are visible, such as heart disease, depression, or asthma.
- ▶ Many people have temporary disabilities which are equally as limiting as permanent disabilities.
- ▶ Not everyone with a disability wishes to discuss it or its limitations. Wait until you know an individual before asking personal questions.

bound, confined or victim as these terms imply that the person has a reduced quality of life. Similarly, avoid cliches like inspirational, in spite of and overcame. Avoid using tropes like a "heroic person overcoming a disability" or a "violent person with mental illness." Both positive and negative emotional words are unfairly biased.



Communicate

If someone uses a translator, talk to them, not the translator. Do not talk about them in the third person. If someone has a speech impediment, never pretend to understand what they said if you don't. It may feel uncomfortable to ask someone to repeat themselves, but your most important responsibility is to hear what the person has to say.

Accuracy

If you don't know how to describe something, ask someone who does. Often, the best course of action is to ask the person you are writing about what he or she prefers. Use accurate descriptions of disabilities, especially of the mental disorders which are frequently reclassified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM).

Accommodations

When setting up an interview, be sure to ask if there are any accommodations you might need to provide. Do you need to arrange for a translator? Will the space you are meeting in be accessible? You may need to allow extra time for the interview if the person uses a translator or has slow speech.

Many terms and phrases have been used to describe disabled people, including “differently abled”, “*physically challenged*”, “*handicapped*”, “*people with disabilities*”. Internationally, the most widely acceptable terms are “*people with disabilities*” and “*disabled people*”. This Guide uses both forms interchangeably. (See also ‘*Terminology*’ for use of respectful language when referring to people with disabilities.)



Disabled people have demonstrated that with the right opportunities and adjustment, where required, to a job or the work environment, they can make a valuable contribution in the workplace.

MYTHS and FACTS

MYTH

There aren't many people with disabilities, so it's not really an issue.



People with disabilities are present in all societies. Many are hidden or excluded from society, either in their homes or in institutions because of social stigma. There may be barriers – physical, attitudinal, legal, regulatory, policy, lack of information in accessible formats – that limit their opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. Furthermore, a disability may not be visible. Some people who have a disability may not even think of themselves as disabled.

MYTH

Disability is a health issue.



Health is important for everyone – whether disabled or not. But health is not the only, or in some cases, most important issue. For many people with disabilities, participation in work, education, politics, among other spheres of life, is equally important. Focusing only on the impairment or on the disabled person as someone to be 'cured' is called the 'medical model' of disability. This approach often overlooks the abilities of the disabled person. By contrast, the 'social model' sees the barriers to participation arising from the way a society is built and organized, and attitudes and mistaken assumptions about disabled persons, in combination with the individual's impairment. Over the past decades, there has been a dramatic shift in how disability is perceived and persons with disabilities have started to be viewed as rights holders. This 'human rights-based' approach recognizes disability as an important dimension of humankind and affirms that all people, regardless of their impairment, have certain inalienable rights, i.e., civil and political as well as was economic, social and cultural rights, which include labour rights.

MYTH

Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thereby making them an employment risk.



Employers of disabled workers consistently report that, as a group, people with disabilities perform on par or better than their non-disabled peers on measures such as productivity, safety and attendance. In addition, people with disabilities are more likely to stay on the job. The costs of job turnover, such as lost productivity and expenses related to recruitment and training, are well known to most employers (www.businessanddisability.org).

MYTH**Accessibility only benefits people with disabilities.****FACT**

Good accessibility benefits everyone. Accessibility is strongly linked to the design of products, devices, services or environments and takes into consideration everyone's needs – whether or not they have a disability – and encompasses features such as colour, audio signal like those found at pedestrian crossings, tonal contrast, surfaces, hearing enhancement systems (such as 'loop systems'), presentation of information, and signage for finding one's way, among others. (www.disabilityaction.org).

MYTH**Considerable expense is necessary to make workplace adjustments for workers with disabilities.****FACT**

Making reasonable adjustments in the workplace refers to measures or actions taken by employers to help disabled people work or to take part in training on the same basis as non-disabled individuals. Most workers with disabilities require no special adjustments and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe.

MYTH**All disabilities can be seen.****FACT**

Nope, they really can't. Millions of people live with a disability – and 90% have what is called an invisible disability. Invisible disabilities aren't easy to spot and can include MS, autism, ADHD, brain injuries, mental illness, epilepsy, learning disabilities, chronic pain... the list goes on. Some disabilities will become more obvious once you get to know someone, but many will be hidden unless they choose to tell you about it.

They should never be allowed to speak as the “authentic voice” of any disabled person. Instead, reporters should seek out actual disabled people to talk about disability.

