



# DCDD newsletter

Nr 15, May 2008 ([www.dcdd.nl/?3335](http://www.dcdd.nl/?3335))

Newsletter contents:

- UN Convention
- Column: Elegant, calm, aristocratic, yet...
- Disabled people cannot get HIV or AIDS
- Egypt: "We always carry the wheelchairs"
- Sport as a tool to empower people

## UN Convention enters into force!

*The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) entered into force on the 3rd of May. Never before did a UN Convention get so many ratifications and signatures in such a short period of time. This underlines the commitment of the international community to the UN Convention. The Dutch government has not yet ratified the UN Convention. Still, DCDD is pushing for implementation.*

On April 3rd, 2008 Ecuador was the 20th country to ratify the UN Convention. Hereby this landmark Disability Treaty has been legally binding as of 3 May. The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the entry into force of the CRPD: "It is a historic moment in our quest for realization of the universal human rights for ALL persons, creating a fully inclusive society for all." Ban Ki-moon underlined the importance of the Convention for people with disabilities in the South: "It is estimated that there are at least 650 million persons with disabilities worldwide, of whom approximately 80 per cent live in less-developed countries." For this reason it is fantastic that 20 out of the current 26 ratifications are countries in the South. People with disabilities living in these countries now have a strong and binding instrument to hold their governments to account.

DCDD already pushing for implementation Unfortunately the Dutch government is not one of these ratifying countries. The Netherlands signed the UN Convention on the 30th of March 2007 and according to the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport, Ms. Bussemaker, Dutch ratification will follow within this term of governing. Despite this lack of ratification, DCDD is already pressing the Dutch government to start implementation the CRPD in its foreign policy.

Article 32 'International Cooperation' is the most



important article for DCDD's lobby activities. This article obliges governments to have an inclusive foreign policy. According to DCDD the Dutch foreign policy is far from inclusive. The Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation, Mr. Koenders, however thinks the opposite. Over the last few months DCDD has been in

direct contact with officials of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliament Members of several political parties such as the Labour Party, the Christian Democrats, the Liberal Party and others, to discuss how the CRPD can be implemented within the Dutch foreign policy.

**Inclusive Dutch development Policy**  
At the EVS Africa Day, April 19th in The Hague, Newspaper Trouw organised a workshop on the lack of an inclusive development policy. During the workshop DCDD and Chantal Gill'ard, Parliament Member of the Labour Party, debated the issue. Ms. Gill'ard agreed to ask Minister Koenders to prove his development policy is, like he says, inclusive. Ms. Gill'ard will ask the Minister to indicate how many people with disabilities benefit from his policy, which methods are being used, what the results are of mainstreaming and how this policy is monitored and evaluated. We will keep you updated of the Ministers response.

Author: Anke Huijboom

## Content Newsletter 15

UN Convention Update .....	1
DCDD updates .....	2
From the Board .....	3
Xplore: disabled teenagers go to Ethiopia .....	3
HIV, AIDS and disability .....	4
Column: Elegant, calm, aristocratic, yet... ..	7
Inclusion .....	8
Sport: An empowerment tool .....	10
Disability and development cooperation .....	11
Egypt: "Here we carry the wheelchairs" .....	12



## Colophon

Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development (DCDD)

P.O. Box 13054  
3507 LB Utrecht  
The Netherlands

E-mail: [dcdd@dcdd.nl](mailto:dcdd@dcdd.nl)  
Website: [www.dcdd.nl](http://www.dcdd.nl)

Telephone: +31.30.236.37.86  
Fax: +31.31.236.30.09

Editorial committee: Letty Darwish, Aartjan ter Haar, Petra de Jong, Petra Jorissen.

Editors: Anke Huijboom and Monique Verwey.  
Lay-out: Aartjan ter Haar.

If you have contributions for the newsletter, please contact us for guidelines.

## DCDD update May 2007

### DCDD board

DCDD has welcomed two members to its board: Sabrina Abdoelbasier and Peter Ybeles Smit. The current board consists of 8 members.

### DCDD office

- Anke Huijboom, programme coordinator at DCDD, will become the manager of DCDD on the 1st of June.
- Froukje Pronk will start as the new programme officer at DCDD also on June 1st.
- DCDD is looking for volunteers for the editorial commission. Are you interested to contribute to the newsletter, contact DCDD.

### DCDD member's structure

- DCDD has started a new working group on HIV&AIDS and Disability. For more information, please see page 4.
- The working group on Education is making a restart. If you are interested in joining this working group, please let us know, [dcdd@dcdd.nl](mailto:dcdd@dcdd.nl).

