Gender And Disability:
A Survey of InterAction Member Agencies

Findings And Recommendations
on Inclusion of Women and Men with Disabilities in International Development Programs

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PREFACE

The research project, titled *Building an Inclusive Development Agenda*: *A Survey of Inlcusion of People with Disabilities Among InterAction Member Agencies,* produced invaluable new data which will enable InterAction member agencies and MIUSA to work more effectively to include people with disabilities, particularly women and girls, in development programs. A particularly exciting byproduct of the research process has been heightened dialogue among InterAction member organizations about the participation of people with disabilities as agents as well as beneficiaries in the development process. This dialogue is especially timely because in May 2000, InterAction adopted Disability Amendments to the PVO Standards, which provide guidelines to InterAction member organizations about inclusion of people with disabilities in governance, management practice, human resources, programs, material assistance, and child sponsorship (See Appendix A for the list of PVO Standards on Disability).

While much work remains to assure inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in the international development process, we were encouraged by the participation of more than 60% of InterAction member organizations in this project. It is cause for optimism to note the willingness of the international development community to examine issues of disability inclusion within their own organizations. The candor of executive level professionals and their insights and perspectives were particularly impressive.

Evaluation comments by research participants reflect that, like MIUSA, they view the *Building an Inclusive Development Agenda* research project as a positive step for InterAction and international development. Participating members said about the research process:

> *"This was an extremely positive exercise for me to go through as the human resources contact…it's extremely helpful to put [the issue of inclusion] more in the forefront. There were a number of questions which really helped to identify how to be more exemplary and make more progress toward inclusivity."*

"Good questions. I will be interested in just continuing the dialogue and sharing what we do and then getting some learnings…. I think just the questionnaire itself will generate some discussion."

"I'm really glad you're doing this kind of interview. I think it's very important. And, it reminds us – those of us who are in this work – to be alert to the opportunities to serve people with disabilities a bit better."

"I think it's interesting to make you look at the disability question. It's been a good interview."

"I think it's a good idea to do the survey. And, I hope the result of it is, basically, a better understanding in the development community that people with disabilities can be really members of your development team."

"…I see this as a real historic step toward the inclusion of people with disabilities in the development process. I see this survey as the catalyst for hopefully a new era of inclusion, and I think it is a very exciting time for everybody. I appreciate the work that everybody is doing toward this goal."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) conceived and undertook the research project, *Building an Inclusive Development Agenda: A Survey of Inclusion of People with Disabilities Among InterAction Member Agencies* to document the extent to which people with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, participate in the international development assistance process. This research is the first systematic attempt to determine if international development organizations based in the United States include eligible people with disabilities in policies, employment, programs and services, and what data, if any, they collect concerning participation by women and men with disabilities. Recognizing the need for such data and information, 104 member agencies of InterAction, a diverse coalition of more than 165 US-based relief, development, environmental and refugee agencies working in more than 100 countries around the world, participated in the research in partnership with MIUSA.

The research confirmed that most organizations do not collect data showing the extent to which people with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities, participate in the development assistance process. Almost one-third of organizations that participated in the research operate disability-specific services or programs such as care and treatment for HIV/AIDS, vocational rehabilitation, or provision of prosthetics. A few others are working proactively to include people with disabilities in their general programs. However, according to available data and respondent observations, few women and men with disabilities are employed by respondent organizations or are served in field programs aimed at general populations.

The new data presented in this report sound a clarion call for InterAction members to begin implementing the InterAction Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) Standards on Disability adopted in 2000. The presence of USAID (United States Agency for International Development) funding in 56% of respondent organizations also reinforces the importance of USAID's Disability Policy, which mandates that USAID grantees must: "avoid discrimination against people with disabilities in programs which USAID funds." Based on these new findings and recommendations, InterAction, its member organizations, MIUSA and others can begin designing appropriate and effective methods to promote inclusion of people with disabilities.

One of the world's largest minorities, 600 million people with disabilities comprise almost one in ten of the world's population. Pity, misperception and prejudice serve to isolate and

marginalize most people with disabilities from the community mainstream. Women with disabilities experience literacy rates estimated to be less than five percent and unemployment that exceeds 75 percent. With little chance to achieve economic security, marry or inherit property, women with disabilities in most societies face severe economic hardship and even threats to their survival. In light of the extreme poverty and disenfranchisement experienced by most people with disabilities around the world, it is imperative that people with disabilities who are eligible to participate in development assistance programs be afforded an opportunity to do so.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overarching Themes

1. InterAction respondent organizations do not collect data showing the extent to which people with disabilities in general, and women and girls with disabilities in particular, participate in the development process. Due to insufficient data collection, 93% of respondent organizations are unable to determine the actual extent of participation of people with disabilities in their programs.

2. While many InterAction respondent organizations acknowledge that they do not collect data that shows how many people with disabilities participate in their general programs, they also acknowledge that they think few or none actually participate.

3. Many InterAction respondent organizations expressed attitudes and beliefs about disability that are not necessarily based on accurate information; rather they appear to be rooted in commonly accepted, though inaccurate assumptions and stereotypes.

4. InterAction member organizations tackle some of the most difficult social problems of the day. Consequently, they are perfectly positioned to provide the leadership that is so urgently needed to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in the development process.

Organizational Policy and Strategic Objectives

5. Most respondent organizations' strategic objectives do not specifically refer to people with disabilities.

Participation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

6. Respondent organizations collect little or no data about the participation of women and girls with disabilities in gender-specific, non-gender specific and disability-specific programs.

7. Very few respondent organizations refer to women and girls with disabilities in their strategic objectives, suggesting that this group and its particular needs are not yet recognized or identified.

8. Nearly half of participating organizations that operate Women in Development or gender-specific programs do not use any specific strategies to include women and girls with disabilities in such programs.

9. According to respondents, obstacles to inclusion of women and girls with disabilities include poor outreach, lack of training and information, lack of funds for disability-related accommodations and physically inaccessible facilities.

10. The 27 respondent organizations that conduct training on gender issues do not specifically address issues of women and girls with disabilities.

People with Disabilities: Employment within InterAction Member Agencies

11. People with known disabilities occupy less than 1% of staff positions in all categories within respondent organizations and represent less than 1% of board members or consultants among InterAction member organizations (according to usable data).

12. Most respondents have either equal employment opportunity policies that include disability or distinct employment policies for disability, or both. However, respondents as a whole do not conduct employment outreach or recruitment, and do not dedicate resources to implementation or monitoring. Furthermore, policies do not appear to result in employment of people with disabilities.

13. Respondents indicated that they need assistance in developing strategies for recruitment and job accommodation of people with disabilities in the US.

Diversity and Disability Training

14. While InterAction's Diversity Amendments became effective in 1998, almost three-fourths of respondent organizations do not have a diversity training or awareness program. Among the 19 who do, only 12 include disability.

15. CEOs cite training, education and public awareness as the highest priority in order for their organizations to include people with disabilities in a meaningful way.

Architectural and Communication Accessibility

16. Almost one-third of respondent organizations have some access limitations, and four percent of their US facilities are completely inaccessible. Eighty percent of respondents report that they do not provide materials in accessible formats.

17. Lack of information about methods to achieve access inexpensively, potential sources of financial support for access modifications, and low or no-cost creative solutions that can achieve the desired result, have contributed to the perception among respondent organizations that solving access problems is overly burdensome and costly.

18. Fifty-two respondent organizations operate field or affiliate offices. Twenty described the difficulty of obtaining accessible facilities in their program areas due to the lack of office space and the fact that most buildings are inaccessible because they do not have ramps or elevators.

Strategies for Inclusion of People with Disabilities

19. Fifty-two percent (39 of 74) of respondent organizations report that they use various strategies to include people with disabilities. However, they do not collect sufficient data to know whether these strategies are effective in increasing participation of people with disabilities.

Perceived Challenges to Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

20. Over half of the respondent organizations did not know what challenges their organizations face to inclusion of people with disabilities; they thought the question was not applicable, or they did not respond at all.

21. Among those organizations that were aware of challenges to including people with disabilities in programs and activities, funding and time constraints were cited most frequently.

22. Most respondent organizations acknowledge that they do not know how to go about conducting outreach to identify candidates with disabilities for their programs, or issues such individuals face in their communities.

Reasons Why People with Disabilities Are Absent from InterAction Member Programs

23. Respondent organizations attribute the absence of people with disabilities in their programs to a range of issues: culturally influenced attitudes of local field offices, conditions inherent in working in developing countries, and attitudes among staff within their own organizations who tend to perceive people with disabilities in stereotyped ways and as victims.

24. Respondent organizations cited lack of interest in people with disabilities by funders and donors, and program participant selection by external entities, (which limits organizational control over how people with disabilities are included), as explanations for the absence of people with disabilities in their development programs.

InterAction Partnerships with Other NGOs on Disability Issues

25. Almost a third of respondent organizations have, at various times, established partnerships with other NGOs on disability issues. About a quarter of respondent organizations have developed partnerships with disability-led NGOs.

Laws and Policies

26. Taken together, US federal law, USAID's Disability Policy and the InterAction PVO Standards on Disability establish a mandate for non-discrimination and inclusion of people with disabilities by InterAction member organizations. Denial of rights under US law could specifically result in legal claims of discrimination and potential remedies involving ceasing the discriminatory behavior, money damages, and attorney fees.

27. Although people with disabilities are the poorest, least enfranchised, and most discriminated-against group in almost every society, many respondent organizations tend to overlook them as a group despite the fact that they are present among the general populations they serve. This omission is paradoxical in light of the humanitarian goals of most respondent organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. InterAction must commit itself to providing leadership and vision to assure that its member organizations include people with disabilities in all aspects of the development process.

2. InterAction must take specific steps to promote recognition, awareness and acceptance of disability issues within its own standing committees and initiatives.

3. InterAction member organizations must develop a Plan of Action to implement the InterAction PVO Standards on Disability.

4. InterAction member organizations, in consultation with disability-led organizations, must seek training, technical assistance, resources and materials on a wide variety of disability-related topics that can be used to implement the goals of A Plan of Action.

5. InterAction member organizations must develop a systematic plan to collect data about participation of people with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities, as agents and beneficiaries of their programs.

6. InterAction member organizations must take all necessary steps to include women and girls with disabilities in both general programs and Women in Development or gender-specific programs.

7. Private donors and multilateral organizations such as USAID should require that applicants for funding specify methods they will use to include women and men with disabilities in the program being funded. Similarly, InterAction member organizations should require such a declaration in all contracts and agreements with their affiliates, partners and field offices. Public and private donors and InterAction member organizations should evaluate the applicant's or partner's responses along with other factors when funding requests are being considered.

8. Women with disabilities must be included in the Commission on the Advancement of Women's (CAW) goal to promote gender equity and the advancement of women in InterAction member agencies, both at the organization and program level.

CONCLUSION

While much work remains to assure inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in the international development process, we were encouraged by the participation of more than 60% of InterAction member agencies in this project. InterAction organizations possess keen understanding and unique expertise in facing problems of poverty, illness, violence, illiteracy, homelessness and violation of human rights. With appropriate information and resources, InterAction members have great potential to incorporate issues of disability, inclusion and disability rights into their service models. MIUSA looks forward to collaborating with our colleagues in InterAction to foster inclusion of women and men with disabilities, and build a truly inclusive international development agenda.

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) would like to acknowledge and thank all those InterAction organizations that contributed their experiences and ideas and gave so generously of their time to make this research possible. We also wish to thank the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Women in Development for their support of the project. Finally, MIUSA extends our appreciation to InterAction for acknowledging the importance of including people with disabilities through the adoption of the Disability Amendments to the InterAction PVO Standards.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Problem

MIUSA's 20 years of field experience with people with disabilities from more than 80 countries led to the basic premise underlying the research: around the world, people with disabilities in general, and women with disabilities in particular, do not participate as agents or beneficiaries of the international development assistance process in numbers that equal their presence in the general population. Women with disabilities in particular are under-represented and under-served in every aspect of the international development field: as partners, staff and beneficiaries of development programs. The exclusion of women and men with disabilities from participation in the international development community impedes efforts to achieve gender equity in development and to further human rights goals for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities offer a vast, untapped resource for international development. In every country, grassroots organizations of people with disabilities offer rich resources for development organizations. People with disabilities are creating organizations and taking action to confront poverty, inadequate health care, lack of education, violence and abuse. The absence of participation by women and men with disabilities in development programs means that the international development community is not taking advantage of valuable opportunities to improve the effectiveness of development strategies and reach a higher percentage of their target populations.

As a member of InterAction, a diverse coalition of more than 165 US-based relief, development, environmental and refugee agencies working in more than 100 countries around the world, MIUSA saw a unique opportunity to seek out experiences and perspectives on disability from colleagues working in diverse international environments.

B. Purpose of Research

The intended purpose of the research was to inform and support strategies that will improve awareness of disability concerns generally and increase participation of people with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, in the international development programs operated by InterAction member agencies.

Until this study, no systematic effort had been made to determine how many eligible people with disabilities are included in groups being served by international development organizations, or even whether organizations collect such information. A number of approaches for increasing inclusion of people with disabilities, especially women, in international programs have been recommended by experts in development, gender and disability inclusion, including USAID, InterAction and MIUSA. In order to design, implement and evaluate strategies to facilitate increased inclusion of people with disabilities, quantitative data were needed as well, in order to provide an understanding of how development assistance agencies currently plan for providing services to people with disabilities.

With this research, for the first time data have been systematically collected that reveal how and to what extent the issue of disability is incorporated into the service models of US-based organizations providing assistance across a range of international development programs and activities. Analysis of the research outcomes provides important new insight about the extent to which eligible people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, participate in operations and programs of InterAction member agencies. Using this information, MIUSA and InterAction will seek to provide resources and practical recommendations to enable InterAction member agencies to increase involvement of women and men with disabilities in overseas programs and administrative operations in organizations' headquarters offices. Furthermore, the results and recommendations from the study can assist InterAction member organizations in complying with the InterAction PVO Standards on Disability.

C. Challenging Stereotypes and Demystifying Solutions that Will Make it Possible for People with Disabilities to Participate in the Development Process

We do not suggest that our colleagues in InterAction change their reason for being, or begin to target people with disabilities for new, specialized services. We also do not suggest that elaborate methods should be used or are even required to serve people with disabilities. On the contrary, we seek to challenge misconceptions about what people with disabilities really require to be included in a meaningful way, and to demystify solutions that will make it possible for people with disabilities to participate in the development process. Furthermore, we hope that an open, ongoing collaboration will help reveal how local organizations and resources can be used to overcome some of the practical problems to serving people with disabilities.

Our goals include infusing InterAction members with an appreciation for disability as a widespread characteristic of the human condition that transcends gender, race, age and class; and an understanding that people with disabilities are a part of every population that they serve. We aim to generate interest in developing pragmatic information and strategies for change that increase InterAction agencies' capacity to incorporate people with disabilities into their missions, organizational structures and programs.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Global Status of People with Disabilities

One of the world's largest minorities, 600 million people with disabilities – almost one in ten of the world's population - face a daily battle for their basic human rights, according to former United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in a 1998 report to the UN. "Equality of opportunity simply does not exist," he notes, "where a disabled child cannot go to school, where a disabled mother has no health care, where a disabled man cannot get training or a job, or where disabled people cannot move freely on the streets." According to Perez de Cuellar, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, yet millions of people with disabilities still face daily discrimination and exclusion from equality of opportunity.

B. Dramatic Domestic and International Social Reforms in Disability Policy During Past Two Decades: Human Rights Instruments and Anti-Discrimination Laws Call for Integration, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity

Extraordinary social changes in disability policy have taken place internationally in recent years, yet these advances contrast dramatically with continued worldwide exclusion, grinding poverty and isolation of many with disabilities. These positive changes recognize some of the root causes of exclusion from society of people with disabilities and hold the promise of hope for those who remain in such dire circumstances.

Historically, people with disabilities have often been isolated in back rooms or incarcerated in institutions for paupers and criminals. In Western countries during the early 20th century, these practices began giving way to more humane models based on providing medical

and custodial care. Though living conditions improved, people with disabilities remained economically and socially isolated and marginalized from the community mainstream due to deeply entrenched fear, pity, misperception and prejudice.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a dramatic change in social policy took place that began to shift the 'medical' approach to disability to a more progressive 'social model.' This new view of disability recognized that the extent to which disability limits an individual's ability to participate in her or his community is a function of the relationship between the individual and the physical, social and economic environment. It also recognized that people with disabilities experience discrimination in every aspect of life. As a consequence, they are either denied, or are significantly limited in their enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

C. Disability Rights in the United States

In the US, technological advances that saved the lives of people with serious injuries and disease, converged with the protest movement environment of the 1960s to ignite a consumer movement of people with disabilities. Specifically, the civil rights movement of African Americans in the US inspired other disenfranchised groups, including people with disabilities, to challenge their second class citizenship by employing the tools of social protest to demand justice, equal treatment, remedies to discrimination, appropriate services and access to education, jobs, and housing.

Disability civil rights statutes enacted in the United States codified the social model and made it legally enforceable, including penalties for those who violate the law. The first national disability rights law, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, became the anthem of the burgeoning disability rights movement and later served as the model for the landmark 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The United States had embarked on a historic journey to restructure society. Similarly, the move away from the medical and toward the social model was also taking place internationally, specifically in the development of standards addressing disability and in the inclusion of disability for the first time in the category of universal human rights.