You can ensure you have access to authentic disability representation for future stories by following disabled activists on social media. Check out hashtags like #CripTheVote, #ADAPTandRESIST, #ActuallyAutistic, #DisabilityTooWhite, #DisabilityAdvocate #DeafTalent, or #FilmDis.

3



Reporting on disability and assistive technology as a project

Wanting to report the Disability in a different way? *Consider following...*

Journalists can help shape a better understanding about disabled persons and in particular the overwhelming barriers they face with respect to health, education, employment and work, and access to the physical environment. People with disabilities can and want to contribute actively and participate in their community and society. Their full participation depends on the removal of these barriers.

A step in this direction begins with challenging the myths that people with disabilities are incapable and helpless.

This requires replacing images that depict disabled persons as sad, passive and dependent with those showing them with dignity and pride, as capable and independent individuals who can contribute towards changes in all spheres of life.

The issues and topics below are intended to provide ideas for stories on disability. They are also instrumental in the successful promotion of the rights of disabled persons and their full inclusion in society where they can achieve financial and economic independence.

Laws and Policies

Journalists can play an important role in promoting improvements in national policies and programmes and making information about vital services as it concerns disability available as widely as possible. In doing so, journalists help raise the visibility of a segment of the population that is largely ignored, while increasing awareness among disabled persons about services and opportunities. In addition, awareness of relevant laws and policies on disability, including key international Conventions and standards, provides a foundation for journalists to more effectively advocate for the protection of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

STOP AND CONSIDER: Which laws and policies in your country help to promote opportunities for people with disabilities? How are these laws being enforced, or what strategies are in place to support their implementation? How aware of these laws are employers, trade unions, businesses, or representatives of civil society? These are some areas that you as a journalist may wish to explore in your reporting.

Public Perceptions and Deep-rooted Beliefs

Stigma and discrimination are among the main barriers that keep a majority of disabled women, men and children living in poverty, dependence and social exclusion. A human rights-based approach to disability regards limitations imposed on persons with disabilities by the social and the physical environments as violations of their basic human rights. However, these rights are often violated due to ignorance and lack of information. In some societies, viewing disability as a “curse” is not uncommon. Such deep-rooted beliefs, ignorance and fear influence the low expectations of people with disabilities and their families about their achievement, limiting their skills attainment and independence. The people that are skilled and able to perform certain types of jobs still face the same skepticism from potential employers. These factors contribute to people with disabilities living below the poverty level. The media has the power to dispel these deep-rooted beliefs and myths surrounding disability and disabled persons. They can also raise awareness among both persons with disabilities and the rest of the public about the rights of people with disabilities to work and employment.

STOP AND CONSIDER: How often are stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities addressed in mainstream reporting? Do you include disabled persons in your stories? Showing people with disabilities living in society, participating in every facet of life – at home, at work, shopping, relaxing with friends at a coffee bar, or simply being part of the population can help break down barriers and promote inclusion. How often do you showcase successful individuals with disabilities at work, as providers of services or as sources of information on various topics of concern to society?



Accessibility

Good accessibility benefits everyone. Yet, without being able to access facilities and services found in the community – building, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, medical facilities and workplaces – persons with disabilities will never be fully included. Accessibility also extends to information and communication and includes such things as audio signals found at pedestrian crossings, presentation of information (e.g. Braille), signage for finding one's way, among others.

STOP AND CONSIDER: Is there existing legislation in your country to encourage or help promote independent living and a more accessible environment? Stories offering examples of barriers present in the physical environment or good practice on accessibility are a key to promoting societies that include everyone.

Access to Education and Skills Development

Equal access to education, skills training and the workplace is a key factor in promoting the economic empowerment of people with disabilities and improving their living standards. It is also a fundamental principle of cohesive societies. Achieving broad access to mainstream education and training and in using training to secure better opportunities for employment requires breaking down barriers that exclude people with disabilities.

STOP AND CONSIDER: What opportunities exist in your community for people with disabilities to take part in skills training alongside non- disabled people? Are there good examples of businesses or employers who have hired disabled workers to create an inclusive workplace? Or consider a story in which an individual with a disability lacks access to basic services, taking into account such factors as their frustration and disappointment, and what happens to them as they grow older. Or think about a feature story on a disabled jobseeker and how they go about finding work.

Women with disabilities

People with disabilities face many obstacles in their struggle for equality. Although men and women are subject to discrimination because of their impairments, women are at a further disadvantage because of the combined discrimination based on sex and disability. They face significantly more difficulties - in both public and private spheres - in attaining access to adequate housing, health, education, vocational training and employment. They also experience inequality in hiring, promotion rates and equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, access to training and retraining, credit and other productive resources, and rarely participate in economic decision- making (O'Riley, A. 2007).