### Agenda

- Autumn 2008: DCDD members-only day.
- December 3 2008: Newspaper Trouw, ICCO and DCDD will organise a conference on 'Inclusive development cooperation'.
- Continuing: CBR Training by the CBR working group.

### Other news

- DCDD application approved by Xplore! DCDD will be taking ten disabled young people between the ages of 16 and 19 years to Ethiopia, please see page 3.
- Four students from the Hogeschool Utrecht are currently doing a research for DCDD. They are investigating how DCDD can get Dutch young adults with disabilities interested in, and act for, an inclusive development cooperation.
- As a result of the DCDD conference on 'Sport, Disability and Development' and the new Note of the Minister on 'Sport and Development' a new platform has started: National Platform People with Disabilities, Sport en Development. For more information, please see page 11.

### New DCDD publication

DCDD has published a toolkit which gives people in the Netherlands tools to ACT for people with disabilities in the South. The Toolkit provides you of information on the situation of people with disabilities in the South, the UN Convention, and the obligations of the Dutch government and development organisations. The toolkit is available on the DCDD website and will be spread throughout the DCDD network. Interested? Please contact DCDD.

*From the board:*

## New manager and program officer

DCDD is changing into a new course with more focus on the human rights of persons with disabilities, wherein a paradigm shift from a care model to a human rights i.e. social model demands a different content and form.

### New manager

The DCDD board is very pleased to announce that Ms. Anke Huijboom, who joined our team on May 1st 2006 as staff member, is now appointed as of the 1st June 2008 as Manager of DCDD. After the departure of DCDD director Mark Raijmakers, the board chose to change the function into Manager. Anke Huijboom is in our opinion as human rights lawyer with broad knowledge and interest in persons with disabilities in developing countries and development policies and through her new position as Manager of DCDD able to fulfil this position well.

Other tasks are managing our office staff and representing DCDD externally.

We welcome her whole heartedly in this new function and wish her lots of success!

### New program-officer

On the 1st June 2008 Ms. Froukje Pronk will join DCDD as the new program-officer. She gained practical experience in working with people with disabilities in developing countries through her involvement in several projects in Papua New Guinea, as well as theoretical knowledge that she could put to practice at our coalition partner VSO. She was further a Wmo advisor in Gelderland (one of the Dutch provinces). Froukje Pronk is joining the office team for three days a week and will focus on currently running as well as planned DCDD projects. A sincere welcome to Froukje Pronk in the DCDD team and we wish her lots of success!

---

## *DCDD application approved by Xplore!*

## DCDD 10 takes disabled teenagers to Ethiopia

The DCDD application was recently approved by Xplore. Within a few months DCDD will be taking ten disabled young people between the ages of 16 and 19 years to Ethiopia.

What will the students be doing in Ethiopia? Together with ten Ethiopian disabled young people, they will perform in a circus act bursting with dance, music and theatre which will be toured across various locations in Addis Ababa.

This performance will focus attention on the problem of the poverty and exclusion of disabled people. It will demonstrate the options and strengths of young disabled people. After the performance a debate will take place with the audience about the position of disabled people in Ethiopia.

In this way, the project will contribute to smashing

the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with disabilities in Ethiopia.

### Upon their return to the Netherlands?

The visit to Ethiopia is not the end of the project. On their return the group of teenagers will visit both mainstream and special schools, as well as Dutch development organisations.

Each of the students will tell 150 people about the project. They will raise attention for the need of an inclusive development policy.

### Which partners are involved?

The partners of DCDD in this project are Pluryn, Respo International, DIR Ethiopia and Plan Nederland.

# Disability and HIV&AIDS

## Two separate worlds?

*The 2007 DCDD symposium on 'Disability and HIV&AIDS' brought the issue to the attention of both disability organisations and development organisations. About 85 people visited the symposium that resulted in an active DCDD working group that will take the issue forward.*



*Panel-meeting during DCDD HIV&AIDS symposium.*

### *VSO: Catalyst of the HIV&AIDS working group*

VSO Nederland is the driving force in the HIV&AIDS working group that was recently set up within DCDD. Jessica de Ruijter, advocacy staff member, explains VSO Nederland's involvement in this theme.

"VSO operates all over the world. We have six development objectives internationally. In the Netherlands we decided to focus on disability and HIV&AIDS. In our advocacy activities we specifically focus on the connection between disability and HIV&AIDS. This connection has not been receiving enough attention in the Netherlands, so we will be highlighting both themes over the next few years."