In 1990, the US enacted the first, most comprehensive disability rights legislation in the world: the ADA. This law outlaws discrimination against people with disabilities by private employers, public entities such as city and county governments, in restaurants, stores and other

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businesses, by public and private transportation facilities and in telecommunications. Equal opportunity and inclusion are the linchpins of the law. Since the enactment of the ADA, at least 43 countries have also passed some form of disability anti-discrimination legislation or included disability specifically in the country's constitution.

D. Disability Rights Internationally

The United Nations (UN) recognized the social model of disability during the Decade of Disabled Persons (1982-1993). A major outcome of the period leading up to the celebration of the Decade was the 1982 *World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons*, a comprehensive articulation of the goals of treatment, rehabilitation and equal social and economic opportunity, justice and citizenship for people with disabilities, including strategies countries should employ to realize them. The UN adopted *the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* in 1993 and set forth critical steps countries should take to fulfill the promise of equality established in the *World Programme of Action*. While representing important advances, adoption of the *Standard Rules* and the *World Programme of Action* by member states is voluntary.

While implementation and enforcement of these new laws remains a challenge to governments and disability communities in most countries, their very existence sends a powerful message: disability is taking its rightful place in human rights and diversity frameworks around the world. Furthermore, a decade of compliance with the ADA in the US has sent the message to other countries that it is both practical and socially beneficial to take steps to challenge disability-based discrimination and welcome patrons, employees, guests and consumers of services with disabilities. Ten years of experience with the ADA has also dramatically altered the architectural and attitudinal landscape of the nation, sending perhaps the most important message: once change takes place, most people take for granted that the new policies have always been included in the rights of citizenship.

Human rights instruments and anti-discrimination laws calling for inclusion and equal opportunity serve as a blueprint for treatment of people with disabilities internationally. International development and humanitarian assistance organizations can affect the dire circumstances experienced by so many people with disabilities around the world by operating

their programs in accordance with the intent of this blueprint, which serves as one important tool to challenge unrelenting cycles of exclusion, persecution and neglect.

E. USAID Disability Policy

With the 1997 passage of a Disability Policy, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) articulated a commitment to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities, within USAID programs, in countries where USAID sponsors programs, and in the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities in foreign assistance program goals. The Disability Policy mandates that USAID grantees must: "Avoid discrimination against people with disabilities in programs which USAID funds and stimulate an engagement of host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in promoting a climate of non-discrimination against, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities."

F. How Do the ADA and Other Disability Rights Laws Apply to International Development Organizations' Operations in the US and Abroad?

Two primary federal disability-rights laws apply to US-based international development organizations. Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, modeled after the 1964 Civil Rights Act, prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities by programs that receive federal financial assistance. This law applies to all employment practices, regardless of the number of people who work for the organization. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) contains almost the same requirements but applies to most public and private entities regardless of whether they receive federal financial assistance. The ADA prohibits employment discrimination by organizations that employ fifteen or more employees. Other state laws can also apply.

In addition to employment practice, the ADA and 504 also apply to programs operated in the US by international development organizations. Section 504 sets forth specific circumstances under which architectural and program accessibility are required, and requires modification of discriminatory policies and practices. The ADA applies architectural accessibility and accommodation requirements to programs operated in the US, including accommodations to assure effective communication for individuals with speech, language, hearing or cognitive disabilities. Both laws apply to services or programs provided in the US by development organizations through contract with other organizations or vendors.

G. Status of Women with Disabilities Around the World

According to Bengt Lindquist, Special Rapporteur to the United Nations and a former minister in the Swedish Government, women with disabilities face triple discrimination daily because of their poverty, their disability and their gender. He notes that,

"Women with disabilities are denied equal access to education – their literacy rate as a group, worldwide, is probably under 5%. Women with disabilities do not have equal access to the labor market: less than a quarter are in paid employment, though the majority contribute significantly to their families and communities through caring for children and relatives, and carrying out daily chores."

According to the UN, only a quarter of women with disabilities worldwide are in the workforce (Groce, 1997). They are twice as unlikely to find work as disabled men. (International Disability Foundation, 1999, as reported in Rousso, 2000)

1. Data Lacking about Women with Disabilities in Development

Data about the participation of women with disabilities in development are virtually uncollected, because the few studies conducted on inclusion of people with disabilities in development assistance programs do not aggregate data by gender. However, anecdotal evidence is consistent. Women with disabilities around the world report that, in spite of extreme need, they are denied significant participation in community projects, human rights organizations and international development programs.

With little chance to achieve economic security through employment, marriage or inheritance of property, women with disabilities in most societies face economic hardship at best, and at worst, threats to survival. Yet women with disabilities traditionally have not had access to economic development initiatives, even those targeting women. Microcredit programs use selection criteria, lending procedures and training facilities that discriminate against women with disabilities, either directly or indirectly through inaccessibility. (Mobility International USA, 1998) Disabled girls and their mothers have difficulty participating in maternal and child health programs. Young women with disabilities do not have access to vital health information, particularly HIV/AIDS prevention.

2. **Poverty and Lack of Economic Opportunities: Major Barriers to Disabled Women's Empowerment**

According to the 1995 study *Leadership Development Strategies for Women with Disabilities: A Cross -Cultural Survey*, (Hershey and Stephens, 1995) poverty and lack of economic opportunities were identified as major barriers to disabled women's empowerment. At MIUSA's 1997 Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability, disabled women leaders from Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific, identified economic empowerment, particularly access to microcredit programs, as priorities for addressing poverty endemic among women with disabilities. As stated strongly by the Uganda Disabled Women's Union,

> *"It is quite absurd that international development programs rarely address the needs of disabled women. Women with disabilities are harassed sexually, exploited by men, suffer abject poverty and social disrespect, malnutrition, disease and ignorance."*
> (Mobility International USA, 2001)

The voices of women with disabilities were significantly reflected for the first time in an official, international agreement at the 1995 Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. The *Platform for Action* emerging from the Beijing Conference mandates governments and non-governmental organizations to include girls and women with disabilities in the areas of economic development, education, leadership training, health, violence prevention, and decision-making (United Nations, 1995.) Specific recommendations included:

> *"Mobilize all parties involved in the development process…to improve the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs directed towards the poorest and most disadvantaged groups of women, such as ... women with disabilities."*

> *"Ensure access to and develop special programs to enable women with disabilities to obtain and retain employment and ensure access to education and training at all proper levels.…"*

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"Provide leadership and self-esteem training to assist women and girls, particularly those with special needs, [such as] women with disabilities...to strengthen their self-esteem and to encourage them to take decision-making positions."

"Improve concepts and methods of data collections on the participation of women and men with disabilities, including their access to resources."

"The girl child with disabilities faces additional barriers and needs to be ensured non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms...."

"Facilitate the equal provision of appropriate services and devices to girls with disabilities and provide their families with related support services, as appropriate...."

"Ensure access to appropriate education and skills-training for girl children with disabilities for their full participation in life."

H. InterAction: A Vehicle for Education about Disability

InterAction is a diverse coalition of more than 165 US-based relief, development, environmental and refugee agencies working in more than 100 countries around the world. Established in 1984, InterAction member organizations promote economic development and self-reliance, improve health and education, provide relief to victims of disasters and wars, assist refugees, advance human rights, protect the environment, address population concerns, advocate for more just public policies and increase understanding and cooperation among people.

InterAction offers a potent medium through which to educate key development assistance organizations about developing programs, projects and policies that include people with disabilities and incorporate disability rights perspectives. Working in Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, North America, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, InterAction organizations possess a keen understanding and unique expertise in facing problems of poverty, illness, violence, illiteracy, homelessness and violation of human rights. InterAction member organizations, if they have not already done so, could easily develop an appreciation for the particularly difficult situations most

people with disabilities face around the world. With appropriate information and resources, InterAction members have great potential to incorporate issues of disability, inclusion and disability rights into their service models.

1. InterAction and Diversity

InterAction has a stated organizational commitment to increasing diversity within the international development assistance field. In 1998, InterAction's Diversity Amendments became effective, which require organizations to ensure that no person is "excluded from participation in the organization, be denied the benefits of the organization or otherwise be subjected to discrimination by the organization on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability or sex." The standards mandate each agency to develop written policy affirming its commitment to ethnic and racial diversity in organizational structures, staff and board composition. Organizations are required to implement policies and procedures which promote diversity and gender and minority equity in recruitment, hiring, training, professional development and advancement, and in programs and program development. Member organizations agree to collaborate with partner NGOs in the field to integrate diversity issues into their programs.

2. InterAction and Gender

Created in 1992, InterAction's Commission on the Advancement of Women (CAW) has provided a forum for InterAction members to address gender equity issues within their organizations. In 1994, CAW launched a Gender Equity Initiative to assist InterAction members to strengthen gender sensitive practices in their programs and organizational structures. In May 1996, InterAction's Board of Directors adopted Gender Equity Amendments to the PVO Standards. The amendments encompass governance, management, personnel and programs. In February 2001, InterAction launched a new initiative focusing on diversity on boards of directors. The *50-50* Boards of Directors Campaign aims to increase the numbers of women, including women of color and with disabilities, on the boards of InterAction member agencies. InterAction's experiences of infusing gender and diversity perspectives into organizational standards and practices suggest that it will not be difficult to incorporate a disability perspective.

3. MIUSA

Mobility International USA (MIUSA), established in 1981, empowers people with disabilities around the world through international exchange, information, technical assistance and training, and promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities in international exchange and development programs. MIUSA is in a unique position to build a much-needed bridge between the InterAction community, the international disability community and particularly women with disabilities working internationally.

As an InterAction member, MIUSA has begun to bring the perspectives of people with disabilities into the InterAction community. MIUSA first collaborated with InterAction member agencies in 1998 when InterAction organizations joined in dialogues with women leaders with disabilities from Africa, Latin America and Asia, during MIUSA's International Symposium on Microcredit for Women with Disabilities. MIUSA has provided education and training on inclusion of people with disabilities in development, through articles in InterAction's international newsletter, "Monday Developments" and workshops at the InterAction Forum, an annual conference of InterAction members, Southern partner organizations and other individuals and organizations that work internationally. MIUSA was instrumental in the recent adoption by InterAction of Disability Amendments to the PVO Standards, providing guidelines to InterAction member organizations on inclusion of people with disabilities in governance, management practice, human resources, programs, material assistance, and child sponsorship.

4. MIUSA and InterAction: Unique Partners for Collaboration

MIUSA and InterAction recognize the need for data and research to understand the problem and recommend actions that will lead to inclusion of people with disabilities within InterAction member organizations. The *Building an Inclusive Development Agenda* research project provided a unique opportunity for MIUSA to collaborate with InterAction member agencies to foster inclusion of women and men with disabilities within their organizations. With a new foundation of information and recommendations, InterAction, member organizations and MIUSA can design appropriate and effective models, resources and materials to increase inclusionary practices in programs and institutional structures.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Goal and Objectives

The research goal was to compile and disseminate new information regarding inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, as agents and beneficiaries of InterAction member organizations.

The research objectives were:

1. To collect data on the status of participation of women and men with disabilities in projects and programs of InterAction member organizations.

2. To collect data on inclusion of women and men with disabilities and disability perspectives in policy and institutional structures of InterAction member organizations.

3. To identify key factors which influence the inclusion of women and men with disabilities by InterAction member organizations.

4. To document success stories, illustrating strategies used by InterAction member organizations to increase inclusion of women and men with disabilities in InterAction member programs.

5. To generate new recommendations for inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, by InterAction member organizations in programs, policies and institutional structures.

B. Introduction to Methodology: Rationale and Research Approach

The research project was designed to obtain quantitative and qualitative data about the participation of men and women with disabilities in InterAction member agency organizational structures and programs. Based on recommendations from sources including InterAction's Commission on the Advancement of Women, independent research consultants and disability community leaders with research experience, the research design incorporated three approaches:

- Written questionnaires completed by program and human resource staff.
- Telephone interviews with InterAction CEOs.
- In-depth on-site assessments of three InterAction member organizations.

1. **Organizational Questionnaire**

Program and human resources staff of 74 InterAction member organizations responded to a written questionnaire consisting of 38 questions regarding inclusion of people with disabilities in field programs and throughout the organization. The questionnaire gathered both quantitative and qualitative data regarding data collection on disability, organizational policy, funding, personnel composition, staff training, programs and beneficiaries, outreach for inclusion, challenges and obstacles to inclusion, accessibility of facilities and information, and partnerships with NGOs. Organizations also described current or past experiences that involved including people with disabilities or specifically women with disabilities.

The questionnaire addressed participation of people with disabilities in field programs as well as in administration, management and policy development. Respondents were asked to report on experiences implementing adaptations to increase program accessibility, partnerships with NGOs led by people with disabilities, and organizational policies and strategic objectives that address inclusion of people with disabilities.

InterAction member organizations described systems, if any, being used to capture information about participation of people with disabilities. They also recommended types of assistance that would be effective in their organizations for increasing inclusion of people with disabilities. Organizations that reported gender-focused programs responded to additional questions specifically exploring the participation of women and girls with disabilities.

2. **CEO Interviews**

MIUSA conducted qualitative telephone interviews with executive level administrators from 77 InterAction member agencies. Interviews explored the following issues: importance to the core mission of the organization of including people with disabilities; conditions that affect inclusion of people with disabilities in organization programs and policies; the potential impact of a disability-inclusion requirement in Requests for Proposals (RFPs); the type of technical assistance that would enable the organization to be more inclusive of people with disabilities; ways InterAction can assist members to be more inclusive of people with disabilities.

3. **In-depth Assessments**

In order to collect more comprehensive and detailed data on inclusion of people with disabilities in field programs and organizational policies and practices, the project coordinator

conducted on-site assessments of three InterAction member organizations. Three organizations, Mercy Corps International, Childreach and Heifer Project International, were selected based on a demonstrated interest in disability and a willingness to share their organizations' experiences. Each organization specializes in a different program area: relief, agricultural development and child-focused development.

Individual and group interviews with executive level administrators, senior program officers and human resources staff were carried out by the project director during three-day site visits to organization headquarters offices. Organizational documents, field reports and program materials were also reviewed and an inventory of physical accessibility of headquarters facilities was conducted. Comprehensive reports were provided for each organization that reviewed findings and generated organization-specific recommendations for strategies to increase inclusion of people with disabilities.

C. Key Issues Explored by the Research

1. Extent of Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Member Agency Programs and Administration

The research attempted to develop a baseline of data on how people with disabilities are currently included as participants and beneficiaries across the range of programs and services conducted by InterAction member organizations. The research was also designed to explore whether women with disabilities are represented in the international development process proportional to their numbers in the population. In particular, it sought to understand whether anecdotal reports relate to actual participation of women with disabilities in development programs.

2. Data on Employment of People with Disabilities and Disability Inclusion in Organizational Policy

The research attempted to determine whether InterAction member organizations employ people with disabilities both in headquarters and in the field, what type of policies, if any, govern outreach and hiring of people with disabilities, and whether people with disabilities are included in organizational policies and strategic objectives.

3. Disability Perspectives and Experiences of InterAction Member Agencies

The research also sought to explore and understand the perceptions of administrators, practitioners and visionaries among InterAction member agencies regarding issues related to participation of people with disabilities. Development professionals provided information about the extent to which they consider disability issues in setting policies and in administrative structures, and what factors influence agencies decisions to include disability in organizations and programs. Examples of "best practices" were collected in the form of success stories in which InterAction members reported strategies that resulted in increased participation of people with disabilities in development programs.

4. Disability-Specific Programs Operated by InterAction Member Agencies

While focused primarily on inclusion of people with disabilities in programs serving general populations, the research also sought information on disability-specific projects and services conducted by InterAction members. For example, information was sought about how InterAction agencies are working with NGO partners to address inclusion of people with disabilities.

5. Challenges and Obstacles to Inclusion

Finally, the research sought to collect information on how InterAction leaders and program managers perceive the challenges and obstacles to inclusion.

D. Terminology

1. Development assistance: InterAction member organizations that participated in the research operate in diverse arenas, including development, refugee assistance, disaster relief, child welfare and other areas. For simplicity, the terms "development organizations" and "development assistance programs" encompass the diverse services of InterAction organizations.

2. Disability: There is much debate about the best way to define disability. For the purposes of this research, disability was defined as a physical, mental, sensory or psychological impairment that may result in activity limitations and/or restrictions on family, social, civic or economic participation. In some cases, the activity limitation

results from the attitudes of others rather than the actual impairment. Some examples of types of disabilities include: visual impairments or blindness, hearing impairment or deafness, health conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, tuberculosis or HIV / AIDS, limb amputations or deformity, disfigurements, speech impairments, mental disabilities such as mental retardation or learning disabilities, psychiatric conditions, mobility disabilities resulting from polio, spinal injury, head injury, burns, cerebral palsy or stroke, or neuromuscular disease such as muscular dystrophy.

3. Inclusion – **The Development View**: Based on responses to interviews with CEOs and program staff, it appears that "inclusion" in the context of the international development and relief community is a philosophical and programmatic construct used to describe programs that have broad requirements for participation and that do not "target" within the specified service population. Respondents described their programs as inclusive if "everyone is welcome," that is, all eligible members of the population are allowed to participate.

4. Inclusion – **The Disability Community View:** Within the disability community "inclusion" is a term that signifies a method to achieve integration and full participation in the life of the community. The word tends to refer to an antidote to historic isolation and segregation of people with disabilities. For some it also stands for political empowerment - for taking a seat at the table. Inclusion does not mean separate or special programs only for people with disabilities, though it does not suggest that certain medical and rehabilitation programs are inappropriate. Rather, by removing policy, attitudinal and architectural barriers, people with disabilities can participate – be included – in all aspects of society, as can people who do not have disabilities.