STOP AND CONSIDER: Are there examples of women with disabilities in your community who serve as role models for other women and girls like them? Consider stories that show disabled women claiming their identities and standing up for their rights to work, to basic services (health, education) and fair treatment. Look for opportunities to showcase these women at work or in their community and allow them to talk about a range of topics - "double discrimination" based on sex and disability; what work means to them and their families; how they use the income generated from work, among other issues.



Always push the positive portrayal of people with disabilities

It is very important that both journalists and communications professionals connect disability issues with human dignity and rights. Here are some tips for promoting the positive portrayal of persons with disabilities:

Support the human rights-based approach. As noted previously, there has been a dramatic shift toward a

human rights approach to persons with disabilities. This approach is linked to the social model in that it recognizes that a transformation within society is needed to ensure equality and justice for all. Human rights are the fundamental principles through which every individual can gain justice and equality. Ultimately, the human rights-based approach aims to empower disabled persons, and to ensure their active participation in social, economic, political and cultural life. Changes are needed in society to ensure this, starting by changing perceptions.



Emphasize ability, not the disability (unless it is critical to the story). For example, Mr. Jones uses a wheelchair, walks with crutches instead of Mr. Jones is wheelchair-bound, is differently abled. Avoid emotional words such as “unfortunate”, “pitiful”. Avoid sad music or melodramatic introductions when reporting on disability. Never refer to individuals with disabilities as the disabled.

Show persons with disabilities as active in society. Portraying people with disabilities as active members of society and not as passive and dependent helps to break down barriers and opens up opportunities.

Allow people with disabilities to speak for themselves. Experience shows that when a disabled person speaks with confidence and authority about a particular situation, non-disabled audiences are more likely to believe that people with disabilities are knowledgeable (ILO and Rehabilitation International 1994).

Focus on the person, not the impairment.

In describing a person with a disability, focus on the individual and not on their particular functional or physical limitations. For example, say people with disabilities instead of the disabled, person of short stature instead of dwarf. Given editorial pressure to save space or accommodate design layouts, it is not always possible to put people first. However, always strive to keep your portrayal positive and accurate: for example, disabled person, wheelchair user, deaf girl, blind person. (See also ‘Terminology’ for use of respectful language when referring to people with disabilities.)

Don’t overemphasize disabled ‘heroes’.

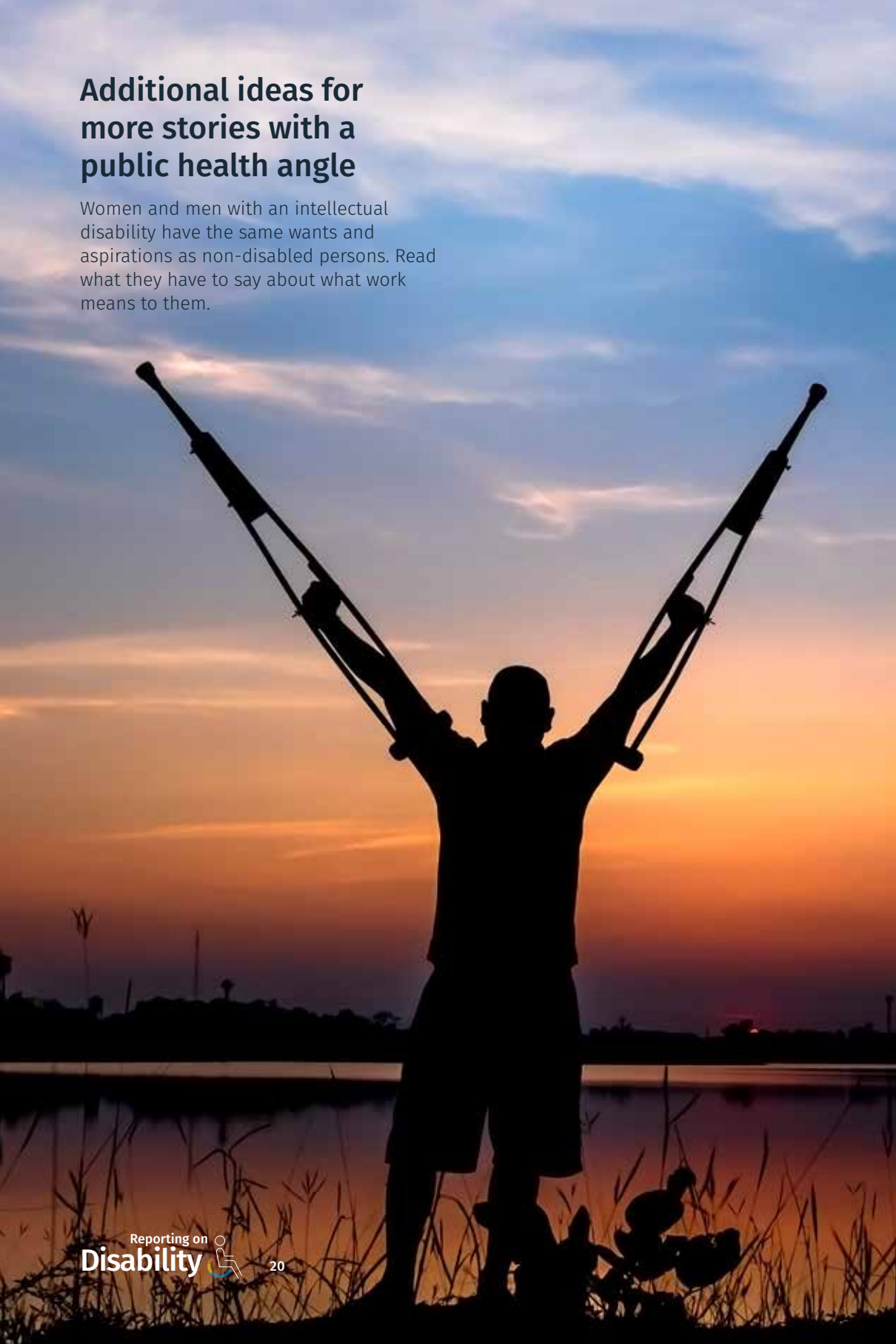
Even though the public may admire ‘superheroes’, portraying people with disabilities as superstars raises unrealistic expectations that all people with disabilities should achieve this level.