#### **Advocacy**

"Advocacy is a new activity at VSO. It means influencing policies and programmes in the Netherlands. Soon after I started working in the field of advocacy, the HIV&AIDS working group was set up within DCDD and it seemed logical to investigate

how DCDD and VSO could enhance each other's work. Through the working group, we were able to align the plans of both DCDD and VSO. Specifically, we will try to influence development organisations in Holland, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, disability organisations and suchlike."

#### **Good practices**

"In August VSO, DCDD and Cordaid will be drawing attention to disability at the international HIV&AIDS conference in Mexico. A workshop will be held on HIV&AIDS and disability. We want to convince the various organisations concerned that they need to do more for people with disabilities within their HIV&AIDS programmes. We will do this by presenting a number of good and practical examples on how existing programs can be modified. In Kenya, for example, HIV&AIDS information materials are being translated into Braille and distributed. In Mozambique radio spots are broadcasted so that blind people are reached too, and recently I heard about a South African man who informs deaf people about HIV&AIDS using picture strips."

Author: Aartjan ter Haar

# Myth:

## Disabled people cannot get HIV or AIDS

All over the world, six hundred million people are being excluded from the fight against HIV&AIDS simply because they have disabilities. The recently started DCDD working group HIV&AIDS wants to make a difference. The working group will focus on increased awareness about HIV&AIDS and disability in organisations operating in the field of disability and development cooperation.



Carin Rensen at DCDD HIV&AIDS symposium.

### Equal or greater risks

People with disabilities are at equal or greater risk of HIV infection, compared to their non-disabled peers. Persons with disabilities are three times more likely to have several sexual partners in a series of unstable relationships. Disabled women, men and children are more likely to be victims of sexual violence and rape.

### Poor access

Persons with disabilities have poor access to HIV&AIDS information and services. Only 2% of

children with disabilities receive an education. They miss out on school based HIV&AIDS education programmes. Low literacy rates among disabled adults and difficulty with access to mass media messages for those with hearing or visual impairments present real challenges to information outreach. Access to HIV testing, care, medication and support is limited due to social and economic obstacles, problems of physical access, prejudicial attitudes towards persons with disabilities and misconceptions that they are not sexually active.

### Left out

There is a growing international attention to the rights of persons with disabilities. However, they are left out of HIV&AIDS policies and programming. Governments and policy makers rarely consider disability issues when formulating their HIV&AIDS strategic plans.

### DCDD working group

The recently started working group HIV&AIDS wants to make a difference. The UN system, AIDS donors, non-governmental organizations, AIDS services organizations, the private sector and disabled people's organizations all should play their role. The first focus of the working group is to create awareness about the issue HIV&AIDS and disability within the Dutch Ministry, development, disability, and HIV&AIDS organisations. Secondly it wants to provide these stakeholders of tools and methods on how to include people with disabilities in their HIV&AIDS programmes. Different advocacy activities will be undertaken: the working group will publish a flyer and a brochure, disseminate good practices and organise workshops.

Author: Aartjan ter Haar

### DCDD Working Group on HIV&AIDS

Active organisations in the DCDD Working Group on HIV&AIDS are:

- Cordaid
- Dark & Light Blind Care
- I/C Consult
- International Child Development Issues (ICDI)
- Stop Aids Now! (SAN!)
- Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)
- World Population Foundation (WPF)
- Prisma
- Public Health Consultants (PHC)
- Stichting Nederland Batam

Furthermore interested individual members are participating.



Hanke at DCDD symposium.

## *Kampala Declaration:*

# Making access for all a reality



Kampala, 11-13 March: 2nd General Meeting of the African Campaign on Disability & HIV and AIDS.

The Africa Campaign is a unifying umbrella under which DPOs, HIV&AIDS NGOs, researchers and activists, work collectively to achieve:

- A coordinated response, involving persons with disabilities in African countries, to achieve inclusive national HIV&AIDS policies and programmes.
- Equal access for persons with disabilities in Africa to information and services on HIV&AIDS.

During the conference the 'Kampala Declaration on Disability and HIV&AIDS' was drafted. The declaration calls upon governments, HIV&AIDS specialists, HIV&AIDS service providers, UN agencies, funding agencies, research institutes and DPOs to include people with disabilities in their response to HIV&AIDS.

The Kampala Declaration refers to the obligations of these stakeholders under the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Millennium Development Goals.