E. Identification of InterAction Survey Respondents

One hundred and four agencies of 165 InterAction member organizations (as of March 2000) participated in the research project. Participating organizations represented the diversity of InterAction member agencies, in type and scope of programs, size of the organization, budget, funding sources and mission. (See Appendix B for List of Participating Organizations)

Table 1 on the following page shows the program sectors in which InterAction member agencies work. Organizations identified all program sectors that apply to their organization.

Table 1

Programs Administered by InterAction Member Agencies		
Program	**Number of Organizations**	**Percentages (n=74)**
Community Development	49	66%
Education/Training	47	64%
Public Health (including child survival)	37	50%
Business Development, Cooperatives and Credit	36	49%
Disaster and Emergency Relief	33	45%
Gender Issues/Women in Development	31	42%
Civil Society, Strengthening of	28	38%
Agriculture and Food Production	27	36%
Rural Development	27	36%
AIDS/HIV	25	34%
Development Education and Constituency Building	24	32%
Nutrition Services	24	32%
Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Management Assistance	24	32%
Refugee and Migration Services	23	31%
Information and Communication	21	28%
Institutional and human Resource Development/Management Assistance	21	28%
Population and Family Planning	21	28%
Public Policy and Advocacy	21	28%
Material Aid	20	27%
Youth Services	18	24%
Policy Research and Analysis	17	23%
Volunteer Placement (at home and overseas)	17	23%
Democratic Development	15	20%
Human Rights/Peace/Conflict Resolution	15	20%
Shelter/Housing	15	20%
Disability	14	19%
Urban Development	12	16%
Cultural Preservations/Traditions	11	15%
Rehabilitation/Vocational Services	11	15%
Children and Adoption	10	14%
Citizen and Student Exchange	3	4%
Transportation	3	4%
None	1	1%

Table 2 shows the regions in which InterAction member agencies operate programs. Organizations identified all regions in which they work.

Table 2

Regions InterAction Member Agencies Operate Programs		
Region	**Number of Organizations**	**Percentage (n=74)**
Latin America and the Caribbean	53	72%
Sub-Saharan Africa	53	72%
North America	47	64%
East Asia and the Pacific	46	62%
Europe and Central Asia	45	61%
South Asia	42	57%
Middle East and North Africa	33	45%
Not Applicable	1	1%

InterAction respondent organizations are diverse in size and scope, operating with staff ranging from one to several hundred, with small to multi-million dollar budgets, and that conduct single projects to multi-regional programs. Top funding sources include individual and corporate contributions (87%), foundation grants (74%) and USAID (56%). More than 72% of respondents receive USAID or other federal funding.

DISCUSSION

Profiles for participating InterAction members reflect great diversity in their respective missions and in the resources they allocate to achieve their goals. Participating organizations, therefore, reflect the diversity that exists within the international development community as well as among Interaction member organizations. For those organizations that have larger budgets, and more established programs and infrastructures, there is a greater possibility that more attention as well as money and other resources could be devoted to strengthening efforts to include people with disabilities in both operations and programs. For smaller organizations, greater creativity might be required to realize an inclusive environment but smallness does not mean that little can be done to achieve the desired goal.

The presence of USAID funding in 56% of respondent organizations reinforces the importance of meaningful enforcement of USAID's Disability Policy, which thus far has had

little impact on how recipients treat people with disabilities in employment or in programs aimed at general populations. The USAID Policy, taken together with InterAction's own PVO Disability Policy, establishes a useful mandate that should spur InterAction member organizations into action.

Awareness of the problem is always the first step. There is neither a cost nor a commitment of resources to becoming informed about the ways people with disabilities can be involved. In consultation with indigenous disability groups, development organizations can select among the most appropriate and efficient solutions that will result in greater involvement and inclusion of people with disabilities.

IV.   ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are presented in five sections:

A. Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Member Agency Programs

Included are outcomes of the research that relate to inclusion of people with disabilities in programs operated by InterAction member organizations. Areas in which data are presented include data collection, organizational policy and strategic objectives, strategies for inclusion, perceived challenges to inclusion, accessibility of facilities and accommodation, disability-specific programs operated by InterAction member organizations, partnerships with disability organizations and NGOs on disability issues, and the strategies they use.

B. People with Disabilities: Employment Within InterAction Member Agencies

Included are data concerning the internal orientation of InterAction member organizations to disability. Some of the areas explored by this aspect of the research are employment in headquarters and field offices, disability representation among staff, organization training, architectural and communication accessibility, barriers or obstacles to hiring people with disabilities, budget allocation, and the organization's general cultural attitude toward disability.

C. Participation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

This research focused on inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in InterAction programs. Data highlight issues such as women with disabilities in InterAction members general programs, Women in Development or gender-specific programs, strategies used by InterAction member organizations to include women and girls with disabilities in programs, women with disabilities in disability-specific programs, programs for women and girls with disabilities, barriers or obstacles to inclusion of women with disabilities in programs, and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in organization policies and strategic objectives.

D. Best Practices and CEO Recommendations

Examples of programs and strategies conducted by InterAction member organizations that included people with disabilities are provided. Creative and insightful suggestions by InterAction CEOs demonstrate that development agencies are highly qualified to solve difficult problems.

E. Conclusion, Key Research Findings, Recommendations and Summary of Key Research Outcomes

V.   INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN INTERACTION MEMBER AGENCY PROGRAMS

A. InterAction Programs: Data Collection Regarding People with Disabilities

"*We do not have or collect information about disabled clients that our member institutions may serve. They don't collect it either. It would be very useful to have that information in order to underscore the fact to these microfinance institutions that very few are currently being served.*" *(InterAction respondent organization)*

A significant outcome of the research is that 93% (69 of 74) of respondent organizations are unable to determine the actual extent of participation of people with disabilities in their programs because of insufficient collection of data. Two percent of 74 respondents were able to estimate percentages of disabled participants or substantiate their estimates with data.

DISCUSSION

Early, proactive efforts to assure gender inclusiveness in development programs were met with some resistance. Lacking data and real understanding of the factors that affect women's participation, development organizations often incorrectly assumed that eligible women were participating according to their capability and interest. Accurate data about the extent to which women actually participated produced deeper awareness by development organizations of gender and development issues. Such data enabled organizations to design and implement projects that began responding to the quantified needs of both women and men, taking into account their respective roles and interests.

Strategists for gender integration now recognize the importance of data collection to serve as baseline and evaluation of interventions. In the *G/WID Strategic Plan of 1995*, the USAID Office of Women in Development states the problem and the importance of collecting information: "Knowledge regarding women's roles is often limited…with data and findings that are not comparable and that do not support the derivation of broad implications useful in program and policy development to benefit women…Improving this information base will be important for the achievement of [G/WID objectives]" In their report on InterAction membership organizations, the CAW states: "Collecting gender disaggregated data …is critical in order to design programs that promote equal participation and benefits for men and women."

Metts and Metts, in their report on disability inclusion in USAID activities in Ghana, recommended that *"identification and recruitment strategies must be supported by data-collection processes rigorous enough to facilitate proper evaluation."* (Metts 1998)

B. Organizational Policy and Strategic Objectives

Forty-six percent (34 of 74) of respondent organizations have policies or organizational statements concerning employment of people with disabilities. Only nine of the 34 respondent organizations have policies that address inclusion of people with disabilities in program implementation. Eight include people with disabilities in program design, six in areas such as reasonable accommodation, volunteer development and fundraising, and five respectively in program evaluation, partner organizations or subcontracts. Table 3 illustrates this data.

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Table 3

Aspect of Organization Disability Policy That Addresses Disability		
Description of Aspect	**Number of Organizations**	**Percentage of Organizations (n=34)**
Hiring and employment	34	100%
Program implementation	9	26%
Program design	8	24%
Other (reasonable accommodation, accessibility, volunteer development, fundraising, communication, membership, compensation, benefits and promotion)	6	18%
Program evaluation	5	15%
Partner organizations or sub-contractors	5	15%

Eighty-two percent (61 of 74) of respondent organizations do not refer specifically to people with disabilities in strategic objectives. Only 12 of 74 respondent organizations refer to people with disabilities in their organization's strategic objectives. Seven of the 12 do so through program implementation. Table 4 illustrates how these 12 respondents refer to people with disabilities in their strategic objectives.

Table 4

How People with Disabilities are Referred to in InterAction Member Agency Strategic Objectives	
How People with Disabilities are Referred	**Number of Organizations (n=12)**
Through program implementation	7
Through EEO policy	2
Through diversity initiatives and policy	2
Through targeted recruitment of people with disabilities for job openings, program participants, media images and promotional materials	1

Although concrete data are difficult to obtain regarding the number of people with disabilities in organizations' programs, many organizations assume people with disabilities are being served based on the nature of their 'non-discriminatory' program policies. For example:

"We work with children who match these criteria without regards to disabled status."

"All of our partner organizations must provide health care services in a non-discriminatory manner.Anyone who is eligible for a program may participate."

DISCUSSION

Gender integration in development programs has shown that coherent policy and strategic objectives are required in order to realize systematic change that achieves inclusion of women.

In their survey of gender integration by InterAction member organizations, the Commission on the Advancement of Women (CAW) identified organizational Gender Policy Statements as key, explaining that "Developing a policy statement on gender and development is an important step in promoting gender equity in programs and within an organization's structure." (InterAction Commission on the Advancement of Women, 1998)

USAID acknowledged the critical role of policy for addressing inclusion of people with disabilities in USAID by enactment of the USAID Disability Policy and Plan of Action, and recommended that every USAID mission should implement a specific disability strategic plan (USAID 1997).

Metts and Metts also emphasize the importance of disability policy in their recommendations to USAID in Ghana:

"Positive outcomes will also be realized as all of the entities that do business with USAID in Ghana begin to implement their own new inclusionary policies and strategies in response to the new USAID mandate." (Metts and Metts 1998)

Inclusive programs should incorporate strategies and perspectives of people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities in every phase of the development process,

beginning with program design and continuing through implementation and evaluation of projects and policies. USAID's Disability Policy suggests,

> *"Many mainstream programs, with minor modification at the design stage, help address [needs of people with disabilities.]"* (USAID 1997)

InterAction's CAW seconds this approach to inclusion in their recommendations for gender integration.

> *"Integrating gender considerations fully into programming requires that gender roles and relations are taken into account in all stages of programming from project design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation." (InterAction CAW, Best Practices for Gender Integration in Organizations and Programs from the InterAction Community)*

Furthermore, *Loud Proud and Prosperous: an International Coalition on Microcredit and Economic Development for Women with Disabilities,* created at the 1998 MIUSA International Symposium on Microcredit for Women with Disabilities, elaborated on specific considerations that should be included in project design.

> *"In order for women with disabilities to enter microenterprise ventures on an equal basis with non-disabled women, microcredit and economic development programs must build strategies and costs of equipment and services for disability related accommodations into all project and funding plans."* (Mobility International USA 1998)

C. Organizational Strategies for Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

Thirty-nine percent (29 of 74) of respondent organizations indicated that they use no particular strategies to include people with disabilities in their programs. On the other hand, 52% (39 of 74) organizations reported that they do use various strategies to include people with disabilities in their programs. These strategies are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Strategies Used by InterAction Member Agencies to Include People with Disabilities in Programs		
Strategies	**Number of Organizations Indicating This Strategy**	**Percentage (n=74)**
None of the strategies are used	29	39%
People with disabilities participate in our program training, meetings and conferences	25	34%
Program training is conducted at locations physically accessible to people with disabilities	18	24%
Our organization contacts community members for assistance in locating people with disabilities	14	19%
People with disabilities and disability organizations are sought out to contribute their perspectives and concerns on issues related to our organization's activities and programs	14	19%
Organizations of people with disabilities are contacted by our staff to inform them of programs or activities	13	18%
Our organization facilitates coalition-building between organizations of people with disabilities and non-disability organizations	11	15%
Our organization provides resources for people with disabilities to participate in regional and international conferences	9	12%
Don't Know, Not Applicable, No Answer Provided	6	7%

DISCUSSION

While 39 of 74 organizations indicated they carry out strategies to foster inclusion of people with disabilities, they do not collect sufficient data to show that their efforts result in actual participation of people with disabilities. These inclusion strategies represent a good faith effort by these organizations to include women and men with disabilities but they have not yet

incorporated a method that will either measure and report the results or fulfill InterAction's commitment to accountability in relation to its gender, diversity and disability standards.

D. Perceived Challenges to Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

InterAction member organizations were asked to identify challenges they face to increasing participation of people with disabilities in their programs. Responses were organized into three general categories: organizational, physical, and attitudinal and cultural. Fifty-three percent (39 of 74) respondent organizations indicated that they either did not know what challenges their organization faced, responded that the question was not applicable, or they did not respond to the question at all. Eight percent (6 of 74) of respondent organizations indicated that they do not make an effort to increase participation of people with disabilities, and five percent (4 of 74) of the organizations indicated that they do not think they face any challenges.

DISCUSSION

Specific responses to this question, discussed below, help create a more complete picture of the problems organizations perceive they face when they consider including people with disabilities in general programs. Perhaps the more important outcome, however, is the fact that more than half of the participating organizations indicated that they were either unaware of any challenges for their organization, thought that the question was not applicable to them or did not respond. Apparently the idea that challenges could exist that would affect the organization's ability to achieve disability inclusion is a new one for those respondents who answered the question. These respondents have not yet linked specific challenges to the absence of people with disabilities from development programs. This revealing perception makes a strong case for a concerted disability awareness and training program that stresses helping organizations understand disability in the development context and the complex factors that can prevent people with disabilities from participating in development programs and activities.

1. Funding and Time Constraints

Of the 35 respondent organizations that identified challenges to inclusion, 34% (12 of 35) cited funding and time limitations as a major challenge that prevents them from including people

with disabilities in their general programs. Small organizations with limited budgets specifically expressed this concern. A number of respondents expressed the concern that expenses related to inclusion could be so significant that they would be required to petition their funders for additional support or that they might have to carry out inclusion of people with disabilities entirely with separate funds.

> *"Our primary funding model limits the amount of program dollars that can be spent on any single child or group of children. We work with children with and without disability, but our treatment of disabilities and programs for children with disabilities is limited to our primary funding model."*

Another respondent explained:

> *"Our funding all comes from the US government, and it's pretty clearly stated what we're supposed to do with that money. So if we were [working] on any big scale, we would have to get contract approval and the funding to [focus on disability]."*

Other respondents stated or suggested that expenses to make programs accessible are unjustified because of the prevalence of poverty in the locales where they work, and the limited economic capacity of the countries in which the organization works to pay for access improvements.

While very few specific potential expenses related to inclusion were noted by respondents, one organization suggested that additional funding would be needed, primarily for travel that would enable staff to work more closely with affiliate countries in order

> *"to learn about their disability outreach, advocate for increased awareness and services, review the present status of accessibility of affiliate offices and share best practices among affiliates."*

DISCUSSION

Respondent organizations' identification of lack of funding and time as a barrier to inclusion is an indication that some respondent organizations misunderstand or are unaware of ways that inclusion can be achieved when resources are scarce. Similarly, they also appear to perceive that inclusion of people with disabilities requires a new service or program rather than including eligible people who are also disabled in existing programs.

These twin perceptions confirm anecdotal observations by disability activists working in development: that exclusion is based on lack of information about disability and on concern related to cost of inclusion. Unquestionably, creating new, specialized programs would require significant time and money. The research, however, focused primarily on inclusion of people with disabilities in existing programs.

InterAction agencies are among the most adept and experienced in the world at finding resources and creating solutions in the midst of adverse conditions and situations of injustice. Perhaps one explanation why inclusion of women and men with disabilities seems so daunting is that some Interaction member organizations lack information about simple solutions and the whereabouts of resources that could facilitate inclusion. Taking steps to meet the challenge of including people with disabilities also may not be perceived as relevant within the current mission and framework of the particular organizations, even though most organizations indicate that they operate in an inclusive manner.

Resources exist that can facilitate inclusion of people with disabilities in existing development programs. People with disabilities themselves and their families are often among the most creative innovators in their communities, with extensive experience using the resources at hand to meet the necessities of daily life. However, for many development organizations, getting started may require a shift in thinking. Rather than asking what extraordinary measures are required to address problems that might come up related to inclusion, an alternative approach could be to assert that all eligible people in the community will participate, including those with disabilities. In light of that goal, how can people with disabilities be identified and included? Such a shift in orientation to disability opens the door to creative and cooperative solutions when and if accessibility or other problems arise.

By understanding that some assumptions and beliefs about disability are rooted in misinformation and stereotype, development organizations can begin to take steps to ensure that

people with disabilities are not unintentionally or wrongly prevented from contributing to and participating in development activities.

2. Outreach and Communication

According to 34% (12 of 35) of respondent organizations that use strategies to include people with disabilities, inadequate outreach affects the level of participation of people with disabilities.

> *"The main challenge our organization faces is first of all, getting the participation of people with disabilities in its programs. At the present time, we have zero participation."*

A majority of organizations indicated that they are not sure where to locate people with disabilities in locales where they operate programs. Many organizations mentioned that they need to get the word out to people with disabilities. They expressed a need for information about how to let people with disabilities know programs are open to them. Some organizations discussed the need to improve outreach, including using networks – within the disability community - the need for more effective communication methods, and a clearer understanding of the issues that affect participation of people with disabilities in order to implement better outreach.