Broaden coverage of stories about disability.

There are a lot of government expenditures that deal with disability, whether that’s children in schools, or access to housing for people with disability, or accessibility in buildings and support for people who are elderly. Broadcasting content should focus more on sensitizing audience to immaculate hoaxes about disabilities.

Additional ideas for more stories with a public health angle

Women and men with an intellectual disability have the same wants and aspirations as non-disabled persons. Read what they have to say about what work means to them.





Pratibha Kamath, India (Autistic)

“What does work mean to me? I love to cook. My hobbies are doing work in the home, I love washing vessels, help my grandparents- give them medicines, put their socks on, keep their clothes out and so on. I love to talk on phone with my friends. In spare time I play sitar and dance. I like to perform on stage”.

Source: <https://www.neurogen.in/testimonials-intellectual-disability>

Naw Aye Myint, Myanmar

(Founder: Disability Resource Center)



Person with Disabilities are all valuable souls, not only for their families, but to the whole society. Disability-friendly Markets changes lives. When I found this center people thought I was crazy. We make soaps (liquid and bars) and shampoo that is low in chemicals. To improve the lives of PWDs to buy and sell in the market we need to cooperate and collaborate. Need to make markets accessible. HPA-Do is the only disable friendly market in Myanmar with ramps, uncluttered aisles, and accessible toilets.

Source: <https://enablement.eu/project/economic-empowerment-project-myanmar/>



Solutions for Journalists

Tips for Interviewing People with Disabilities

Best Tip: Ask the expert — the person you are interviewing.

Before the Interview

- ▶ Ask if you should make any special arrangements in advance. An interpreter, for example, may be needed if the person has hearing loss or is not able to speak or communicate in a conventional way.
- ▶ Ask the person being interviewed to choose where to meet. Not all places are accessible to people with a mobility disability. Additionally, lack of affordable, accessible transport may be an issue. A person with a hearing impairment may find it difficult to concentrate if the surroundings are noisy.
- ▶ Try to interview the person alone, although a second person may be necessary as an attendant or an interpreter. Be aware that sometimes friends and family may interrupt and presume to speak for the person being interviewed. Stay on track and remember who you are interviewing.

Setting up the Interview

- ▶ Place yourself and the camera (if applicable) at interviewee's eye level.
- ▶ If the interview will take place on a platform and the interviewee has a physical disability, be sure there is proper physical access to the interviewing area.

During the Interview

- ▶ Sit at the same level as the person being interviewed. Ask if you can be heard clearly or if it is better to sit on one side rather than another.
- ▶ When interviewing a person with disability, speak directly to that person and maintain eye contact rather than interacting directly with an interpreter or companion.
- ▶ Use the same interviewing techniques and manner that you usually do. Speak in relaxed, everyday tones. Do not hold



back from asking frank questions — for example, how the person manages certain tasks. Usually people with a disability are not precious and fragile about their disabilities.