Among the 170 participants, coming from 20 African and 10 Western countries, there were only a few representatives of international NGOs. Handicap International (co-organizer of this campaign), Cordaid and VSO attended the meeting. Furthermore UNAIDS and the Global Fund were present. This limited participation of international

organisations reflects the lack of awareness and/or interest of international organisations when it comes to mainstreaming disability in HIV&AIDS programs.



The Kampala Declaration is an important step towards increased awareness and appropriate action for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the HIV&AIDS response at all levels.

For more information about the Africa Campaign have a look at [www.africacampaign.info](http://www.africacampaign.info). The Kampala Declaration can be downloaded at [www.dccd.nl/default.asp?action=article&id=3652](http://www.dccd.nl/default.asp?action=article&id=3652)

## Newsletter column:

# Elegant, calm, aristocratic, yet...

"Madame, Madame, come in, I will make you a nice price!"

Once again... My interest in a special statuette had not gone unnoticed. Before I realised, the Malinese trader pulled me into his booth and I saw him think to himself: here's another one of those 'look see, no buy' tourists. But I didn't want to be thought of as someone from a country of skinflints. Instantly, I became hot and sweaty. Haggling is really not 'my thing' and it was enough to make you faint in the middle of the day at the hottest time of the year! Dazed, I made an offer, but in the meantime, from the corner of my eye I saw something passing by that I couldn't immediately place. Was it a dog or a human being? I wondered as I made my second bid. A few minutes later, after the deal was made, the 'something' popped up again right in front of me. The first thing I saw was the proud look, the perfectly chiselled profile, then her endlessly long hands which ended in dirty plastic flip-flops.

### Admiration

No, it was not a Greyhound, that saloon dog which many an Amsterdam canal-house dweller likes to parade about. No, it was a young woman who was doing her shopping on her hands and knees, walking through the stinking open sewers. She carried the obligatory transparent plastic bag in her mouth. Small bags of water, an over-ripe banana and two mangoes shone through. No one took any notice of her; it was only my mouth which dropped. My first reaction was one of aversion, but this soon turned into admiration. The woman was not just beautiful as to build, face and skin, it was the way that she moved which really got me. It was elegant, calm, aristocratic. My first association with a Greyhound wasn't that crazy: her profile, the long slender 'forelegs' with their wafer-thin skin which every minute bone, nerve and muscle shone through.

### Stereotypes

I saw her again later that day. She was sitting on a tricycle at a busy roundabout with some disabled men, relaxed and laughing. Next to the wheelchair sat two vibrant toddlers, each munching half a black banana and sucking on a bag of water. As soon as they saw me they shot over. Did I have any sweets, or a pen, or a bit of chewing gum? When I gave them some sweets, the real work began. Sweets? "Ah, merci Madame." But they would much prefer CEFAs (the West African currency), lots of CEFAs, many CEFAs, 'pour maman', the tallest of the two girls cajoled, laughing coquettishly. They were skilful, these young daughters. Mother's little helpers. The young mother looked on, nodding in a friendly way and smiling serenely. Confusion struck



*Petra Jorissen.*

again. Before I knew it, I had slipped them a wad of notes. Even worse: before I knew it, I had labelled the woman a beggar by giving her money. This, and only an hour ago I thought that she should receive an accolade for her beautiful gait. Well, is it principles, unshakable stereotypes, or is it sentiment which we are led by? And which of the three is the least damaging? Questions which nagged me for days.

Author: Petra Jorissen  
pejoris@xs4all.nl

*Petra Jorissen is a freelance publicist, trains service providers and clients in health care. She's a member of the editorial board of the DCDD Newsletter, and writes columns for the newsletter. Petra is a wheelchair rider.*

# Disability not yet an obvious theme in development cooperation

*On 30 March 2007, the Netherlands signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Recently, the Cabinet made known that it wanted to ratify the convention during the current government term. However, this does not mean that people with disabilities in developing countries can expect any particular attention from the government or development organisations.*



There are organisations, of course, which are devoted to people with disabilities, such as Dark & Light Blindcare, the Leprastichting (Lepra Foundation) and LEPRAZending (LEPRA Mission) and the Liliane Fund that gave, in collaboration with local partners, direct and customised aid to 73,200 children with physical, mental or multiple disabilities in 2007.