3. Lack of Knowledge and Training about Disability

While a number of respondents described the need to establish and maintain an ongoing professional training effort within the organization, 74% (55 of 74) of respondent organizations do not have a diversity training or awareness program. Of the 19 organizations that do conduct diversity training for employees, 12 include disability as an issue of diversity. Seven of 35 respondent organizations that identified challenges to including people with disabilities cited lack of knowledge and understanding about disability by program staff as a factor that reduces the effectiveness of organizations' capacity to include people with disabilities. One respondent described the challenge of

"getting field staff to think creatively of how to integrate people with disabilities into major programs in countries with little awareness of the issues or rights of people with disabilities."

DISCUSSION

In various contexts throughout the research, respondents described how lack of training and information about disability acts as an obstacle to inclusion of people with disabilities in their service models. Diversity training is as an essential first step that organizations must take if they wish to broaden their understanding of the issues underrepresented communities experience in the development context. While InterAction has adopted diversity amendments, most members do not conduct diversity training or offer awareness programs. Similarly, implementation of the newly adopted Disability Amendments will require a commitment by many respondent organizations to conduct disability training either within the diversity framework or separately.

Because so few people with disabilities work with development organizations and little data are available that suggests they participate in general field programs, respondent organizations, therefore, have had few opportunities to assimilate the unique problems and issues people with disabilities face. Lack of exposure can perpetuate assumptions about disability that may be inaccurate and discourage the need for proactive planning for inclusion.

4. Accessibility in the Field

i. Accessibility of Field and Affiliate Offices

Fifty-two of 74 respondent organizations operate field or affiliate offices. Twenty organizations described difficulty obtaining accessible facilities in their program areas due to the lack of accessible office space and the fact that most existing buildings are inaccessible because they do not have ramps or elevators. Many organizations think that the costs of making their field offices accessible will require funding beyond their budget. Describing the challenges they perceive to increasing accessibility of field or affiliate offices, respondents cite inaccessible existing facilities, space donated by partner organizations, financial constraints, lack of policy and laws requiring access and local partner organizations and landlords that are unaccustomed to considering accessibility.

"Our field offices are generally based within partner agencies, or donated by local dioceses. We don't have a lot of flexibility as to where we are located."

"Since all of our field offices are leased, the challenge would be to convince landlords to upgrade their facilities if increased physical accessibility was an issue. In those instances where we do have disabled employees... I would hope that field leaders would make the necessary provisions, but we do not have any policy that requires them to do so."

ii. Infrastructure Conditions

Respondent organizations reported that the conditions inherent in working in developing countries dictate the level of inclusion of people with disabilities that is possible for their organizations. According to respondent organizations, poor infrastructure, dense urban areas, rural environments, geographical diversity and distance from program sites each affect the ability of people with disabilities to participate.

Most of the CEOs who were interviewed spoke about how physical structures – hospitals, meeting places, homes – in developing countries are often inaccessible to people with physical disabilities. They too emphasized the challenges presented by unpaved roads, inaccessible schools, hospitals and transportation systems. Relief and refugee organizations in particular elaborated on the difficulties of addressing accessibility in war-torn environments. Security issues and logistical access challenges in these environments pose such difficulties that these respondents found it difficult to conceive how they could begin to incorporate a concern for accessibility or inclusion of people with disabilities. One respondent stated summarily:

"Refugee camps are generally inaccessible."

iii. Laws, Policies and Standards on Program Accessibility

A number of organizations expressed the perceived difficulty of making adaptations without standards and legislation for accessibility in the countries in which they are working. CEOs also noted that legislation such as the ADA that requires accessibility for people with disabilities has not been enacted in most countries in which they work. Where laws exist they are often not enforced. One organization noted that it would be very difficult to set standards for accessibility across varying conditions and settings. In the absence of local requirements, some

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organizations questioned the appropriateness of demanding access on behalf of people with disabilities. One organization stated the issue this way:

> *"There may not be any law requiring access by people with disabilities so there may be a lack of consensus as well as sensitivity on this issue. Our organization does not own these institutions so we cannot demand that they…make their facilities accessible."*

DISCUSSION

An effective rule of law and coherent policy regarding access can be critical tools for improving accessibility, as demonstrated by the dramatically increased level of architectural accessibility that now exists in countries that have laws requiring access. Still, even without laws, alternative methods for achieving access or delivering services can be effective in serving eligible people with disabilities who would otherwise be excluded.

While US disability rights laws do not technically apply to the programs that development organizations operate abroad, the underlying principles of inclusion and equal treatment are profoundly important to people with disabilities who are among the populations they serve. Adoption of these principles and incorporation of the spirit of US laws can guide the development of more inclusive programs. Furthermore, US architectural accessibility guidelines should not be dismissed as overly technical and costly for use in a development context. The accessibility principles they contain can serve as a comprehensive guideline for usability. For example, simple ramps can open a program that could otherwise be closed to an eligible person with a mobility disability. In this example, the basic message that can be taken from the US accessibility guidelines is that ramps can make inclusion possible, not that ramps have to be constructed in accordance with US building guidelines.

When addressing accessibility issues, cost is often the first thing that comes to mind. The US "program accessibility" concept, which requires bringing the program to the person if the person cannot get to the program, offers a strategy to provide access without making costly renovations. Delivering the service in an alternative location is one way to deal with many of the objections to costly infrastructure changes noted by the respondents. Alternative ways to achieve architectural access are also acceptable in such situations, including temporary ramps and removing bathroom doors to widen entryways for wheelchair access. Providing physical

assistance to the individual who wishes to participate in the program can also be an option under certain circumstances.

One lesson from the US experience that should serve as a guideline abroad is that it costs almost nothing to make a new building or structure – including a refugee camp – usable by people with disabilities who require some level of accessibility. However, it can cost a great deal to retrofit that same building once it has been constructed. In refugee situations where temporary shelter and housing are being created, some degree of usability should always be possible. In this instance, awareness of the need for simple, functional access and a policy requiring it can translate into a no-cost or very low cost solution because the structures are being erected on the spot.

Probably the most important single step development organizations can take to address accessibility issues in most situations is to establish linkages with indigenous disability organizations or individual leaders. If development organizations are committed to inclusion of people with disabilities in their programs, local organizations or individuals familiar with disability concerns can help identify acceptable solutions, join with the organization to negotiate with partner groups, landlords and others, and reach out to the disability community itself. Collaboration, however, can take place only after development organizations have made a serious commitment to serving people with disabilities who are among eligible groups.

Finally, the environmental, worker's rights, child labor and other socially important movements have spurred the US government to include compliance by overseas NGOs and government recipients with clean air and water, and child labor standards as a condition of funding, even in countries that do not have such policies. While similar policies concerning disability have not yet been adopted, development organizations are perfectly situated to provide leadership by modeling them within their operations abroad.

5. Attitudes Toward Disability

i. Cultural Influences

Cultural attitudes about disability in host countries influence InterAction member organizations' ability to address accessibility, according to responses to the written questionnaires, in-depth interviews and CEO interviews. (See section VIII. for a summary of CEO Recommendations) Ten organizations identified cultural attitudes towards disability in the

countries where they work. Nearly one third of the 75 CEOs interviewed mentioned culturally influenced attitudes of local field staff and local NGOs as a factor that affects the participation of people with disabilities in their organizations' programs.

> *"There is still a stigma attached to people with disabilities in much of the Third World, which results in low self-esteem and in children and adults with disabilities being locked away in family homes, institutionalized, or abandoned."*

Another CEO stated,

> *"We can do our part of including [people with disabilities], but if the society itself in which we operate is not supportive, then the impact – what we can do to be inclusive – is going to be hard."*

Contemplating InterAction member organizations' role in raising awareness about disability in order to facilitate adaptations for inclusion, a number of respondents articulated a dilemma common to development assistance: What impact will this effort have on the rest of the culture, and what impact is appropriate?

> *"Is accessibility an expectation of the people? Is making [partner NGO] offices accessible going to change things? What is the impact on the rest of the culture?"*

One CEO, however, warned against exaggerating the cultural barriers when thinking about the participation of people with disabilities in field programs. His concern was that talk of such barriers is often based on stereotypes about third world cultures and different groups of people.

ii. Intra-Organizational Attitudes

Seventeen percent (13 of 77) of CEOs interviewed noted that attitudinal issues within their own organizations might affect the participation of people with disabilities. They cited lack of discussion and lack of education on disability issues, the tendency of staff to treat people with

disabilities as victims, and the tendency of non-disabled people to perceive people with disabilities in stereotyped ways. One CEO elaborated,

> *"I've often found that where people have not had direct experience with a person who's different from themselves – whether that be race, gender or disability – they might have some assumptions that need to be challenged, in terms of embracing and accepting someone who's different than themselves."*

Another CEO mentioned that the biggest barrier was simply getting the board and the management to be more proactive when participation of people with disabilities is an issue in their organization:

> *"The barrier is a mental one in recognizing the need to be more aggressive."*

iii. Attitudes of Funders

Lack of interest in people with disabilities by funders and donors was noted by a number of respondent organizations. As one organization stated,

> *"Donors seldom express interest in programs targeted toward people with disabilities."*

Such lack of interest by donors suggests that they, too, think all people with disabilities require specialized programs or a new program focus. One respondent suggested that having accurate data about the number of people with disabilities being served in programs would be a useful mechanism with which to demonstrate to funders that people with disabilities are being under- served in existing programs.

Forty-five percent (35 of 77) of CEOs interviewed said that including a disability inclusion requirement in Requests For Proposals (RFPs) would raise awareness of disability issues and motivate organizations to pay attention to the issue.

> *"It would force NGOs to be more inclusive and think about the omission and to be cognizant of them as they develop programs and as they seek funding for programs."*

"The thing that guides [most non-profits], beyond their own mission, is really donor requests. So if that was part of a donor's request, I think it would definitely be an effective way of making that happen."

"It would make us aware that [disability inclusion] is part and parcel of doing a competent job in the field."

"You and I both know that sometimes change needs to be legislated, or there needs to be a positive coercion or motivation – that at some point the rhetoric needs to be measured by action."

"If you added a few sentences, it just gives the international organization more consciousness, the same way they add gender now. It makes you think about it more in a specific way, rather than in the general terms we tend to think about beneficiaries."

On the other hand, 16% (12 of 77) CEOs believed that a disability inclusion requirement in requests for proposals (RFPs) would not be effective.

"Inclusion of such a requirement in RFPs would result in superficial maneuvering or lip service."

"It would create frustration for us, because there's nothing we are, of our own volition, not doing."

iv. Serving People with Disabilities Considered Outside the "Nature of the Work"

"Disability is not within our mission."

This sentiment, expressed by several CEOs, reflects an assumption that appears throughout the research: that people with disabilities comprise a separate target group with needs that do not fall within the mission of the organization. Overall, CEOs recognized people with

disabilities as a marginalized group, but they also expressed the belief that disability is not a priority of their organizations or partner organizations.

Respondent organization comments confirm the perception that people with disabilities cannot participate or are not part of the population that their organizations serve. For example, a provider of family planning services said,

> *"Our programs do not track whether or not the people we work with are disabled as [disability] is not applicable to what we do."*

Such an attitude suggests that this organization does not perceive that women with disabilities in the community might need access to family planning services. This perception may be the result of little or no actual participation by women with disabilities, possibly because no outreach to identify them has been undertaken, or due to lack of access to the facility in which services are being provided, or to cultural attitudes that discourage or even forbid their participation.

Another organization that works with farmers assumed that farmers will not be people with disabilities.

> *"They're not in the target group that we're working with. The farmers aren't disabled. If they're mentally disabled they probably wouldn't be running their own farm anyway."*

Some respondents said that using scarce resources for people with disabilities is not a legitimate priority in situations of poverty or crisis. Doing so would raise objections by the local society.

> *"You know, in a country where the per capita income is $1200 a year or $1500 a year, where one-third of the public is malnourished – in other words, to go to a society like that and say that we're going to design a special program that helps people with disabilities – they're going to say, 'Wait a minute. We're not even feeding a third of our citizens, and we're developing special programs for people that have this or that disadvantage?!' I mean, come on. So it's not a matter of them necessarily being insensitive. It's a matter of*

poverty being so excruciating and so grinding that it essentially obscures, to some extent, other legitimate social issues."

"You want to save as many people as possible for what you spend. In emergency phase of [our] work, you serve everyone. Then you focus on refugees. People with disabilities rarely make it to camps – the largest concentration of people with disabilities and the elderly are in IDP (internally displaced populations). The disabled are the last to leave the city and end up being taken care of by elderly. Also, refugee camps are generally inaccessible."

One CEO explained why resources for accessibility are unjustified:

"[Another] obstacle is the incredible levels of poverty that exist within the communities. Sometimes, you know, it's just everything is so limited when you don't even find desks in the school. We don't necessarily build desks either...we work with what's there. So our function is not to go into a village or a new schoolroom and be accessible for somebody on crutches."

"Overseas we do encounter difficulties where the resources are so limited that the culture is more inclined to serve those that do not have physical or mental handicaps first. If there is any money left over, they would serve these other groups. And, of course, there's never any money left over. Or there's not very much."

DISCUSSION

The data revealed by the research about attitudes raise the most important question of the study. Why do many respondent organizations fail to acknowledge the presence and needs of people with disabilities within their service populations when these women and men are the poorest, least enfranchised, and most discriminated-against group in every society? In light of the humanitarian goals of most development organizations, this omission is startling and paradoxical, but perhaps not surprising.

The research outcomes on the role and impact of attitudes revealed the strongest evidence that many respondent organizations appear to exclude people with disabilities from their programs based on incorrect assumptions and misperceptions. For example, many respondent organization CEOs tended to perceive physical barriers as the dominant problem preventing people with disabilities from participating. While physical access can be critical, alternative methods to include individuals who require access must be considered. One CEO offered the example that extreme poverty often means that necessities such as desks might not be available in schools, implying that in light of these limitations, accessibility costs cannot be justified.

This reasoning suggests that access is viewed as a binary choice, either ramps, or nothing, which might lead to exclusion of an eligible child. In fact, inclusion of children with disabilities in educational programs is so important that they should be encouraged to attend under any circumstances. If the choice is exclusion from education altogether because schools lack ramps then children must be helped into the building. Participation is the goal in every situation. The method to facilitate participation must be devised in response to local circumstances and resources, and in collaboration with indigenous groups, but exclusion should never be an acceptable solution when a person with a disability is otherwise eligible to participate in a development program.

In fact, a much greater deterrent to participation of women and men with disabilities than lack of accessibility appears to be the impact of incorrect assumptions and misperceptions about disability. Many people with disabilities simply require a willingness on the part of respondent organizations to rise above discriminatory attitudes – either their own, or those based on local culture, custom or belief. Female genital mutilation is now regarded as a human rights violation and is opposed by many organizations worldwide, though it is a deeply embedded cultural practice in many countries. Similarly, cultural norms and practices could stigmatize and ostracize an individual with, for example, facial disfigurement or a paralyzed limb while she or he is perfectly capable of contributing to the community or attending school but for social oppression and related lack of opportunity.

It is critically important that development organizations understand the many ways that physical or mental characteristics or limitations inspire prejudicial social treatment. By being less than proactive in confronting disability-related stigma and exclusion, both within their

organizations and in the field, respondent organizations may be contributing to the perpetuation of social practices that limit opportunities and full citizenship for people with disabilities.

6. External (Funding Agency, Partner Organization) Limits

Some respondent organizations reported that selection of participants for their programs by external entities limits their control over how people with disabilities are included.

"Participants for our programs are selected by the US Department of State, not us."

DISCUSSION

Indeed, donor selection of program participants creates an additional barrier to recruitment and inclusion of people with disabilities. While a broad voluntary mandate of nondiscrimination, inclusion and accommodation has been adopted by the US State Department in relation to its funded programs abroad, for example, implementation of the intent of that mandate remains a significant challenge. Nevertheless, program organizers who are committed to a principle of inclusion can express that commitment to donor organizations and also can facilitate outreach to identify qualified program participants who are individuals with disabilities. The fact remains that people with disabilities are an integral part of every group being served by development organizations. Furthermore, development organizations also usually have some measure of control over the selection pool. Because people with disabilities will always be among a given eligible population, their numbers in the selection pool can be increased if development organizations are committed to doing so.

7. "Change Takes Time"

Some organizations perceive inclusion of people with disabilities as a very significant change in the way they do business that will take a long time. As one CEO stated,

"You know, the single biggest barrier is time. So many of the good solutions take years, a lot of groundwork and bringing people together over a long period of time. Then, gradually a solution emerges out of the community."

Another CEO echoed these sentiments:

"There is a process to change that requires a certain amount of time and incorporating new attitudes, and then going to the next step. And I'm not sure I can come up with a resource, other than time, that would help."

DISCUSSION

While no one would assert that social change takes place rapidly, certain factors contribute to the pace at which it does take place. Vision and leadership are two critical elements. When combined with opportunity, vision and leadership can dramatically alter the status quo. The disability rights movement in the US is an excellent example of the convergence of these elements, which culminated in the enactment of the ADA in 1990 – when such comprehensive legislation was unthinkable a decade earlier. Similarly, development organizations, many of whom already tackle some of the most difficult social problems of the day, could provide the leadership that is so urgently needed to reverse the widespread practice of excluding people with disabilities from the services they provide. Social change is in significant part a matter of will.