- ▶ When talking with a person with a hearing loss, be sure to face them and do not cover your mouth when you speak. Place yourself so that you face the light source and are not backlit. Wait to speak until the person is looking at you.
- ▶ When meeting an interviewee who has a visual impairment, identify yourself and others who are with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
- ▶ Listen attentively when you are talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish speaking rather than correcting them or speaking for them. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Instead, repeat what you believe was said and allow the person to respond.

Other Suggestions

- ▶ Focus on the person you are interviewing, not the disability.
 - ▶ Shake hands when greeting a person with a disability. People with prosthetics or limited hand motion usually shake hands.
 - ▶ If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instructions on how to proceed.
 - ▶ A wheelchair or other assistive device is part of the person's body space. Do not lean or hang on a person's wheelchair.
 - ▶ Service animals and guide dogs are working. Do not make eye contact, praise, talk or pet the animal as it is distracting for the animal and owner.
-
- ▶ When covering an event where a sign or oral interpreter is present, be aware of the communication between an interpreter or real-time captioner and the person using the service. Avoid walking between them or blocking their communication. Often people who use interpreters are located near the front of a room in a designated section. Remember, blocking this communication is like pulling the plug on the public address system.

Choose Your Words Carefully

Both words and images used to describe a person or situation can have a positive or negative effect. Avoid categorizing a person based on their disability. Refer to the person and not the disability. The following guidelines are suggested:

AVOID PHRASES LIKE	USE PHRASES LIKE
Afflicted by multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person who has cerebral palsy, etc. ▶ Person with cerebral palsy
Attack, spells, fits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Seizure
Birth defects, deformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person born with a disability ▶ Person with a disability from birth
The blind, the visually impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person who is blind ▶ Person with a visual impairment
Confined to a wheelchair, Wheelchair-bound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person who uses a wheelchair ▶ A wheelchair user
Crazy, insane, mad, demented, psychotic, lunatic, schizophrenic, deviant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with a mental health disability ▶ Person who has schizophrenia, etc.
Cripple/crippled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with a physical disability ▶ Person with a mobility impairment ▶ Person who walks with crutches ▶ Person who uses a walker
Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person who is deaf ▶ Person who is hearing impaired
Differently-abled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with a disability
Disabled community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Disability community
(the) Disabled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with a disability ▶ People with disabilities ▶ A woman with a disability ▶ A man with a disability
Dwarf, midget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A person of short stature
Handicapped seating, parking, washrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Accessible seating, parking, washrooms
Invalid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with a disability
Mentally retarded, idiot, imbecile, slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with an intellectual disability ▶ Persons with learning disabilities
Mongoloid, mongolism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with Down Syndrome
Normal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person without a disability ▶ Non-disabled person
Spastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person who has muscle spasms
Suffers from, stricken with Cripple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Person with a disability ▶ Person who has cerebral palsy, etc. (Disability is not synonymous with suffering)

Not to Forget the General Etiquettes, while Interacting with People with Disabilities.

- ▶ **People with disabilities are human.** Acknowledge their differences as you would acknowledge anyone else's uniqueness and treat them "as normal." Do not talk down to them literally or figuratively. If they use a wheelchair, use a chair to be on their same eye level if you are having a long conversation.
- ▶ **Put the person first.** Say "person with a disability" rather than "disabled person." Say "people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled." For specific disabilities, saying "person with Tourette syndrome" or "person who has cerebral palsy" is usually a safe bet. Still, individuals do have their own preferences. If you are not sure what words to use, ask. Avoid outdated terms like "handicapped," "crippled" or "retarded." Please see more details on this point in our "Terminology Tips: Using the Correct Lexicon" section.
- ▶ **Speak directly to a person with a disability,** not to their companion or sign language interpreter. A lack of immediate response does not indicate that the person can't or won't respond.
- ▶ **Adults with disabilities are adults and deserve to be treated and spoken to as adults.** Do not make decisions for them. Do not tell them what to do or use baby talk. Provide them with every option you provide those without disabilities. If the option they choose presents a difficulty concerning their disability, discuss ways you could modify or adapt the choice.