The International Red Cross is now also convinced that people with disabilities sometimes need extra support to ensure that they get access to equal opportunities. In the World Disasters Report 2007, the Red Cross emphasises the need for special care for vulnerable groups such as women and children as well as for people with disabilities. Disabled people often suffer twice if a disaster occurs: from the disaster itself, but also because they are excluded from the provisions made for the disaster, during it and after it. Not just by their own community, but by relief workers too. The Red Cross wonders why disability mainstreaming i.e., including the interests of people with disabilities in general policy is still not part of emergency aid in spite of all the guidelines. To change this, the Red Cross advocates strengthening disability organisations in disaster-prone countries.

The Dutch government and many general

development organisations are still in the dark about the extra attention in humanitarian aid and structural development aid that people with disabilities need.

## 'Right to a decent life'

In her article 'More vulnerable, but no special attention', which appeared (in Dutch) in the *De Verdieping* section of the *Trouw* newspaper on 5 March 2007, journalist Sybilla Claus criticises the laxity of the government and many aid organisations in focussing attention on people with disabilities in developing countries. She spoke with Ms. Varina Tjon-A-Ten, among other people, who was an MP for the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) from 2003-2006. In her memorandum 'The Right to a decent Life' (2006), Tjon-A-Ten advocated a visible, verifiable disability policy in development cooperation, which the new UN

Convention could serve as a catalyst for.

The Minister of Development Cooperation at that time, Ms. van Ardenne, promised to inform the Lower House of Parliament about how the Netherlands would be implementing the Convention in its development cooperation policy. This promise passed to her successor, Mr. Koenders, early in 2007, but he said that he did not consider a change of policy necessary. That is remarkable for someone who in 2006 supported the memorandum of Tjon-A-Ten, a member of his own party. As a minister, Koenders believes that developing countries should put disability policy on the agenda themselves first. "That is not fair," says Tjon-A-Ten. "Poor countries have so much on their plates that they can't get round to this. We as donors have to point out the necessary measures to governments and support them."

Tjon-A-Ten is disappointed by the fact that, after she left Parliament, no one in the Lower House took up the torch. She doesn't share Koenders' opinion that the Netherlands is doing enough for people with disabilities: "That is nonsense! Neither is it true that general development organisations some of which receive large government subsidies in the framework of the Co-Financing Programme care enough about people with disabilities."

## Arbitrary and ad hoc

Tjon-A-Ten's view matches the findings of a survey carried out by DCDD in 2003. Development organisations were shown to deal with disability in an arbitrary and ad hoc fashion. They did respond to disability-related project proposals made by partners in the field, but didn't have any structural policies. Of the co-financing organisations at the time, only Cordaid paid specific attention to people with disabilities. That is very odd, because every development organisation is engaged in fighting poverty and promoting human rights. If there is anything that is indisputable, then it is the relationship between poverty, disability and a lack of concern about human rights.

In 2006, DCDD carried out a second survey, this time for the European Union. Although this survey was not identical to the 2003 survey, it became clear that little progress had been made: the theme of disability was still invisible in the policies of general development organisations. Health organisations such as Wemos, Simavi, Médecins sans Frontières and Health Net believe that they reach people with

disabilities by definition. But how can we be sure that health projects are accessible for people with disabilities if participation by the disabled is not a specific, quantifiable objective?

There is a danger of organisations hiding behind their 'inclusive policies'. "We target diversity, so we cover all groups." seems to be Oxfam Novib's way of thinking. "We target people with disabilities and people with disabilities are vulnerable." is the reasoning of Médecins sans Frontières. But neither organisation has a structural or concrete disability policy. In Tjon-A-Ten's opinion, organisations 'parade' inclusive policy about too easily: "In practice, mainstreaming often means 'outstreaming'. It leads to nothing."

## Promises by Minister Koenders

Minister Koenders' policy is aimed at improving the condition of women in developing countries. He wants more attention paid to their subordinate position and to the rape crimes that go unpunished. But does he realise that there are countless women with disabilities in developing countries who are not 'automatically' reached by general programmes? It only costs a little extra to make sure that people with disabilities can participate in development projects. But it requires a different mindset. In Sybilla Claus' article, Koenders is quoted as saying:



"Being disabled in a developing country is a tragedy, of course. But because we don't focus on specific target groups anymore, I assumed that organisations such as Oxfam Novib, ICCO and Cordaid were implementing inclusive policies. If they aren't living up to this, I will call them to account." A promise which DCDD will hold the minister to.

## Hopeful developments

In 2008, specific attention for people with disabilities is still not an obvious component of the policies of development organisations.