E. Disability-Specific Programs Operated by InterAction Member Agencies

Thirty-two percent (24 of 74) of participant InterAction member organizations dedicate resources to disability-specific programs. Of these, 15 described programs that focus on the disability, including programs addressing prevention or treatment of medical conditions leading to disability, such as HIV/AIDS and river blindness, and other programs such as rehabilitation services or provision of disability-specific equipment such as prosthetics and orthotics.

Other respondents described programs that focus on capacity building for community members with disabilities. Examples included a child welfare program that targets disabled children, and vocational training for blind residents of a refugee camp. One microfinance program built in a credit line to be used specifically by disabled microentrepeneurs. Another operates a dairy cattle project for women in which the majority of participants are blind. One organization subcontracts with a local disability-led NGO that provides training and support to empower people with disabilities to contribute to community development. Another organization responds to needs identified by a local disability-led NGO with capacity building and identification of resources.

A number of organizations took innovative approaches that combined disability-focused treatment with capacity building opportunities for people with disabilities. An HIV/ AIDS prevention and medical program also offers microcredit loans to self-help groups of people with AIDS. Community based rehabilitation (CBR) programs in Cambodia and Kenya train people with disabilities and their family members to provide rehabilitation services in the community. One program tests and provides hearing aids to deaf and hearing-impaired children, but also provided specialized educational services and sign language training for teachers and interpreters.

Table 6 shows the types of disability-specific programs that respondent organizations operate.

Table 6

Types of Disability-Specific Programs Operated by InterAction Member Agencies		
Type of Disability-Specific Program	**Number of Organizations Operating This Program**	**Percentage (n=24)**
Medical	6	24%
Capacity-building	5	20%
Child-focused	3	12%
HIV/AIDS	3	12%
Funding	2	8%
Landmines	2	8%
Prosthetics/Orthotics	2	8%
Sports/Recreation	2	8%
Agriculture	1	4%
Disability Services	1	4%
Education	1	4%
Food Program	1	4%
Microfinance	1	4%
Physical/mental disability	1	4%
Psycho-social	1	4%
Rehabilitation	1	4%
Solar Cooking	1	4%
Supply Distribution	1	4%

DISCUSSION

Although the long-term goal of inclusion of people with disabilities in existing development programs is to foster integration and empower people with disabilities so they can participate in their communities, disability-specific programs can provide important, sometimes critical and life-saving support to people with disabilities. In recommendations to the World Bank, economist Dr. Robert L. Metts suggests that,

> *"International strategies to increase the economic and social contributions of people with disabilities must [employ] integrated and multifaceted combinations of rehabilitation, inclusion and empowerment strategies." (Metts, 1998)*

The USAID Disability Policy, furthermore, acknowledges that,

> *"The response to [factors limiting participation of people with disabilities] must be a balanced combination of prevention, rehabilitation and measures for the equalization of opportunities."* (USAID 1997)

USAID's Disability Policy suggests that all programs should be accessible to people with disabilities, noting,

> *"People with disabilities have the same needs as others for nutrition, family planning, health care, training and employment."* (USAID 1997)

Likewise, disability-specific programs may be useful as stepping-stones along a path to full participation in communities, but they also risk perpetuating segregation and marginalization. Rather than assuming the need for a separate program as a starting point, it may be appropriate to begin by involving women and men with disabilities in existing programs. With consultation involving local disability groups, including existing organizations of women with disabilities, people with disabilities can be identified and recruited, and disability-specific accommodations will evolve that actually enable disabled people to participate in the fullest capacity possible. If special programs are needed, development organizations must be mindful

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that segregated programs often perpetuate inequities and the mistaken belief that people with disabilities must be served in separate programs. Development organizations that operate separate programs must build the capacity of their participants to join broader community-based development programs.

F. InterAction Partnerships with Other NGOs on Disability Issues

Thirty percent (22 of 74) of respondent organizations indicated that they have partnered with other NGOs regarding disability issues. Twenty-four percent (18 of 74) of respondents described partnership experiences with disability-led NGOs. These partnerships included project collaboration, technical assistance, program coordination, provision of supplies, funding, and referral or subcontracts.

Successful strategies used by respondent organizations to work together with disability-led NGOs and the number of organizations that used them are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Successful Strategies Used by InterAction Member Agencies When Partnering with Disability-Led NGOs		
Strategy	**Number of Organizations Who Use These Strategies**	**Percentage (n=18)**
Identifying /Complementing Strengths and Weaknesses	4	23%
Communication	3	17%
Partnership/Collaboration	2	11%
Common Goals/Project Vision	1	6%
Provision of Materials/Equipment	1	6%
Training	1	6%
No Answer Provided, Not Applicable	8	44%

DISCUSSION

The research revealed the encouraging fact that almost a third of member organizations that participated in the study have had some experience working with NGOs interested in or dedicated to disability concerns. While some of these alliances were formed to provide

specialized medical or rehabilitative services to participants with disabilities, others were formed to enhance the primary development organization's capacity to understand and respond to the needs of people with disabilities within the target populations. These alliances can serve as motivation and a model, as well as a resource to other development organizations.

The critical role of indigenous disability organizations, preferably those led by people with disabilities themselves, and the importance of supporting these organizations from a development standpoint, has been acknowledged by USAID in its agency Disability Policy, which recommends that US PVOs support indigenous NGOs that are interested in issues affecting people with disabilities. The 1998 Disability Policy report advises:

> *"Programs that are largely NGO-driven already include the participation of organizations that represent people with disabilities. These organizations exist and are growing. Support of these organizations fit easily within the USAID goal of strengthening civil society. As a rule, people with disabilities are the last to receive education and other services in developing countries. Because of this historic discrimination, many organizations of people with disabilities need support in organizational development."* (USAID 1998)

Metts and Metts concur. In their recommendations to USAID related to activities in Ghana, they state,

> *"We also strongly suggest targeted interventions to support the emerging organizations of people with disabilities in Ghana, for it is through these types of grassroots organizations that people with disabilities in Ghana can begin to organize to represent their own interests."* (Metts and Metts 1998)

Furthermore, the USAID Disability Team established the suggested 1999 goal for missions of identifying

> *"at least one contact organization in the disability community."*

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InterAction members could use USAID's guidelines as a model by establishing a similar goal for each of its member organizations. Such a step would enable members to begin the process of developing relationships with these organizations and their key players that will lead to identifying, recruiting, accommodating and serving individuals with disabilities who are present within service populations. It will also serve the goal of building acceptance of disability among member agencies through education and contact, and also through hands-on experience that inevitably helps to reinforce the reason why inclusion is so important.

VI.   PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: EMPLOYMENT WITHIN INTERACTION MEMBER AGENCIES

A. Employment in Headquarters Offices

Eighty-eight percent (65 of 74) of responding InterAction member agencies report that their organizations do not take affirmative steps to recruit people with disabilities. Respondent organizations note that they lack knowledge about where and how to recruit people with disabilities for hiring, how to accommodate employees with disabilities in the US or how to foster employment opportunities with affiliates of partners abroad.

Among the 23% (17 of 74) of respondent organizations that do recruit women and men with disabilities for employment, job announcements are posted with a variety of organizations including vocational rehabilitation offices, independent living centers, disabled students' service offices and disability organization newsletters.

To be effective, employment policies must be attached to strategies and resources for implementation and monitoring. Of the 99% of respondents that have equal opportunity hiring policies in place, 82% (61 of 74) of these include references to disability. Forty-six percent (34 of 74) of respondent organizations have a disability policy or statement that specifically addresses hiring and for people with disabilities. However, only 14 of 34 respondent organizations with disability policies or statements have procedures in place to monitor the policies. Seventy-one percent (24 of 34) of respondent organizations with disability policies or statements reported that they do not dedicate resources to implementation of disability policies.

B. Disability Representation Among Staff

Respondent organizations identified that people with disabilities occupy less than 1% of staff positions in all categories including field staff, interns, middle and senior management, support staff and volunteers (of usable data collected). Paradoxically, 82% of 34 respondents that have a disability policy report that their organizations have encountered "no problems" implementing non-discrimination policies involving people with disabilities. The actual number of disabled employees might be somewhat higher because most organizations are legally prohibited from requesting disclosure of disability. Nevertheless, the extremely small number of known employees with disabilities could indicate that equal employment policies do not, in fact, appear to relate to actual hiring of people with disabilities.

A minority of respondents acknowledged core problems in hiring people with disabilities that are likely to be representative of those most organizations encounter now or would encounter in the future if they actually implemented their non-discrimination and equal opportunity policies. These included the lack of training about disability, too few resources, too little information and staff support to implement their employment policies. One respondent remarked

> *"We have not yet effectively overcome these obstacles. We need to*
> *increase our outreach and recruitment efforts to the disabled community."*

Another said that within the organization there is

> *"some modest resistance to the idea of hiring and working with people*
> *with disabilities."*

C. Diversity and Disability Training

Seventy-four percent (55 of 74) of respondent organizations reported that they do not have a diversity training or awareness program. Twenty-six percent (19 of 74) that do have such training report that it is mandatory. Twelve organizations refer to disability in diversity training programs within their organizations. Only 14% (10 of 74) of respondent organizations reported conducting some type of disability-specific training for staff. Seven of these organizations make such training mandatory. Two organizations provide voluntary disability-specific training.

D. Architectural and Communications Accessibility

Sixty-six percent (49 of 74) of respondent organizations report that their headquarters offices are completely accessible (e.g. entrance, meeting rooms, rest rooms, offices). Other organizations reported that some areas of headquarters offices are accessible, while others are not. Four percent (3 of 74) report that their US facilities are completely inaccessible.

Eighty percent (59 of 74) of responding organizations do not provide any organizational materials in alternative formats. Twenty percent (15 of 74) of responding organizations offer alternative format versions of print materials, such as computer diskette, audiocassette tapes, in Braille and large print, or captioned or audio description versions of videotapes.

E. Barriers or Obstacles to Hiring People with Disabilities

Respondent organizations indicated various barriers or obstacles their organizations face in hiring people with disabilities. Table 8 illustrates that recruitment, accessibility and accommodation are perceived as posing the greatest barriers.

Table 8

Barriers or Obstacles InterAction Member Agencies Face in Hiring People with Disabilities		
Barrier or Obstacle	**Number of Organizations**	**Percentage (n=74)**
The organization is unsure of where to recruit people with disabilities	24	32%
Physical accessibility issues at headquarters or field offices	23	31%
No barriers or obstacles	13	18%
The organization is unsure about how to accommodate people with disabilities	7	9%
Don't know, not applicable, no answer provided	12	16%

Respondents also expressed the belief that a significant barrier to employment of people with disabilities is the small pool of qualified applicants with disabilities who have the necessary base of experience to work in international development.

DISCUSSION

A majority of respondent organizations do not proactively seek people with disabilities for jobs within their organizations. Where organizations have equal opportunity policies that include disability, they lack an effective mechanism to identify qualified job candidates with disabilities, and staff have little or no idea how to accommodate potential employees with disabilities should that be required.

Compliance with equal opportunity guidelines may meet the minimum legal requirements but does not necessarily result in effective equal opportunity hiring practices. Some organizations include disability within their diversity training while others offer disability-specific training. However, doing so does not appear to have an appreciable impact on the number of people with disabilities that are actually employed by respondent organizations or who serve on their boards or as volunteers.

These outcomes come as no real surprise. Unemployment among working-age Americans with disabilities exceeds 70%, according to government and private studies. They are among the poorest people in the nation, and they frequently experience discrimination in the workplace.

What is somewhat surprising, however, is that more attention is not given by many respondent organizations to proactively seeking people with disabilities for employment. Some of these same organizations are devoted to advancing education, job training and economic self-sufficiency for the poorest and most oppressed people in the countries where they operate programs. The basic values that drive their core mission, however, do not appear to translate into action at home.

Furthermore, people with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in the opportunities programs that afford emerging professionals the experience and skills they need to work internationally, such as international exchange programs, university study abroad programs, Peace Corps, work camps and other international volunteer programs. Anecdotal reports from students with disabilities suggest that they are not informed about or encouraged to consider international opportunities for study, travel, and careers, as are their non-disabled peers. Unquestionably, young women and men with disabilities need more and better information, role models and strategies to equalize opportunities for employment in today's global economy.

However, development organizations also have at their disposal methods to increase participation of people with disabilities in employment. Proactive measures, including outreach

to and recruitment of individuals with disabilities, could be readily carried out or increased with any of the numerous organizations and services that assist people with disabilities to locate employment opportunities. Sponsored fellowships, paid and unpaid internships and volunteer opportunities are excellent methods for initiating people with disabilities into the world of international development. A serious commitment to the goal of inclusion throughout member organizations would have the effect of converting the organizations' orientation and perception of disability to one of active goal-setting and proactive efforts.

Furthermore, both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act require non-discriminatory treatment of qualified applicants and employees with disabilities who can perform the essential functions of the job. They also apply to architectural accessibility. Section 504 applies to all programs that receive federal financial assistance; the employment provisions of the ADA apply to organizations with 15 or more employees, whether or not they have federal funding. Remedies to discrimination can include fixing the problem, money damages under certain circumstances and attorney fees.

F. Employment Abroad

Respondent organizations indicated that they need assistance to develop strategies to recruit and accommodate people with disabilities for jobs in field programs, and that they do not know how to foster employment opportunities with affiliates or partners abroad. Physical access problems, culturally based attitudes about the roles of people with disabilities, and their own perception that people with disabilities are not capable of accomplishing the tasks required by the job are among the obstacles that respondents believe impede the hiring of people with disabilities.

CEOs pointed to physical inaccessibility and lack of legal requirements for access in developing countries as impeding hiring overseas field staff and volunteers with disabilities. Respondents noted that local partners often do not share a US perspective on the importance of employment of people with disabilities:

"The challenge will be to convince our member institutions that this issue is important and one that should be studied. In terms of potential employment opportunities within these member institutions (in developing countries), lack of awareness and sensitivity to

the potential contributions of disabled people coupled with a lack of a legal framework surrounding this area make it more difficult for these institutions to openly embrace participation."

Respondents expressed concern about whether people with physical disabilities would be able to perform many of the intensely physical job duties of overseas relief and development work. One CEO said:

"Physical access would be the major barrier in most of our programs. Depending on what their disability is, I think it's mostly the fact that they couldn't physically perform the work."

Another said:

"There are two areas [of work]: the poor and war- torn [relief]. It doesn't lend itself to disability."

An organization described its programs in war zones and countries in crisis:

"The challenges we face are inherent personal and physical risks, as well as the logistical obstacles that exist in war- torn environments."

Alternatively, one CEO explained:

"Without the ADA [legislating access] in other countries, it is very hard to get around. That doesn't mean that no one with a [disability] is able to participate. We have had some volunteers that have selected certain sites, and we try and help with the arrangements from this end."

DISCUSSION

Respondent organizations identified many familiar concerns regarding placement of people with disabilities in field positions abroad. While the rugged conditions of the working environments – inaccessibility, lack of a legal framework and cultural attitudes – are real problems, notions that people with disabilities as a group will not be able to serve effectively under difficult conditions are overstated and appear to be based in stereotype and misinformation. InterAction member organizations can begin a process of elevating awareness about the role of people with disabilities in development by bringing staff and volunteers with disabilities into the development process. Combining their experience and expertise at problem-solving in challenging environments, people with disabilities and development organizations can work together to find practical solutions to real problems.

Furthermore, field placement opportunities are available in widely diverse situations in which many people with disabilities can function with minimal or no accommodations. Respondent organizations appear to perceive potential workers with disabilities as having uniform mobility limitations. In fact, disabilities include unseen conditions such as dyslexia, or epilepsy, which can be controlled with drug treatment, or amputation that might result in no practical limitation because a durable and efficient prosthesis replaces the lost limb. In these instances and many others, qualified individuals could be excluded from field assignments based on stereotype alone.

Besides widening the pool of talented development professionals, hiring US and local staff with disabilities will set a clear example for local communities that it is both possible and valuable to include all eligible and qualified individuals in development efforts.

G. Organization Administration, and Board Membership

People with disabilities represent fewer than 1% of board members of respondent organizations (of usable data collected). The dearth of people with disabilities among development organization employees and field staff is also apparent within policy setting bodies and boards of directors, according to interviews with CEOs. It is, therefore, not surprising that respondent organizations place so little emphasis on inclusion of people with disabilities in the development process. Without leadership at the policy setting levels, program and field staff do not receive signals that direct them to respond to this concern. (See V A and B above for a

discussion of reasons why people with disabilities are substantially absent from development positions in the US and field positions abroad. This discussion also applies to policy setting bodies and boards of directors.)

DISCUSSION

InterAction's PVO Standards Disability Amendments direct member agencies to

"Strive to increase the numbers of people with disabilities, where there is under-representation, in senior decision-making positions at headquarters, in the field and on boards of directors."

In order to achieve full inclusion, women and men with disabilities must participate not only as beneficiaries, but as administrators, consultants, partners and field staff.