- ▶ **If you are unsure of how you should interact with a person with a disability, just ask him or her.** Just because someone has a disability, do not assume they need help. Do not give assistance without asking first if they want it. You can ask if the person would like help, but don't ask repeatedly or qualify their response with "are you sure?" Respect someone's choice even if it looks like they're struggling. If there is a dangerous situation, help just as you would help someone without a disability.
- ▶ **A person's mobility equipment, such as a wheelchair, scooter or cane, is part of his or her personal space.** Do not touch or move it without permission, even if someone puts it down or chooses to leave it somewhere. Leaning on someone's wheelchair is like leaning on his or her shoulder. Putting something in someone's carry basket is like putting something in his or her backpack. It is vital that the owner knows where his or her equipment is at all times.
- ▶ **Listen attentively when you are talking with a person who has difficulty speaking.** Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person. If necessary, ask short or close-ended questions that require short answers, a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond. The response will clue you in and guide your understanding.
- ▶ **People who have psychiatric disabilities may have varying personalities and different ways of coping with their disability.** Some may have trouble picking up on social cues; others may be supersensitive. One person may be very high energy, while someone else may appear sluggish. Treat each person as an individual. Ask what will make him or her most comfortable and respect his or her needs to the maximum extent possible.
- ▶ **There are visible disabilities as well as invisible disabilities, meaning not all disabilities are apparent.** A person may make a request or act in a way that seems strange to you. That request or behaviour may be disability-related. For example, you may give seemingly simple verbal directions to someone, but the person asks you to write the information down. He or she may have a learning disability that makes written communication easier. Even though these disabilities are hidden, they are real.
- ▶ **Please note it is considered offensive to pretend to have a disability,** and disability simulation experiences should be done for design/navigational purposes only.



Why is there a need of media support?

What can the media do to support reporting on disability and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in all spheres of society? Here are some recommendations:

- ▶ Raise awareness of the challenges facing people with disabilities and issues surrounding disability, and factors that contribute to the exclusion and stigmatization of people with disabilities.
- ▶ Bring discussion of disability into the public arena to challenge the idea of it as a taboo subject.
- ▶ Feature examples of people with disabilities as providers of expertise, services, assistance and as contributors of financial support to their families and communities.
- ▶ Media professionals should be trained and well informed to bridge the gap between the other mainstream media journalists and the general public on the other hand.
- ▶ Minimizing stereotyping and negative perception made in covering stories relating to disability.
- ▶ Increase the quality and quantity of new in and around the topic of disability.
- ▶ Promote the message that people with disabilities are present in every community across the globe. They have the same range of emotions, interests, talents, skills and behaviour as the rest of the population and should be portrayed as having the same complexity of personality and experience as other people of similar age and situation.
- ▶ Include subtitles, enclosed captions, sign language to make an easy interpretation to broadcasting content that offers accessible services for a better inclusion.
- ▶ Usually, reporters reach out to non-disabled parents or doctors as the primary sources for stories about disability. Family members can only understand disability through an external lens, so you should only reach out to them when telling stories about their personal experiences. They should never be allowed to speak as the “authentic voice” of any disabled person. Instead, reporters should seek out actual disabled people to talk about disability.



Reporting on person with disability who requires assistive Aid

Disability is Both a Cause and Consequence of Poverty

Cause: because it can lead to loss of job, reduced earnings, barriers to education and skills development, additional expenses, and many other challenges leading to economic hardships.

Consequence: because poverty can limit access to healthcare and preventive services and increase the likelihood of a person lives and works in an environment that may adversely affect health.

The poverty rate for working-age people with disabilities is nearly two and a half times higher than that for people without disabilities. *Resulting: poverty and disability comes hand in hand.*

Many of the interviewees discuss the lack of reliable and accessible transportation. Many also discuss restrictive and outdated asset limit, providing modest income support to individuals with significant disabilities and very low income and assets.

In order to break the link between poverty and disability it's imperative that disability be expressly contemplated as a part of broader antipoverty agenda. Policymakers have a number of solutions at their

fingertips that could make a real difference today, which would make it possible for more low-income individuals with disabilities to access preventive care and reduce financial strain.

Enabling paid leave protection would benefit both worker with disabilities and workers who care for family members with disabilities. Raising the minimum wage would also boost income of many workers with disabilities. Adding on to it, investing solutions like- investing in affordable, accessible housing would also enable persons with disabilities to obtain safe and stable housing and live independently. And investing in accessible transportation can enable more persons with disabilities to take the jobs that takes hours in travelling/ transit.

Effects of Lack of Access to Assistive Technology

WHO estimates that over one billion people, the majority of whom are person with disabilities and older people, need one or more assistive devices. This number

is projected to be increased beyond two billion by 2050. However, the evidence indicates that an estimated 90% of people who would benefit from Assistive Technology do not have access to them and there will remain a huge unmet need.

Estimates suggest that 70 million people need a wheelchair and only 5-15% have access to one, only 5% of 40 million amputees have access to prosthetics, hearing aid production meets only 10% of global need and 200 million people with low vision do not have access to spectacles or other low vision devices. Also, it is still unknown whether how many people with intellectual disabilities globally have access to appropriate assistive devices.