On the other hand, we note several hopeful developments. For example, collaboration between disability-focussed and 'broad' organisations is growing. In Southern Sudan, where ICCO and Oxfam Novib are working to improve primary education, they also relied on the expertise of Dark & Light Blindcare to make the curriculum accessible to children with disabilities. Moreover, other organisations, not just Cordaid, have also incorporated disability in their policies: Terre des Hommes, for example, whose website has a link to 'disability

projects', and VSO, which has disability as a policy priority. ICCO now also wants to include disability in its policy in a structural way. Although ICCO already used to carry out projects and had partners targeting people with disabilities, its activities were fragmented. It now strives for greater coherence in implementing its business plan, which is based on "special attention for vulnerable groups including people with disabilities".

More good news is that Stop Aids Now! (SAN!) has joined DCDD's HIV&Aids and Disability working group. In the new knowledge platform on the SAN! website, disability is treated as a theme in its own right. This initiative gives disability a place within the HIV&Aids programmes of development organisations.

We hope that other organisations will follow these examples.

On the basis of the baseline measurement of 2003, DCDD will carry out a follow-up survey in 2008 into the integration of disability in development cooperation. This survey is expected to give an insight into the developments over the past five years and also to provide stepping stones for DCDD's future policy.

Author: Sybilla Claus

# Sport: An empowerment tool for people with disabilities

On December 14, 2007, DCDD organised the International Conference: 'Sport and Disability in Development Cooperation; Sports as a tool to empower'.



**"Sports is not a luxury, but a necessary tool for inclusion"**

Rinske de Jong (Rehabilitation Center Blixemborg) and Taco Nijhoff (active in setting up wheel chair tennis-projects in Romania and Sri Lanka) attended the DCDD conference. We asked them what challenges they see in the field of 'Sport, Disability and Development Cooperation'.

*Rinske:* "The biggest challenge is to work together. The conference made clear that there are many initiatives. Private initiatives, initiatives from sports organisations, from development organizations and from disability organisations. All have a great impact for people with disabilities in developing countries, especially when it comes to inclusion. But there is no coherent approach. We need to learn from each other and we need to work together. I think guidelines are needed on how to set up projects, what is important, where to pay attention to, how to work together etc. Furthermore methods for monitoring and evaluation are of great importance."

*Taco:* "The conference showed me that the main challenge is to develop sustainable projects. Projects have to be set up together with people with disabilities themselves. Nothing about us without us. We all agree that ownership is needed, but for some reason this ownership is often forgotten when it comes to people with disabilities. Once the project is set up, it has to be continued. You have to make sure you provide sufficient knowledge and training to local leaders and trainers."

Author: Petra de Jong

## Lessons learnt

Sport, empowerment and development cooperation

- 'Nothing about us without us'. It is important to base sport initiatives for people with disabilities on what they want. Include people with disabilities in the design of your project. Ask questions!
- Build umbrella organisations. Working together strengthens the position of individual projects and makes it possible to share expertise.
- Create forums to exchange knowledge, experiences and good practices for parents, sports organisations, NGOs, DPOs, governments on local, national and international level.
- Sustainability. Make sure you provide sufficient knowledge and training to local leaders and trainers.
- Focus on opportunities and abilities. Sport- and development organisations should not focus on the obstacles, but on the opportunities and abilities. Often with limited adjustments, projects can be accessible for ALL.
- Create local support. Involve the community, like DPOs, parents and sports organisations. It is important to have strong support network, parents organizations and DPOs.
- Be creative! Don't be afraid to try new or unusual approaches. For example: rules of games can easily be adapted in such a way that people with disabilities can take part.



## Ministers memo on sport and development:

# Priority for disabled people

*People with disabilities are named as a priority target group in the new government memorandum on sport and development cooperation.*

On 11 February, the Ministry of Development Cooperation and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport launched the policy document 'Een kans voor open doel. De kracht van sport in ontwikkelings-samenwerking' ('A chance to score in an open goal. The power of sport in development cooperation'). The ministries want to make better use of sport as a means of combatting poverty and promoting welfare and peace in developing countries. The memorandum sets out policy and names the main target groups and the various stakeholders.

### Priority target group

The memorandum identifies people with disabilities as one of the priority target groups, stating: "In many countries, including the Netherlands, people with disabilities live in isolation, sometimes even

hidden from the outside world. Participating in sports can bring them out of their isolation and even give them the chance to excel... We want to promote the exchange of expertise about adaptive methods, facilities and materials, and the training of support workers."