Similarly, USAID's Disability Policy promotes participation of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation. According to the Policy,

"One of the best means of raising awareness in programs is to actively pursue [USAID] personnel procedures so that Agency staffing patterns reflect the intention of Agency programs." (USAID 1997)

In 1998, disabled women leaders from Africa, Asia and Latin America at the MIUSA International Symposium on Microcredit for Women with Disabilities concluded:

"All economic development organizations, microcredit programs and lenders must conduct outreach specifically to women with disabilities to be involved at every level, including planning, consulting, training, services, project implementation and evaluation. Microcredit programs must actively recruit women with disabilities both as providers (consultants, experts, trainers) and as consumers of the program." (Mobility International USA, 1998)

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VII. WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN INTERACTION MEMBER PROGRAMS

A. Participation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

There are no data available to support assumptions that women and girls with disabilities are included in InterAction member programs. On the contrary, a presumption of exclusion may be more supportable based on the fact that very few respondents reported implementing outreach strategies or policies, or dedicating resources to facilitate inclusion of women with disabilities. The following comments from participating organizations illustrate the widespread lack of data about participation of women and girls with disabilities in programs that are not gender-specific.

"We may have some women with disabilities in our programs operated by implementing partners, but we don't track the numbers."

"We have female beneficiaries with disabilities, we just don't segregate our data this way. We segregate our data on adult and children basis."

"Our programs include female beneficiaries with disabilities, but we do not classify them as such. Rather, we work with them because they are children in need who live in the geographic areas where our organization operates."

"We don't collect this information. Anecdotally, we are aware of female microfinance borrowers who are supporting children or other dependents who are disabled. As mentioned earlier, I don't know if we have any disabled people who are direct borrowers."

"Our programs serve detained asylum seekers and immigrants; therefore whatever population exists in the detention facilities is who we serve. I don't know whether the people in the field make a special effort to search out detainees with disabilities."

"Because we do not track the inclusion (or exclusion) of people with disabilities, it is not possible to answer this question. We would have to assume that our programs reach no disabled women, and I am not prepared to make that assumption."

"We assume that there are many women with disabilities served by our counterpart organizations."

"Programs benefit entire communities – women with disabilities included wherever there ARE some."

B. Women with Disabilities in Women in Development or Gender-Specific Programs.

Fifty-three percent (39 of 74) of respondent organizations conduct gender-specific programs. These InterAction member programs address issues that are critical to women with disabilities. Table 9 illustrates some of these programs:

Table 9

Women in Development and Gender-Specific Programs Operated by InterAction Member Agencies		
Types of Women in Development and Gender-Specific Programs	**Number of Organizations Operating This Program**	**Percentage (n=39)**
Microcredit/Economic	15	38%
Health	12	31%
Capacity-building	6	15%
Education	6	15%
Gender Equity	6	15%

C. Strategies Used by Organizations to Include Women with Disabilities in Women in Development and Gender-Specific Programs

Forty-three (32 of 74) of participating organizations stated that they do not use any strategies to include women with disabilities. When organizations use strategies to include women with disabilities in women in development and gender-specific programs these include

encouraging participation in conferences and trainings, conducting programs at accessible locations, and outreach to the community in order to identify women who might participate.

Though organizations conducting gender-specific programs assume that women with disabilities participate, few could provide numerical data about their participation.

> *"We do not specifically target women with disabilities in our gender-specific programs, although they may benefit indirectly through our programs."*

D. Women and Girls with Disabilities in Disability-Specific Programs

Thirty-two percent (24 of 74) of respondent organizations operate disability specific programs. Types of disability-specific programs are illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10

Types of Disability-Specific Programs Operated by InterAction Member Agencies		
Type of Disability-Specific Program	Number of Organizations Operating This Program	Percentage (n=24)
Medical	6	24%
Capacity-building	5	20%
Child-focused	3	12%
HIV/AIDS	3	12%
Funding	2	8%
Landmines	2	8%
Prosthetics/Orthotics	2	8%
Sports/Recreation	2	8%
Agriculture	1	4%
Disability Services	1	4%
Education	1	4%
Food Program	1	4%
Microfinance	1	4%
Physical/mental disability	1	4%
Psycho-social	1	4%
Rehabilitation	1	4%
Solar Cooking	1	4%
Supply Distribution	1	4%

Few respondents, however, could provide data about either the number of program beneficiaries as a whole or the number of women and girls with disabilities who participate in disability-specific programs.

E. Programs for Women with Disabilities

Twelve percent (9 of 74) of the respondent organizations have conducted programs designed specifically to address the needs of women with disabilities. Most focused on health and treatment of HIV/ AIDS. Table 11 illustrates the type of programs operated specifically for women with disabilities.

Table 11

Programs Operated by InterAction Member Agencies That Specifically Address Women with Disabilities		
Type of Program	**Number of Organizations Operating This Program**	**Percentage (n=9)**
Health	3	33%
HIV/AIDS	3	33%
Agriculture	1	11%
Capacity-building	1	11%
International Visitors Program	1	11%
Microcredit/Economic	1	11%
Not Applicable, No Answer Provided	6	18%

F. Barriers or Obstacles to Inclusion of Women with Disabilities in Women in Development or Gender-Specific Programs

Most organizations did not identify specific barriers to inclusion. Among those who did, factors identified by respondents as obstacles to inclusion for women with disabilities in gender-specific programs did not differ significantly from those identified by general programs. This outcome suggests either that the barriers are actually the same or a lack of recognition of the specific needs of women with disabilities, or both. Participant organizations identified the following barriers: sixteen percent identified lack of outreach, eleven percent identified lack of knowledge about how to include women with disabilities, four percent identified lack of funds for providing disability-related accommodations and one person identified physically

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inaccessible facilities. Fifty-five percent (41 of 74) of participating organizations reported that no funding is dedicated to programs that specifically address the needs of women with disabilities.

G. Organizational Policies and Strategic Objectives

Ninety-five percent of respondent organizations indicated that their organizations do not specifically refer to women or girls in their strategic objectives. Only 4% (3 of 74) of the respondent organizations refer specifically to women and girls with disabilities in their strategic objectives, all 3 through program implementation. Of the organizations surveyed, 47% (35 of 74) have a gender policy but 97% of such policies do not specifically refer to inclusion of women and girls with disabilities. Of the 27 participating organizations that conduct training that specifically addresses gender issues, 96% do not address issues of women with disabilities.

H. Strategies to Assure Participation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Women in Development or Gender-Specific Programs

Respondent organizations that do not use any strategies to include women with disabilities were asked how they assure participation in Women in Development or gender-specific programs. Forty-six of 74 organizations (62%) responded that the question was not applicable to them, and 8 organizations did not respond to the question. Sixteen organizations (22%) do not take steps to ensure that women with disabilities are included in gender-specific programs. These organizations, as with the organizations that do not assure inclusion of people with disabilities in general programs do not take specific steps to assure participation of women because of the inclusive nature of their policies and programs.

> *"We do not discriminate when sending out applications for our training programs. However, we are not as aggressive in inclusion as we could be – but we are changing that through our strategic planning process now."*

> *"We do not specifically target women with disabilities in our gender-specific programs, although they may benefit indirectly through our programs."*

Responding to a question about why no strategies are implemented to recruit women with disabilities, one organization said,

"We have enough to focus on already!"

DISCUSSION

Comparing issues for disabled women with those of other marginalized groups and poor non-disabled women, participant leaders with disabilities at MIUSA's 1998 International Symposium on Microcredit for Women with Disabilities identified many common issues. Included were a lack of acceptable collateral, low self-confidence, few resources for business, lack of experience and training, illiteracy, heavy family responsibilities, unmarried status or discouragement from husbands.

MIUSA Microcredit Symposium delegates identified obstacles that affect the abilities of women with disabilities to participate in microcredit activities. Structural and communication barriers include inaccessible meeting and market places, equipment, and modes of transportation, print-only materials and lack of sign language interpreters. Other important barriers include disability stigma and discrimination in training, loan opportunities and the marketplace. These disability-specific obstacles can be extrapolated to other development programs, and they require specific responses to assure participation of women with disabilities.

InterAction's CAW, describing successful approaches to incorporating gender perspectives in program planning, recommended:

"Consultation with local women's organizations and involving women participants in program planning is perhaps the best way to ensure a gender perspective in program design."

Women with disabilities must be involved in program planning to assure that practical and effective methods for inclusion are built into projects from the outset.

"Women leaders with disabilities are the best resource for technical assistance and problem solving for inclusion of women with disabilities. All development organizations,

microcredit programs and lenders must consult with women leaders who have disabilities for strategies to make all information, programs and services accessible for women with disabilities." (Mobility International USA: Resolution and Recommendations: Loud Proud and Prosperous: an International Coalition on Microcredit and Economic Development for Women with Disabilities,1998)

VIII. BEST PRACTICES AND INTERACTION CEO RECOMMENDATIONS

A. InterAction Member Organizations That Have Experience Working with People with Disabilities.

Some InterAction member organizations include people with disabilities in their programs. Examples of programs and strategies are highlighted below.

1. International Rescue Committee (IRC)

International Rescue Committee (IRC) acknowledges that persons with disabilities are a part of every population that it serves and that people with disabilities can derive benefit from IRC programs, such as microfinance, education, shelter and capacity building. In fact, IRC believes that if programs are designed at the outset to be inclusive, disability specific programs may not be required. IRC has hired consultants to conduct research, assess and address the needs of people with disabilities in its programs.

In Somaliland, IRC program staff have incorporated two groups of people with disabilities as implementing partners in a project to expand income-generating opportunities for repatriated Somali refugees and internally displaced persons. The IRC Somaliland Micro-Enterprise Project had not had previous experience of partnering with a group of persons with disabilities; disability groups lacked previous experience with participation in a community project targeted to economic development. Citizens with disabilities report that participation in the program increased both self-reliance and confidence so they could become more active in the community.

2. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) applies ADA accessibility guidelines to its overseas facilities, and has designated the AFSC Affirmative Action Office to monitor and

implement accessibility using ADA guidelines. The AFSC Board of Directors has adopted a policy requiring that all facilities be barrier-free. A regular activity by staff during visits to affiliate offices is evaluation of the physical plant for accessibility. Follow up is scheduled regularly. A board-supported accessibility fund ensures that all facilities owned or rented by the organization are accessible to people with disabilities. AFSC proactively seeks qualified job applicants with disabilities.

Other InterAction members report that they include people with disabilities in their general programs.

3. Delphi International

Delphi International offers an International Visitors Programs that includes disability issues and participants with disabilities.

4. Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA)

Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA), which serves the needs of small, medium and micro enterprises in Chad, conducts a loan program targeted to people with disabilities. Launched in 1994, the program currently works with four non-governmental organizations serving people with physical, visual and hearing disabilities, and has granted more than 200 loans to disabled borrowers.

5. Childreach

Childreach has a line item in its budget for reasonable accommodation to support costs of adaptations and arrangements that assist people with disabilities to participate in programs. Children with disabilities are targeted as "Children in Special Circumstances" to be mainstreamed into regular Childreach program operations.

6. InterAction

InterAction included a line item in its 1999 budget to pay for any needed accommodations disabled participants might require in order to attend the InterAction's annual forum.

B. CEO Recommendations

During qualitative interviews with 77 CEOs of InterAction member agencies, their views were elicited concerning steps they recommend be taken to enhance inclusion and opportunities for participation in development programs by people with disabilities.

Education and promoting awareness of disability was the most common suggestion cited by 21 CEOs for enhancing inclusion and opportunities for participation in development programs by people with disabilities. Several noted that:

> *"It's like with gender inclusion: it's a process of educating people in the field, by being included in trainings and orientations and mission statements…."*

> *"It's an educational process to get people to think more strenuously about how persons who have disabilities could fit into the workplace."*

One CEO suggested that disability be added to the InterAction PVO standards.

> *"InterAction has done quite a lot in their standards to include, for example, the question of women – gender equity – and ethnic diversity in the programming and in the staffing of its organizations. And, I think a similar type of standard, or guideline, could be applied for working with disabled people."*

Another suggested that a standing committee on disability should be created.

> *"Just like they've got a Commission for the Advancement of Women, they could have a Commission for the Advancement of Disabilities in InterAction, funded through a grant, whose sole purpose is to work on methodologies, tools and ways to engage the membership around this question and then get looking at success stories, champions, so forth, over the years."*

Seven CEOs suggested various educational formats at the annual InterAction Forum as vehicles that could increase visibility, and thus awareness, of the disability issue.

A number of CEOs made suggestions for ways to build awareness of disability: through "Monday Developments," advocacy, and outreach.

Several CEOs suggested that increasing the involvement of people with disabilities as program planners, implementers and participants can be accomplished with dedicated outreach efforts, modifications to increase accessibility, and changes in attitudes and assumptions as well as engineering increased gender and disability awareness by US and indigenous staff.

Several CEOs also suggested that all contracts with partner organizations abroad must raise the issue of inclusion of people with disabilities during negotiations, and that agreements should be crafted that assure consideration of qualified disabled job applicants.

CEOs were asked to identify types of technical assistance and resources that would enable their organizations to begin resolving the architectural, physical, attitudinal and cultural barriers that bar people with disabilities from participating in development programs.

Twenty-three of the 77 InterAction CEOs interviewed listed training and education for both staff and program beneficiaries as one of the highest priorities. They envisioned it as ranging from sensitivity training to workshops on how to better recruit people with disabilities. One CEO pointed out the need to train people in local communities who have family members with disabilities. Nine CEOs listed some form of consultation or assessment. One CEO explained:

> *"I guess one of the things that might be useful is for somebody with technical information on disabilities to come and have a look at some of the projects that we're doing and coming up with some ideas about things that we could do to make our programs more accessible to people with disabilities."*

Using consultants to address gender issues had worked in the past for this organization, so perhaps they would also be useful on disability issues.

> *"For somebody to actually help us design a plan...[for] how we'd be able to do better outreach, whether it be in terms of advertising jobs or recruiting new volunteers...that would be helpful."*

Sixteen of the 77 CEOs interviewed said that money was a crucial resource that would allow them to make their headquarters more physically accessible or give them the opportunity to extend programs to better address the needs of people with disabilities. One CEO, however, remarked:

> *"It would be a bit of a cop out for either organizations or people within the United States to say they need more money to properly address barriers to inclusion."*

Five CEOs mentioned the importance of sharing information and success stories among organizations as a method for working together to resolve the variety of barriers that confront people with disabilities. A few CEOs realized that they had not yet shared the stories of what they have already done to address barriers, while a few others mentioned that receiving such information would help them as they begin to work on these issues. Others suggested opening up structured lines of communication between InterAction agencies so more ideas and information can be shared among organizations.

CEOs were also asked what strategies their organization has used to ensure that field or affiliate offices are accessible to people with disabilities. Fifteen organizations had made a variety of structural modifications such as building ramps, making rest rooms accessible, and renting single story offices. Some organizations had used informal networking within the organization to resolve an issue when it arose, while others assigned responsibility for accessibility directly to field offices.

DISCUSSION

Many CEOs offered creative and insightful suggestions for removing barriers to participation in development programs by people with disabilities, thus making the point that InterAction member organizations possess great creativity and problem-solving ability. Their suggestions illustrate that when development organizations turn their attention to solving a particular problem, the outcomes can be very productive. The challenge for the future will be implementation of these appropriate and useful ideas.

Taken together, the following CEO recommendations for minimizing barriers to participation of people with disabilities represents a partial blueprint for action. They suggested:

- Obtaining appropriate training and consultation on a variety of development related disability concerns.

- Conducting education programs through InterAction.

- Working to change internal and external attitudes about disability.

- Increasing community outreach and networking with disability organizations.

- Setting as a priority assisting people with disabilities to attend meetings, especially in the context of micro-lending group-based programs.

- Taking all necessary steps to ensure that all events are physically accessible.

- Adding the cost of disability accommodations to organizations' budgets as a matter of practice.

- Undertaking *"Operations research to demonstrate in local settings how the disabled can function both as active producers, [and] also as leaders, in their communities."*

- Supporting actions by private donors, government development assistance organizations and InterAction members that require either applicants for funding or contracts and agreements with affiliates, partners and field offices to specify methods they will use to include women and men with disabilities in the program being funded and assure consideration of qualified disabled job applicants.

IX.   CONCLUSION

This research project confirmed that InterAction respondent organizations are actively engaged in some of the most difficult and challenging international assistance work being carried out today. Many operate relief and assistance programs in geographic areas torn by armed conflict, acts of nature, famine and disease. Others help communities rebuild, promote civil society and an effective rule of law following changes in political leadership and ideology. Still others contribute to local economic empowerment and development.

While these organizations are making significant contributions around the world, the research revealed that people with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, do not appear to participate in these important programs in numbers that equal their presence in general populations. The reasons few people with disabilities appear to participate are complex and multi-faceted, but they are fundamentally rooted in historic social practices that sanction

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exclusion. Reflecting these patterns, the research revealed the following four overarching themes that dominate and transcend the findings presented in Section X.

1. InterAction respondent organizations do not collect data showing the extent to which people with disabilities in general, and women and girls with disabilities in particular, participate in the development process.

2. While many InterAction respondent organizations acknowledge that they do not collect data that shows how many people with disabilities participate in their general programs, they also acknowledge that they think few people with disabilities actually participate.

3. Many InterAction respondent organizations expressed attitudes and beliefs about disability that are not necessarily based on accurate information; rather they appear to be rooted in commonly accepted, though inaccurate assumptions and stereotypes.

4. InterAction member organizations tackle some of the most difficult social problems of the day. Consequently, they are perfectly positioned to provide the leadership that is so urgently needed to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in the development process.

In light of these themes, a summary of key research outcomes, findings and recommendations is presented for consideration by the InterAction community as well as by private and public development donors, and disability organizations concerned with inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in the development process.

We believe that this information will spur a productive dialogue among development organizations, disability groups, donors, and other NGOs that leads to greater opportunities for people with disabilities in international development organizations and programs.