Inequalities: in access to assistive devices and services have been found between people living in different countries, under different economic conditions, among people with different impairments, genders, age, languages and cultures. Study says Men are often more likely to have Assistive Technology than Women, and Adults more than Children, and in some countries types of impairments more frequently have Assistive Technology than people with other impairments do.

Lack of Access to Assistive Technology: is due to a number of factors including high costs, limited availability, and lack of governance and inadequate financing in many settings, as well as a widespread lack of awareness and suitably trained person.

Challenges to the Availability of Assistive Technology and Services: WHO found that there is a general lack of state funding, nationwide service delivery system, user-centered research and development, procurement systems, quality and safety standards, and context-appropriate product design which limits the availability of assistive devices.

Lack of governance including legislation, policies, and national programmes is a key barrier to the availability of Assistive Technology. Many of the states does not have relevant legislation or policies relating to the provision of Assistive Technology.

WHO on the other hand emphasis on affordable and appropriate access to Assistive Technology, which requires government commitment to adequate and sustained financing, including efficient procurement of appropriate assistive products and delivery systems.

Affordability of AT (Assistive Technology)

The cost of assistive devices can be prohibitive in low-income contexts and lack of economic means has been identified as a primary barrier to access Assistive Technology. Research in Bangladesh found that about 2/3rd of respondents who did not have hearing aid or wheelchair reported that the reason for this was cost. Poor or non-existing access to assistive devices in public sector leads to high out-of-pocket payments being a burden for the user and their families.

Prohibitive cost also arises from the cost of maintenance and repair of the assistive device. Indirect costs of assistive devices, such as significant time people need to spend away from work or caregiving to travel to the nearest facility or affordable assistive devices shop as they are mostly located in the urban areas, is also problematic.

Human Rights and Call for Action

How about highlighting some basic Human Rights?

United Nation Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities

The UN CRPD is an international human rights instrument intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. State Parties to the present Convention are required to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law.

Article 1: Purpose

The purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Article 2: Definitions

“Communication” includes languages, display of text, Braille etc. “Language” includes spoken and signed languages. “Reasonable accommodation” means making appropriate modifications and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden.

Article 5: Equality and Non-discrimination

To ensure that all persons are equal before and under law and shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability.

Article 8: Awareness- raising

Requires ratifying member States to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices and promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.



Article 9: Accessibility

Taking appropriate measures to ensure proper access to persons with disabilities, on equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communication and all other facilities and services open or provided to the public both in urban and rural areas.

Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person

Every person with disabilities has a right to respect for his or her physical and mental integrity on an equal basis with others.

Article 24: Education

Ensuring an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, development of personality, talent and creativity, enabling participation effectively in a free society.

Article 27: Work and Employment

State Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others, this includes the right to opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities.

Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection

Recognize the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing and to continuous improvement of living conditions.



Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action

Rehabilitation is a key objective in the WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014–2021, yet now, in the era of the sustainable development agenda, it needs to be brought into a broader context. Rehabilitation services are necessary for the achievement of SDG goal 3 – “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. Rehabilitation 2030 is a call for action to scale up rehabilitation so that countries can be prepared to address the evolving needs of populations up to 2030.

Objectives

- ▶ To draw attention to the increasing needs for rehabilitation.
- ▶ To highlight the role of rehabilitation in achieving the SDGs.
- ▶ To call for coordinated and concerted global action towards strengthening rehabilitation in health systems.

Total number of participants in Rehabilitation 2030 is 208. The total representation across WHO regions:

- ▶ Europe (46%),
- ▶ Eastern Mediterranean (4%)
- ▶ South-East Asia (9%)
- ▶ The Americas (19%)
- ▶ Western Pacific (15%)
- ▶ and Africa (7%).

Call for Action The participants of the meeting Rehabilitation 2030 acknowledge the following:

1. The unmet rehabilitation needs around the world, and especially in low- and middle-income countries, is profound.

2. Demand for rehabilitation services will continue to increase in light of global health and demographic trends, including population ageing and the increasing number of people living with the consequences of disease and injury.
3. Greater access to rehabilitation services is required to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” (Sustainable Development Goal [SDG] 3)
4. Rehabilitation is an essential part of the continuum of care, along with prevention, promotion, treatment and palliation, and should therefore be considered an essential component of integrated health services.
5. Rehabilitation is relevant to the needs of people with many health conditions and those experiencing disability across the lifespan and across all levels of health care. Thus, rehabilitation partnerships should accordingly engage all types of rehabilitation users, including persons with disability.
6. Rehabilitation is an investment in human capital that contributes to health, economic and social development.
7. The role of rehabilitation is instrumental for effective implementation of the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health (2016– 2020), the Mental health action plan (2013–2020) and the Framework on integrated people-centred health services, and as a contribution to the efforts of the Global Cooperation on Assistive Technology (GATE) initiative.
8. Current barriers to strengthen and extend rehabilitation in countries include:
 - ▶ under-prioritization by government amongst competing priorities;