### Recognition

DCDD is pleased at this recognition of the great importance of sport for people with disabilities in developing countries. DCDD is currently in discussion with the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport about how DCDD can contribute to the implementation of the policy. DCDD also plays an important role in the National Platform for Disability, Sport and Development Cooperation, which will contribute to the fleshing out of this policy.



## National Platform for Disability, Sport and Development Cooperation

The conference held by DCDD and the new memorandum on 'Sport and Development Cooperation' have resulted in the creation of a National Platform for Disability, Sport and Development Cooperation. The Platform will contribute to new initiatives being taken in the field of sport as an empowerment tool for people with disabilities, as formulated in the Minister's memorandum.

### Platform

The Platform brings together experts (both organisations and people) from the field of sport, disability and/or development cooperation to give substance to government policy. To avoid fragmentation and any lack of expertise in the

various initiatives, a programmatic approach and cooperation between a wide range of parties is necessary; this will lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency. The Platform will thus serve as a facilitator of the exchange of experiences and good practices, and as a focus for the promotion of expertise in the field of sport, disability and development cooperation.

### DCDD

Within the Platform, DCDD will contribute its specific knowledge of the field of sport, disability and development cooperation, and be responsible for the human rights approach within the initiatives that will be developed. Because of its extensive network, DCDD will also be able to link initiatives and organisations with each other to promote efficiency.

We will update you about all the developments at the Platform and about how the elaboration of the Minister's memorandum progresses.

Author: Anke Huijboom

Egypt:

## “It's different in your country, here we always carry the wheelchairs”

*“Disabled people here usually stay indoors,” I was frequently told in Egypt. In view of the many people with visible disabilities in the streets of Cairo, you wouldn't think so. Are there any special-interest organisations and what are they doing, I wondered? I visited two and, indeed, they are very active: SHUMUU is an organisation which campaigns ceaselessly for attention to be given to human rights. The SETI Centre stimulates inclusive cooperation. It trains parents and relatives of children who have a psychiatric condition, or who are intellectually challenged, to coach and stimulate their children in their own environment.*

Until recently the Egyptian government showed little interest in people with disabilities. But at the end of 2007, in part because of the urgings from various disability and human rights organisations, for the very first time it took the initiative and drew up a report about the position of disabled people. The report assumes that thirteen to fifteen percent of the Egyptian population is disabled. That could be a realistic figure; if you stroll through the streets of Cairo for just fifteen minutes you will come across at least twenty people with visible disabilities. Most of them are men. Disabled women usually stay at home, just like most able-bodied women. I saw men with only one leg, men on crutches, men on boards with wheels, men without any legs, blind men. They make up a significant proportion of the population of Egypt's capital - carrying heavy loads, begging, selling paper handkerchiefs or smoking a hookah.

### Accessibility

Only people who have been in paid employment can claim a modest amount of social security benefit if they become disabled. For others, their relatives are the safety net for survival. Disabled people get an ID card, a document which is not very useful in practice. Wheelchairs are not unusual in the streets, but there seems to be only one type: broad, rusty, heavy and with flat tires... if you have managed to get hold of one in the first place, as this can take years in Egypt's labyrinthine bureaucracy. So these are some of the issues confronting a disabled Egyptian person in everyday life. A government policy which is concerned about physical limitations does not (yet) exist. I can also be brief about the infrastructure: there is hardly any. Very occasionally one will find a make-shift ramp on a pavement, but physical accessibility has been on the decrease rather than increase over the past few years. Because of the enormous intensity of road traffic, new kerbs that are being made are now no less than 30 centimetres high - all to prevent cars from parking on the pavement.

Only one to two percent of disabled Egyptians receives any help or support in any shape or form, says a report produced by Caritas Egypt, a non-profit NGO which is active in the fields of health care, literacy programmes and aid for young people, refugees and women.



### Rights

SHUMUU, the National Centre for Human Rights and the Support of the Disabled, a very active NGO which is financed largely by money from America, is devoted to promoting the rights of people with disabilities. Its director, Hasan Yousef, apologises profusely for the four steep stairs which his staff carry me up. “This is different in your country, but here we always carry wheelchairs upstairs. Traditionally, disabled people are kept inside here; it's rare for them to live independently. The concept of accessibility is not very prominent in my country,” says Yousef. “In addition, there is a serious lack of facilities for adult disabled people. There are a number of institutions, but they operate according to ideas which are considered outdated in the western world, with rigid schedules and protocols: getting up at set times, meals at set times, going outdoors on such and such days.” SHUMUU regards rules like this as serious restrictions of the rights of the residents and is trying hard to do something about it, by advising the residents of their (human) rights and also by providing information to management boards, social workers and other workers. Individual help and support by personal assistants - that is the goal driving SHUMUU.