X.   KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overarching Themes

1. InterAction respondent organizations do not collect data showing the extent to which people with disabilities in general, and women and girls with disabilities in particular, participate in the development process.

Due to insufficient data collection, 93% of respondent organizations are unable to determine the actual extent of participation of people with disabilities in their programs. Only 2% of respondent organizations were able to estimate percentages of participants with disabilities or substantiate their estimates with data.

2. While many InterAction respondent organizations acknowledge that they do not collect data that shows how many people with disabilities participate in their general programs, they also acknowledge that they think few or none actually participate.

A small number of respondent organizations report that they include people with disabilities in a meaningful way in their operations and programs. However, many respondent organizations acknowledge that people with disabilities are probably not included among the eligible general populations they serve. Furthermore, they acknowledge that they think inclusion of people with disabilities will require a very significant change in the way they do business that will take a long time.

3. Many InterAction respondent organizations expressed attitudes and beliefs about disability that are not necessarily based on accurate information; rather they appear to be rooted in commonly accepted, though inaccurate assumptions and stereotypes.

These assumptions, taken together with the absence of data, fuels a wide range of reactions to the idea that people with disabilities should be included as agents and beneficiaries of the development process. For example:

- People with disabilities are frequently described as comprising a separate group that cannot be served within general development programs, and that would more appropriately be served by special, segregated programs.

- Inclusion of people with disabilities in general development programs will require establishing new and separate initiatives.

- Some respondent organizations found it difficult to imagine how people with disabilities could participate in their general programs, referring to lack of accessibility, cultural bias about disability both in the field and at headquarters offices, lack of access laws and policies, and limited funding.

- Other respondent organizations perceive that the price of including people with disabilities is too high in terms of staff time, and monetary and other resources relative to the extraordinary need of the general populations being served.

4. InterAction member organizations tackle some of the most difficult social problems of the day. Consequently, they are perfectly positioned to provide the leadership that is so urgently needed to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in the development process.

Though situated to begin developing methods to include people with disabilities in existing development programs, many organizations will require assistance from disability-led organizations in order to find effective ways to challenge the widespread effects of disability-based social stigma and prejudice.

Organizational Policy and Strategic Objectives

5. Most respondent organizations' strategic objectives do not specifically refer to people with disabilities.

- Eighty-two percent (61) of respondent organizations do not refer specifically to people with disabilities in strategic objectives and 39% (29) indicated that they implement no particular strategies to include people with disabilities in their programs.

- Only nine respondent organizations have policies that address inclusion of people with disabilities in program areas, including program design, implementation or evaluation. Most respondents, however, reported that they assume people with disabilities are among their participants.

Participation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

6. Respondent organizations collect little or no data about the participation of women and girls with disabilities in gender-specific, non-gender specific and disability-specific programs.

- Slightly more than half (53%) of the respondent organizations conduct gender-specific programs but gender-specific programs are not more likely than non-gender-specific programs to include women with disabilities.
- Organizations that conduct gender-specific programs assume that women with disabilities participate, but do not track disability-specific data that would validate such assumptions, or have processes in place to provide accommodations participants might require.

7. Very few respondent organizations refer to women and girls with disabilities in their strategic objectives, suggesting that this group and its particular needs are not yet recognized or identified.

- Only 4% (3) of respondent organizations refer specifically to women and girls with disabilities in their strategic objectives, all through program implementation.
- Of the 35 respondent organizations that have a gender policy, 97% of such policies do not specifically refer to women or girls with disabilities.

8. Nearly half of participating organizations that operate Women in Development or gender-specific programs do not use any specific strategies to include women and girls with disabilities in such programs.

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9. According to respondents, obstacles to inclusion of women and girls with disabilities include poor outreach, lack of training and information, lack of funds for disability-related accommodations and physically inaccessible facilities.

10. The 27 respondent organizations that conduct training on gender issues do not specifically address issues of women and girls with disabilities.

People with Disabilities: Employment within InterAction Member Agencies

11. People with known disabilities occupy less than 1% of staff positions in all categories within respondent organizations and represent less than 1% of board members or consultants among InterAction member organizations (according to usable data).

12. Most respondents have either equal employment opportunity policies that include disability or distinct employment policies for disability, or both. However, respondents as a whole do not conduct employment outreach or recruitment, and do not dedicate resources to implementation or monitoring. Policies do not appear to result in employment of people with disabilities.

- Of the 99% of respondent organizations that have equal-opportunity hiring policies in place, 82% include specific references to disability.
- Forty-six percent of respondent organizations have distinct policies that address equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- However, 88% of respondent organizations report that they do not conduct outreach to or recruit people with disabilities.
- Only 56% of respondent organizations have procedures in place to monitor the policies.
- Seventy-one percent reported that they do not dedicate resources to implementation of disability policies

13. Respondents indicated that they need assistance in developing strategies for recruitment and job accommodation of people with disabilities in the US.

- Paradoxically, 82% of the respondents report that their organizations have encountered "no problems" implementing non-discrimination policies involving people with disabilities.

Outreach and Training

14. Most respondent organizations acknowledge that they do not know how to go about conducting outreach to identify candidates with disabilities for their programs, or issues such individuals face in their communities.

- A majority of respondent organizations indicate that they are not sure where or how to locate people with disabilities in areas where they operate programs. Some organizations discussed the need to improve outreach, including using networks within the disability community, the need for more effective communication methods, and a clearer understanding of the issues that affect participation of people with disabilities.

15. While InterAction's Diversity Amendments became effective in 1998, almost three-fourths of respondent organizations do not have a disability training or awareness program. Among the 19 who do, only 12 include disability.

- Limited diversity training among respondents suggests that InterAction as an organization must redouble its efforts to make the spirit of the Diversity Amendments a reality. Likewise, the Disability Amendments will only have meaning if member organizations commit to implementation. However, lack of knowledge and understanding about the needs of people with disabilities stemming directly from little or no training and limited information significantly affects respondent organizations' capacity to include women and men with disabilities.

16. CEOs cite training, education and public awareness as the highest priority in order for their organizations to include people with disabilities in a meaningful way.

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- Twenty-one of 77 CEO's interviewed cited education and promoting awareness as needed for enhancing inclusion and opportunities for participation by people with disabilities.
- Twenty-three of the 77 InterAction CEOs interviewed listed training and education for both staff and program beneficiaries as one of the highest priorities.

Architectural and Communication Accessibility

17. **While United States laws require certain levels of architectural, program and communications accessibility, some aspects of the headquarters offices of almost one-third of respondent organizations have some access limitations, and four percent of their US facilities are completely inaccessible.**

18. **Eighty percent of respondents report that they do not provide materials in accessible formats.**

19. **Lack of information about methods to achieve access inexpensively, potential sources of financial support for access modifications, and low or no-cost creative solutions that can achieve the desired result, have contributed to the perception among respondent organizations that solving access problems is overly burdensome and costly.**

20. **Fifty-two respondent organizations operate field or affiliate offices. Twenty described the difficulty of obtaining accessible facilities in their program areas due to the lack of office space and the fact that most buildings are inaccessible because they do not have ramps or elevators.**

Strategies for Inclusion of People with Disabilities

21. **Fifty-two percent (39 of 74) of respondent organizations report that they use various strategies to include people with disabilities. However, they do not collect sufficient data**

to know whether these strategies are effective in increasing participation of people with disabilities.

Perceived Challenges to Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

22. **Over half of the respondent organizations did not know what challenges their organizations face to inclusion of people with disabilities; they thought the question was not applicable, or they did not respond at all.**

- This finding suggests that these organizations have not yet given much consideration to the absence of people with disabilities from their programs, and therefore, find it difficult to identify challenges. This observation affirms the need for a disability awareness and training program for InterAction member agencies. Such training must assist organizations to understand and appreciate barriers people with disabilities face in the development context as well as the complex factors, including disability stigma and prejudice, that can prevent or discourage people with disabilities from participating in development programs and activities.

23. **Among those organizations that were aware of challenges to including people with disabilities in programs and activities, funding and time constraints were cited most frequently.**

- This response suggests that organizations tend to be unfamiliar with the practical accommodation needs of those people with disabilities who, in fact, need accommodation. They may also be unaware of ways that inclusion can be achieved even when resources are scarce and working conditions are difficult. Inevitably, these perceived challenges can lead to the belief that inclusion of people with disabilities requires either a new service or program rather than integrating eligible people with disabilities into existing programs.

Reasons Why People with Disabilities Are Absent from InterAction Member Programs

24. **Respondent organizations attribute the absence of people with disabilities in their programs to a range of issues: culturally influenced attitudes of local field offices, conditions inherent in working in developing countries and attitudes among staff within their own organizations who tend to perceive people with disabilities in stereotyped ways, and as victims.**

    - Nearly one third of 77 CEOs who were interviewed mentioned culturally influenced attitudes toward disability of local field staff and local NGOs as a factor that affects the participation of people with disabilities in their organizations' programs. Seventeen percent of CEOs interviewed noted that attitudinal issues within their own organizations might affect the participation of people with disabilities. Commonly cited problems were lack of discussion and lack of education on disability issues.

25. **Respondent organizations cited lack of interest in people with disabilities by funders and donors, and program participant selection by external entities, (which limits organizational control over how people with disabilities are included), as explanations for the absence of people with disabilities in their development programs.**

    - Thirty-five of 77 CEOs interviewed said that requiring a description of strategies for outreach and inclusion of people with disabilities in funding applications would raise awareness of disability issues and motivate organizations to pay attention to the issue.

Disability-Specific Programs Operated by Participating InterAction Member Organizations

26. **Almost a third of respondent organizations operate disability-specific programs dealing with such issues as HIV/AIDS, river blindness, rehabilitation, provision of disability-specific equipment such as prosthetics and orthotics, capacity building and vocational training for the blind.**

- Disability-specific programs can provide important, sometimes critical and life-saving support to people with disabilities, and may be useful as stepping-stones along a path to full participation in communities. However, they also risk perpetuating segregation and marginalization. Rather than assuming the need for a separate program as a starting point, it may be more appropriate to begin by involving women and men with disabilities in existing programs.

InterAction Partnerships with Other NGOs on Disability Issues

27. Almost a third of respondent organizations have, at various times, established partnerships with other NGOs specifically to strengthen their capacity in the area of disability. About a quarter of respondent organizations have developed partnerships with disability-led NGOs.

- Thirty percent (22) of respondent organizations have, at various times, established partnerships with non-disability-led NGOs.
- Twenty-four percent (18) of respondent organizations indicated that they have established successful partnerships with disability-led NGOs. They identified primary benefits including enhanced communication, coalition building, networking, and identifying and complementing strengths and weaknesses.

Laws and Policies

28. Taken together, US federal law, USAID's Disability Policy and the InterAction PVO Disability Standards establish a mandate for non-discrimination and inclusion of people with disabilities by InterAction member organizations. Denial of rights under US law could specifically result in legal claims of discrimination and potential remedies involving ceasing the discriminatory behavior, money damages, and attorney fees.

- Over half of respondent organizations receive financial support from the United States Agency for International development (USAID), which adopted a disability non-discrimination policy in 1997 that applies to its recipients of financial assistance as well as its own programs. InterAction adopted Disability Amendments to its PVO Standards in 2000. Furthermore, respondents are also obligated to comply with the non-discrimination provisions of either the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, or both.

While these laws and policies should serve as a blueprint for action by InterAction members, they also afford people with disabilities a mechanism to challenge policies or actions that exclude them from programs in which they are eligible to participate, including US-based employment.

People with Disabilities: A Part of the General Population

29. Although people with disabilities are the poorest, least enfranchised, and most discriminated-against group in almost every society, many respondent organizations tend to overlook them as a group despite the fact that they are present among the general populations these organizations serve. This omission is paradoxical in light of the humanitarian goals of most respondent organizations.

- Research data and qualitative findings about attitudes of some respondent organizations toward people with disabilities reveal patterns of false assumptions and misperceptions about disability. Some respondent

organizations apparently either do not accept or are unaware of the prevalence of disability among the general populations whom they serve. Nor do they acknowledge the effect of incorrect assumptions about disability on the lives of people with disabilities.

- CEOs as a group recognized people with disabilities as a marginalized group. However, some also noted that disability is not a priority for their organizations. Respondent comments suggested that people with disabilities cannot participate in or are not part of the population that their organizations serve. Some respondents noted that using scarce resources for people with disabilities is not a legitimate priority in situations of poverty or crisis. Doing so might raise objections by the local society.

- By being less than proactive in confronting disability-related stigma and exclusion – within their own organizations and in the field – respondent organizations may be contributing to the perpetuation of social practices that limit opportunities and full citizenship for people with disabilities.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research outcomes suggest both general and specific steps that development organizations must take to increase involvement of people with disabilities in their programs and activities. These recommendations, however, require an agent or agents to implement them. They are neither self-executing, nor is there an external mechanism that requires oversees implementation (with the exception of the implementation of disability rights laws in the US by various government agencies). The following recommendations, therefore, are aimed primarily at InterAction and its members.

1. **InterAction must commit itself to providing leadership and vision to assure that its member organizations include people with disabilities in all aspects of the development process.**

This leadership must be demonstrated as a unified initiative that comes from the board of directors and the administration. It must include a commitment to collaboration with member

organizations as well as funders and other organizations including disability-led organizations that can serve as resources. Working together, these partners must develop a plan for training, consultation, technical assistance and resource development that will advance the goal of inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of the development process.

2. **InterAction must take specific steps to promote recognition, awareness and acceptance of disability issues within its own standing committees and initiatives.**

Methods to reach this goal include establishing a Commission for the Advancement of People with Disabilities whose sole purpose is to develop methods to engage the membership about the issue of disability. InterAction could conduct educational sessions at the annual InterAction Forum that will lead to increased visibility and awareness of the disability issue. In addition, all practicable steps must be taken to infuse disability concerns and issues into InterAction's standing committees including Disaster Response, Refugees, Development Policy and Practice, Public Policy and Advancement of Women.

3. **InterAction member organizations must develop a Plan of Action to implement the InterAction PVO Standards on Disability that will lead to inclusion of people with disabilities throughout the development process. Action plans should specify goals, objectives, timetables and implementation strategies for increasing inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of member programs and operations.**

4. **InterAction member organizations, in consultation with disability-led organizations, must seek training, technical assistance, resources and materials on a wide variety of disability-related topics that can be used to implement the goals of a Plan of Action.**

Training, technical assistance and structured collaboration with disability-led organizations is essential if InterAction member organizations are to make meaningful progress toward including people with disabilities. Training and technical assistance should promote the perspective that the rights of all people with disabilities are

encompassed within a broad human rights framework. Materials and resources must assist development organizations to design, implement and monitor affirmative, non-discriminatory employment policies and practices, and criteria for assessing accessibility of facilities and programs. They must also provide information about practical adaptations that will improve communication and architectural accessibility, and provide direction for effective outreach. Strategies for funding and budgeting the costs of making programs accessible should be included as well as information on cross-cultural issues related to disability. Finally, these resources must foster partnerships that enable organizations to enhance outreach and provide accommodation when required, include examples of best practices that serve as practical role models, and link development organizations with indigenous and domestic disability organizations.

5. **InterAction member organizations must develop a systematic plan to collect data about participation of people with disabilities as agents and beneficiaries of their programs. A mechanism must be included for collecting information about participation in both general and gender-specific programs by women and girls with disabilities.**

6. **InterAction member organizations must take all necessary steps to include women and girls with disabilities in both general programs and Women in Development or gender-specific programs.**

InterAction member organizations must advocate for inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in health, education and training programs. They must also consult with organizations of women with disabilities who can identify women and girls with disabilities who are eligible to participate in services and programs. These organizations can also provide practical solutions for making facilities accessible and strategies for involving women with disabilities in policy and decision-making processes. Development organizations must also work proactively with women with disabilities to pressure governments to implement the recommendations that have been made over the years by various UN bodies and non-governmental organizations, particularly at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

7. **Private donors and multilateral organizations such as USAID should require that applicants for funding specify in the application itself methods they will use to include women and men with disabilities in the program being funded**. **Similarly, InterAction member organizations should require such a declaration in all contracts and agreements with their affiliates, partners and field offices. Public and private donors and InterAction member organizations should evaluate the applicant's or partner's responses as are other factors when funding requests are being considered.**

8. **Women with disabilities must be included in the Commission on the Advancement of Women's (CAW) goal to promote gender equity and the advancement of women in InterAction member agencies, both at the organization and program level.**

The CAW should include disability in the gender audit and technical workshops for headquarters and field staff. Gender analysis tools should be developed that include disability and workshops on women with disabilities and their issues should be conducted under CAW's auspices. In order to promote member agencies staffs' understanding of the intersection between gender and disability, materials and information must be presented that describes how gender issues are the same as and different from disability issues. Gender and disability publications, documents, references to Internet listservs should be added to CAW's resource collection. Sessions on disability that will foster "peer learning" should be included using electronic conferencing. Success stories and best practices about inclusion of women with disabilities in gender equity programs and activities should be developed and disseminated. Finally, CAW should strengthen information-sharing and capability of technical specialists and networks by fostering and encouraging collaborating with disabled women's organizations and other disability-related networks.

XII. SUMMARY OF KEY RESEARCH OUTCOMES

A. Inclusion Of People With Disabilities In Interaction Member Agency Programs

1. InterAction Programs: Data Collection Regarding People with Disabilities

- Ninety-three percent of respondent organizations (69 of 74) are unable to determine the actual extent of participation of people with disabilities in their programs because of insufficient data.
- Two percent of 74 respondent organizations were able to estimate percentages of disabled participants or substantiate their estimates with data.