- ▶ absence of rehabilitation policies and planning at national and sub-national levels;
- ▶ limited coordination between ministries of health and social affairs where both are involved in rehabilitation governance;
- ▶ non-existent or inadequate funding;
- ▶ a dearth of evidence of met and unmet rehabilitation needs;
- ▶ insufficient numbers and skills of rehabilitation professionals;
- ▶ absence of rehabilitation facilities and equipment; and
- ▶ lack of integration into health systems.

There is an urgent need for concerted global action by all relevant stakeholders, including WHO Member States and Secretariat, other UN agencies,

rehabilitation user groups and service providers, funding bodies, professional organizations, research organizations, and nongovernmental and international organizations to scale up quality rehabilitation.

In light of the above, the participants commit to working towards the following ten areas for action:

1. Creating strong leadership and political support for rehabilitation at sub-national, national and global levels.
2. Strengthening rehabilitation planning and implementation at national and sub-national levels, including within emergency preparedness and response.
3. Improving integration of rehabilitation into the health sector and strengthening inter-sectoral links to effectively and efficiently meet population needs.



4. Incorporating rehabilitation in Universal Health Coverage.
5. Building comprehensive rehabilitation service delivery models to progressively achieve equitable access to quality services, including assistive products, for all the population, including those in rural and remote areas.
6. Developing a strong multidisciplinary rehabilitation workforce that is suitable for country context and promoting rehabilitation concepts across all health workforce education.
7. Expanding financing for rehabilitation through appropriate mechanisms.
8. Collecting information relevant to rehabilitation to enhance health information systems including system level rehabilitation data and information on functioning utilizing the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).
9. Building research capacity and expanding the availability of robust evidence for rehabilitation.
10. Establishing and strengthening networks and partnerships in rehabilitation, particularly between low-, middle- and high-income countries.

Strengthening Rehabilitation in Health Systems: Learning from Current Initiatives in WHO

- ▶ Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research: AHPSR is an alliance to promote the generation, dissemination and use of knowledge for enhancing health systems. It focuses on ensuring integration of interventions through applying policy and systems research.
- ▶ Programme for Improving Mental Health Care: PRIME is a research consortium focused on scaling up mental health services in low resource settings. It has used research to develop packages of mental health interventions that can be integrated into primary health care. The field of mental health faces very similar challenges to that of rehabilitation (e.g. under-funded, under resourced, weak governance, and fragmented inefficient service delivery), making it a valuable field to draw lessons from.
- ▶ Global Cooperation on Assistive Technology: A global alliance to increase access to high quality affordable assistive technology through addressing policy and service delivery models, defining priority products and developing training packages for personnel.

Relevant sources and resources



[World Report on Disability](#)



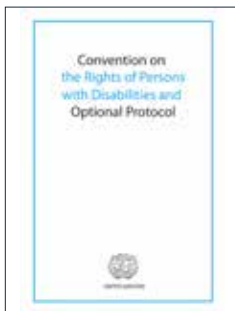
[WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021](#)



[International Labour Organization: Reporting on Disability](#)



[Community-based Rehabilitation: CBR Guidelines](#)



[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol](#)



[Monitoring Progress on Universal Health Coverage and the Health-related Sustainable Development Goals in South-East Asia Region](#)

Other relevant sources:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5af976ab40f0b622d4e9810f/Assistive_technologies_in_developing-countries.pdf

<https://gettecla.com/blogs/news/global-access-to-assistive-technology>

<https://talkpoverty.org/2014/09/19/disability-cause-consequence-poverty/>

<http://origin.searo.who.int/publications/journals/seajph/issues/seajph2018v7n2p84.pdf>

<https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2015/6-tips-for-covering-people-with-disabilities/>

<https://www.adaptivesports.org/blog/announcements/five-tips-writing-about-people-disabilities>

<https://www.respectability.org/inclusion-toolkits/etiquette-interacting-with-people-with-disabilities/>

Reporting on Disability *beyond stereotypes* ▶

A Guide for Journalists

Booklet 1: Reporting Tools

Supported by



Developed by



Trust Cradle

H-11A, Connaught Place,
New Delhi - 110 001

Email: info@trustcradle.org

Web: www.trustcradle.org