### Support

Apart from providing information, organising seminars and setting up lobby groups (27 by now in Egypt!) which put pressure on the politicians, SHUMUU also offers individual support. Hardly a day

passes without Ms. Amal, a lawyer, reading something upsetting in the papers that she wants to get her teeth into. But she doesn't need to collect abuses from the newspapers; more and more people with disabilities know where to find her.

A third component of SHUMUU'S activities is to increase disability awareness of disabled people by using drama. "This means, above all, developing and stimulating the skills and self-awareness of disabled people," says Yousef. Drama is a suitable way of doing this. SHUMUU has several drama groups which deaf people also participate in. One of the plays which they performed last year was by Berthold Brecht, a play in which the groups explicitly incorporated a number of themes about the violation of human rights. The play was performed in institutions and at disability organisations and was received enthusiastically. Rehearsals take place in a dilapidated space on the ground floor with a makeshift wheelchair toilet hidden behind a curtain. While I am having the conversation with Yousef, suddenly two players enter, one deaf and the other hard of hearing. Enthusiastically they begin to gesture. It doesn't take long before an interpreter is found in the building. Mahmut, who is 23 years old and deaf, graduated from a secondary school for deaf pupils. In 2006, the Ibsen Year, he played a part in *The Wild Duck*, a play by the nineteenth century Norwegian 'father of modern drama', Ibsen. He also had a part in the Brecht play and is still proud of it, but his greatest wish is to specialise in Indian dance. His hard of hearing fellow actor would rather become a good football player. Mahmut's biggest problem is language. At school sign language was used, but that is not much help in ordinary society. "I would prefer to speak the ordinary spoken language but am not able to, and the people here don't understand sign language."

### Education

Caritas Egypt set up the SETI (Support Education Training for Inclusion) Centre toward the end of the nineteen eighties especially for children with a psychiatric condition, or who are intellectually challenged, and their parents. This centre offers practical educational support to parents of children who are intellectually challenged or who have a psychiatric disorder. The aim is to let the children grow up in their own environment as much as possible. The parents, mainly mothers wearing a niqab, bring their children to the centre where, under the supervision of a psychologist, and along with other mothers or carers, they are given advice about how they can deal with their 'difficult' child in the best way. Although the building and its facilities look rather primitive, the principles and methods used are modern. There are posters depicting the faces of mischievously smiling mentally challenged toddlers. 'We're not disabled, we're different', the captions say in Arabic.

However modern the principles may be, they were also born from necessity. "The number of children with disabilities is so large here, there is so little money and the infrastructure is so poor that, even if we built more special institutions and schools, we would still reach far too few children. It is the parents and the community which need to give help

and support in the first place," the centre's spokesman says. The SETI Centre also provides training courses for teachers, social workers, psychologists and specialised centres.

### Differences

Like everywhere else in the world, in Cairo the differences between disabled people are great. I met Samira from the southern district of Aswan on a terrace. She was on a short holiday in Cairo with her uncle. Wheelchair user Samira lives by herself and has a paid job at a school. Her father works in one of the Gulf states; that explains a few things. Or take Nevine, who has suffered from cerebral palsy since she contracted meningitis at a young age. Nevine has studied at a university and works in the library of the SETI Centre. She has all the care and help she needs: her own driver, a dresser, a housekeeper and a cook. Nevine grew up in a very wealthy environment. But for some people, their wheelchair is their home.



Mustafa, a short skinny man of indeterminate age with a lively expression, has his place around the corner from my hotel. During the day and at night all kinds of merchandise such as water pistols and paper hankies are displayed around his wheelchair. At night he rolls up in a blanket under the chair. The seat is his roof and the wheels act as a protective wall. Why he doesn't have a home, or how he manages to take care of his personal hygiene, I didn't discover during my two weeks in Cairo. Mustafa can't speak, he communicates only with his eyes.

### Participation

Egypt is not exactly a model country as regards political or social participation by citizens in general. But the social participation of people with disabilities is still very poor indeed, says Mr Yousef, the director of SHUMUU. Yet he remains optimistic. Egypt recently signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Samira and Nevine had never heard of this convention. Neither, probably, has Mustafa. But, happily, help is always available in Egypt. There is no African city where I received support in such a matter-of-course way as in Cairo.

Author: Petra Jorissen  
Photography: Rozemarijn Esselink