2. Organizational Policy and Strategic Objectives

- Forty-six percent (34 of 74) of respondent organizations have policies or organizational statements concerning employment of people with disabilities.
- Nine of the 34 organizations have policies that address inclusion of people with disabilities in program areas, including program design, implementation or evaluation, partnerships and subcontracts.
- Eighty-two percent (61 of 74) of respondent organizations do not specifically refer to people with disabilities in strategic objectives.
- Sixteen percent (12 of 74) of respondent organizations refer specifically to people with disabilities in their strategic objectives.

3. Organizational Strategies for Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

- Thirty-nine percent (29 of 74) of respondent organizations indicated that they use no particular strategies to include people with disabilities.
- Fifty-three percent (39 of 74) of respondent organizations use various strategies to include people with disabilities.
- Thirty-four percent (25 of 74) of respondent organizations report that people with disabilities participate in their program trainings, meetings and conferences.

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- Twenty-four percent (18 of 74) of respondent organizations conduct program trainings at locations physically accessible to people with disabilities.
- Nineteen percent (14 of 74) of respondent organizations contact community members for assistance in locating people with disabilities.
- Nineteen percent (14 of 74) of respondent organizations seek out people with disabilities and disability organizations to contribute their perspectives and concerns on issues related to their organizations' activities and programs.
- Eighteen percent (13 of 74) of respondent organizations state that they inform local organizations of people with disabilities of programs or activities.
- Fifteen percent (11 of 74) of respondent organizations report that they facilitate coalition-building between organizations of people with disabilities and non-disability organizations.
- Twelve percent (9 of 74) of respondent organizations provide resources for people with disabilities to participate in conferences.
- Seven percent (6 of 74) of respondent organizations responded don't know, not applicable or no answer provided.

4. **Perceived Challenges to Inclusion of People with Disabilities in InterAction Programs**

   ➢ *Lack of Identification of Challenges*
   - Fifty-three percent (39 of 74) of respondent organizations indicated that either they did not know what challenges their organization faced, responded that the question was not applicable, or they did not respond to the question at all.
   - Eight percent, or six respondent organizations indicated that they do not make an effort to increase participation of people with disabilities.
   - Five percent (4 of 74) of respondent organizations indicated that they do not think they face any challenges.

➢ *Funding and Time Constraints*

- Of the 35 respondent organizations that identified challenges to inclusion, 34% (12 of 35) cited funding and time limitations as a major challenge that prevents them from including people with disabilities in their general programs.

➢ *Outreach and Communication*

- Thirty-four percent (12 of 35) of respondent organizations cite little or no outreach to people with disabilities affects the level of participation of people with disabilities in programs they operate.

➢ *Lack of Knowledge and Training about Disability*

- Seventy-four percent (55 of 74) of respondent organizations do not have a diversity training or awareness program.
- Of the 19 organizations that do conduct diversity training for employees, 12 include disability as an issue of diversity.
- Seven of 35 respondent organizations identified lack of knowledge and understanding about disability by program staff as a factor that reduces the effectiveness of organizations' capacity to include people with disabilities.

➢ *Accessibility in the Field*

- Fifty-two of 74 respondent organizations operate field or affiliate offices.
- Twenty respondent organizations have difficulty obtaining accessible facilities in program countries.

➢ *Infrastructure Conditions*

- Respondent organizations report that poor infrastructure, dense urban areas, rural environments, geographical diversity and distance from program sites each affect the ability of people with disabilities.

➢ *Laws, Policies and Standards on Program Accessibility*
- Both CEOs and respondent organizations expressed the perceived difficulty of making adaptations without standards and legislation for accessibility in the countries in which they work.

5. Attitudes Toward Disability

➢ *Cultural Influences*
- Ten (14%) of respondent organizations identified cultural attitudes towards disability in program countries as a factor that affects the participation of people with disabilities in their organizations' programs.
- Nearly one-third of the 77 CEOs interviewed mentioned culturally influenced attitudes of local field staff and local NGOs as a factor that affects the participation of people with disabilities in their organizations' programs.

➢ *Intra-Organizational Attitudes*
- Seventeen percent of CEOs interviewed (13 of 77) noted that attitudinal issues within their organizations might affect the participation of people with disabilities. Commonly cited problems were lack of discussion and lack of education on disability issues, the tendency to treat people with disabilities as victims, and the tendency of non-disabled people to perceive people with disabilities in stereotyped ways.

➢ *Attitudes of Funders*
- To explain the absence of people with disabilities in development programs, lack of interest in people with disabilities by donors was frequently cited.
- Forty-five percent (35 of 77) CEOs interviewed said that including a disability inclusion requirement in Request For Proposals (RFP's) would raise awareness of disability issues and motivate organizations to pay attention to the issue.

- Twelve of the 77 CEOs interviewed (16%) believed that a disability inclusion requirement in request for proposals (RFP's) would not be an effective strategy to increase participation of people with disabilities in programs.

➤ *Serving People with Disabilities Considered Outside the "Nature of the Work"*

- CEOs recognized people with disabilities as a marginalized group, but some also expressed the belief that disability is neither a priority nor an appropriate concern related to the work of their organizations, or partner organizations.

- Respondent comments suggest perceptions that either people with disabilities cannot participate in general programs or are not part of the population that their organizations serve.

- Some respondents said that using scarce resources for people with disabilities is not a legitimate priority in situations of poverty or crisis. They said doing so would raise objections by the local society.

➤ *External (Funding, Agency, Partner Organizations) Limits*

- Selection of participants for programs by external entities limits development organizations' control over how people with disabilities are included.

➤ *Change Takes Time*

- Some respondent organizations perceive inclusion of people with disabilities as a significant change in the way they do business and that will take a long time.

B. <u>Disability-Specific Programs Operated by InterAction Member Agencies</u>

- Thirty-two percent (24 of 74) of respondent organizations dedicate resources to disability-specific programs.

- Fifteen of the 24 respondent organizations conduct programs that address prevention or treatment of medical conditions leading to disability, such as HIV/AIDS and river blindness, rehabilitation services or provision of disability-specific equipment such as prosthetics and orthotics.

C. InterAction Partnerships with Other NGOs on Disability Issues

- Thirty percent (22 of 74) of respondent organizations indicated that they have partnered with other NGOs regarding disability issues.
- Twenty-four percent (18 of 74) of respondent organizations described partnership experiences with NGOs led by people with disabilities. These partnerships involved project collaboration, technical assistance, program coordination, provision of supplies, funding, and referral or subcontracts.

D. People with Disabilities: Employment within InterAction Member Agencies

1. Employment in Headquarters Offices

- Eighty-eight percent of respondent organizations (65 of 74) report that their organizations do not take affirmative steps to recruit people with disabilities for employment.
- Twenty-two percent of respondent organizations (17 of 74) recruit people with disabilities for employment.
- Ninety-nine percent of respondent organizations have an equal opportunity policy. Eighty-two percent (61 of 74) include specific references to disability.
- Forty-six percent (34 of 74) of respondent organizations have policies that address equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Fifty-six percent of these organizations (14 of 34) have policies in place to monitor the policy.
- Seventy-one percent (24 of 34) of respondent organizations with disability policies report that they do not dedicate resources to implementation of the policy.

2. Disability Representation Among Staff

- People with disabilities occupy less than 1% of staff positions in all categories including field staff, interns, middle and senior management, support staff and volunteers (of usable data collected).
- Eighty-two percent of 34 respondent organizations that have a disability policy report that their organizations have encountered "no problems" implementing non-discrimination policies involving people with disabilities.

3. Diversity and Disability Training

- Seventy-four percent (55 of 74) of respondent organizations do not have diversity training or awareness program.

- Twenty-six percent (19 of 74) that do conduct diversity training report that training is mandatory.

- Only ten of 74 respondent organizations conduct disability-specific training for staff. Seven of these organizations make training mandatory, two voluntary.

- Among the approximately 20 organizations that responded to this question, 63% or 12 organizations, refer to disability in organization diversity training programs.

E. Architectural and Communications Accessibility at Headquarters Offices

- Sixty-six percent (49 of 74) of respondent organizations have accessible headquarters offices.

- Other organizations reported that some areas of headquarters offices are accessible, while others are not.

- Four percent (3 of 74) of respondent organizations' headquarters offices are completely inaccessible.

- Eighty percent (59 of 74) of respondent organizations do not provide organizational materials in alternative formats.

- Twenty percent (15 of 74) of respondent organizations offer alternative format versions of print materials, such as computer diskette, audio-cassette tape, Braille and large print, or captioned or audio description versions of videotapes.

F. Barriers or Obstacles to Hiring People with Disabilities

- Thirty-two percent (24 of 74) of respondent organizations are unsure of where to recruit people with disabilities.

- Thirty-one percent (23 of 74) of respondent organizations identified physical accessibility issues at headquarters or field offices.

- Eighteen percent (13 of 74) of respondent organizations reported no barriers or obstacles to hiring people with disabilities.
- Nine percent (7 of 74) of respondent organizations are unsure about how to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Sixteen percent (12 of 74) of respondent organizations responded don't know, not applicable or did not respond to the question.

G. <u>Employment Abroad</u>

- Physical access problems, culturally based attitudes about the roles of people with disabilities, and organization perception that people with disabilities are not capable of accomplishing required job tasks are obstacles respondent organizations indicated impede hiring of people with disabilities.

H. <u>Women With Disabilities In Interaction Member Programs</u>

1. Participation of Women with Disabilities in InterAction Member Programs

- There are no data to support respondent organization assumptions that women with disabilities are included in InterAction member programs.

2. Women with Disabilities in Women in Development or Gender-Specific Programs

- Slightly more than half, or 53% of the respondent organizations (39 of 74) conduct gender-specific programs. Types of programs include microcredit, health, capacity-building, education and gender equity.

3. Strategies Used by Organizations to Include Women with Disabilities in Women in Development or Gender-Specific Programs

- Forty-three percent (32 of 74) of respondent organizations stated that they do not use any strategies to include women with disabilities in their Women in Development or gender-specific programs.
- When organizations use strategies to include women with disabilities in Women in Development or gender-specific programs, these include

encouraging participation in conferences and trainings, conducting programs at accessible locations, and outreach to the community in order to identify women and girls who might participate.

4. **Women with Disabilities in Disability-Specific Programs**

- Thirty-two percent (24 of 74) of respondent organizations operate disability-specific programs. Few respondents could provide data about either the number of program beneficiaries as a whole or the number of women with disabilities.

- Twelve percent (9 of 74) of respondent organizations have conducted programs designed specifically to address the needs of women with disabilities. Most were focused on health conditions, specifically treatment of HIV/ AIDS.

- Among non-gender-specific programs that conduct disability-specific programs, 71% do not collect sufficient data to determine how many of the participants are women.

5. **Barriers or Obstacles to Inclusion of Women with Disabilities in Women in Development or Gender- Specific Programs**

- Fifty-two percent (39 of 74) of respondent organizations identified barriers or obstacles that affect inclusion of women and girls with disabilities: 16% identified lack of outreach, 11% identified lack of knowledge about how to include women and girls with disabilities, 4% identified lack of funds to provide disability-related accommodations and one organization identified physically inaccessible facilities.

- Fifty-five percent (41 of 74) of respondent organizations reported that no funding is dedicated to programs that specifically address the needs of women with disabilities.

6. Organizational Policies and Strategic Objectives

- Ninety-five percent of respondent organizations indicated that their organizations do not specifically refer to women or girls with disabilities in their strategic objectives.

- Only 4% (3 of 74) of respondent organizations refer specifically to women and girls with disabilities in their strategic objectives, all 3 through program implementation.

- Of the 35 respondent organizations that have a gender policy, 97% of such policies do not specifically refer to inclusion of women and girls with disabilities.

- Of the 27 respondent organizations that conduct training that specifically addresses gender issues, 96% do not address issues of women with disabilities.

- Sixty-two percent (46 of 74) of respondent organizations that do not use any strategies to include women and girls with disabilities in gender-specific programs responded not applicable. Eight organizations did not respond to the question.

- Twenty-two percent (16 of 74) do not take steps to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are included in gender-specific programs.

Appendix A

INTERACTION PVO STANDARDS ON DISABILITY

2.0 *GOVERNANCE*

2.6.3 Each agency will develop a written policy that affirms its commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities in organizational structures and in staff and board composition. The policy should be fully integrated into an organization's plans and operations, in a manner consistent with its mission and the constituency it serves.

6.0 *MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AND HUMAN RESOURCES*

6.4.3 *Promoting People With Disabilities*

6.4.3.1 Agencies will strive to increase the numbers of people with disabilities, where there is under-representation, in senior decision-making positions at headquarters, in the field and on boards of directors.

6.4.3.2 In order to embrace diversity in its organizational culture, agencies will integrate disability into the diversity sensitization program within an organization's human resource development program for staff at all levels. This will improve organizational effectiveness, promote non-discriminatory working relationships and create a respect for diversity in work and management styles.

7.0 Program

7.4 Promoting People With Disabilities

7.4.1 Consistent with its mission and the constituency it serves, members will establish a mechanism which operates with a mandate from the CEO to promote and monitor the inclusion of people with disabilities in programs.

7.4.2 Disability inclusion strategies will be integrated into each stage of the program process, from review of project proposals to implementation and evaluation to ensure that projects foster

participation and benefits for all affected groups, including disabled men, women and children. Members will collaborate with local NGO partner organizations in the field on these efforts.

7.4.3 Member programs and activities should be held in accessible locations to the maximum extent feasible. Organizations will provide training and conference materials in alternative formats as applicable (Braille, sign language interpreters, etc.). Member agencies should plan financially to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities in member programs and activities.

7.6 Material Assistance

7.6.2 Materials provided shall be appropriate, based on an assessment of local needs, and sensitive to the local culture and situation. Any donations of goods and services will be accessible to disabled men, women and children.

7.9 Child Sponsorship

7.9.15 Members engaged in child sponsorship should develop policies that support the inclusion of children with disabilities and their families in child sponsorship programs and child-focused community development projects.

Appendix B

INTERACTION MEMBER AGENCIES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY

CEO Interviews

Action Against Hunger USA

Advocacy Institute

Aid to Artisans

Air Serv International

American Friends Service Committee

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

American Near East Refugee Aid

American Refugee Committee International

Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team

Bread for the World

CARE

Center of Concern, The

Child Health Foundation

Childreach

Children International

Citizens Democracy Corps

Concern America

Concern Worldwide

Congressional Hunger Center

Counterpart International, Inc.

Direct Relief International

Enersol Associates, Inc.

Episcopal Relief & Development

Ethiopian Community Development Council

Floresta

Freedom from Hunger

Grassroots International

Health Volunteers Overseas

Heart to Heart International

Helen Keller Worldwide

Holt international Children's Services

Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc.

International Aid

International Development Conference

International Development Enterprises

International Eye Foundation

International Medical Corps

International Orthodox Christian Charities

International Relief and Development

International Relief Teams

International Youth Foundation

Islamic African Relief Agency

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA

Katalysis North/South Development Partnership

Latter-Day Saint Charities

Laubach Literacy International

Lutheran World Relief

Margaret Sanger Center International

Medical Care Development, Inc.

Mercy Corps International

Minnesota International Health Volunteers

Mobility International USA

National Peace Corps Association

Near East Foundation

Obor, The International Book Institute, Inc.

OIC International

Operation USA

Partners for Development

Pathfinder International

Pearl S. Buck International

Physicians for Human Rights

Physicians for Peace

Planning Assistance

Presbyterian Church USA, Disaster Assistance and Hunger Program

Project Concern International

RESULTS

Salvation Army World Service Office

SHARE Foundation: Building a New El Salvador

Solar Cookers International

The Hunger Project

Trickle Up Program

United Way International

USA for UNHCR

World Relief

World SHARE

Young Men's Christian Association of the USA

Zero Population Growth

Organization Survey

Academy for Educational Development

ACCION International

Advocacy Institute

Africare

Aid to Artisans

Air Serv International

Alan Guttmacher Institute

American Friends Service Committee

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

American Jewish World Service

American Near East Refugee Aid

Armenian Assembly of America

CARE

Child Health Foundation

Childreach

Children International

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

Citizens Democracy Corps

Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs, The

Concern America

Concern Worldwide

Delphi International

Direct Relief International

Enersol Associates, Inc.

Floresta

Food for the Hungry International

Freedom from Hunger

Heart to Heart International

Heifer Project International

Helen Keller Worldwide

Holt international Children's Services

InterAction

International Aid

International Catholic Migration Commission

International Development Enterprises

International Eye Foundation

International Medical Corps

International Relief Teams

International Rescue Committee

International Youth Foundation

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA

Laubach Literacy International

Lutheran World Relief

MAP International

March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

Mercy Corps International

Mobility International USA

National Peace Corps Association

OIC International

Oxfam America

Partners for Development

Pathfinder International

Pearl S. Buck International

Planning Assistance

Refugees International

RESULTS

Salvation Army World Service Office

Save the Children

Sierra Club

Solar Cookers International

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, The

Synergos Institute, The

Trickle Up Program

United Way International

USA for UNHCR

Volunteers in Technical Assistance

Women's Opportunity Fund of Opportunity International -US

World Learning

World Relief

World Resources Institute

World SHARE

World Vision

Young Men's Christian Association of the USA

Zero Population Growth

In-Depth Assessments

Childreach

Heifer Project International

Mercy Corps International

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