The Sustainable Development Goals have been in effect for just over a year, pursuing an ambitious agenda to “end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.” As foreign aid and international development have evolved over the years, so too has the definition of “all.” Previously, people with disabilities were typically ‘invisible’ in development programs and were not mentioned in the original Millennium Development Goals. This is slowly changing, as now the Sustainable Development Goals have five targets where disability is included (SDGs 4, 8, 10, 11, 17).
As disability becomes more integrated in development programming, the evolving definitions and concepts of disability need to be considered for full integration. Historically, international development efforts have focused on implementing disability related programs utilizing the Medical and/or Rehabilitation Model of Disability. These models generally view disability as a condition, which needs to be “fixed” or “rehabilitated.” Often, these models are seen in programs that focus on medical conditions, such as vaccinations to “prevent disability.”

While lives have been positively changed by these service provision programs, utilizing only the Medical and the Rehabilitation Models in development can reduce persons with disabilities to being receptacles of health care. This leads to a patronizing attitude towards people with disabilities, such as those who need ‘protection’ and ‘caretaking.’

Today, with the advancement of healthcare, people have the chance to live longer, and with technology they can be more self-sufficient. As a result, the focus of the development community is slowly moving into the Inclusive Development Model. Inclusive development is society taking into consideration the needs of people with disabilities and accommodating their needs through inclusive legislation and budget allocation to implement laws. This is similar to the more recent Social Model of Disability, in which the ‘disability’ is a result of societal attitudes and barriers towards people with disabilities.

The models are also not without controversy, as some view that the social and medical model create a false dichotomy between “biological impairments and social limitations.” “One maintains that disability is a complex phenomenon, in which biological impairment and social exclusion are deeply interwoven and difficult to tease apart (Martiny 2015; Anastasiou and Kauffman, 2013).”

As the Medical/Rehabilitation Models have a longer history in international development, the development community must come together to advocate for funding towards integration of people with disabilities utilizing all approaches, because they complement each other. The medical model is more effective if it is accompanied by a rehabilitation process, and accommodated by a social model of disability. Similarly, it is economically rational for society to accommodate those with disabilities utilizing a social model, when the disability cannot be “treated” by medicine. For instance, a program providing surgery to local community members can also include a project in which the local
community members educate each other about such a medical condition, as well as planning accessibility accommodations for those who may be in the process of receiving surgery or rehabilitation. The social model would also ensure that after their surgery, individuals are able to participate fully in their community.

Ultimately, inclusive programs start when funding is allocated to support bringing persons with disabilities “to the table.” People with disabilities are the greatest resource available in identifying what needs exist, and what approaches do and do not work in development. Input from people with disabilities at the earliest stages of a project ensures that a “one-size fits all” approach will not be taken, and that funds can be efficiently spent to reach the widest possible cohort with the highest return.

The development community needs to come together and ensure that people with disabilities are seen as complex human beings, who have both medical and social equity needs (as anyone else), in which fulfillment in all areas will further equality with their peers and community members who do not have disabilities.

Article courtesy of Karen Saba (Disability Consultant), Rebecca Berman (World Learning Program Associate) and Aaron Merchen (Senior Associate, Global Early Childhood Development at RESULTS and RESULTS Educational Fund). Graphic courtesy of Aaron Merchen, 2016.

**TAAP’ing into Intersectionality**

At TAAP, we seek to bring forth the skills, experiences, and voices of all people to address the inclusion of historically marginalize identities and communities. Through advocating for social inclusion and working with a variety of experts on different identities, we recognize the importance of having
different frameworks to understand how one identity’s affects participation in society. One important lens is “intersectionality” which can be defined as how our individual identities - such as race, gender, disability status and age – interact in ways that can compound or intensify the inclusion or exclusion we experience from others, within institutions, and through systems and policies. A recent TED Talk by Kimberlé Crenshaw titled “The Urgency of Intersectionality” explains how intersectionality can help us tackle exclusion. First, Crenshaw stresses the importance of having a frame for a problem. Crenshaw describes how African American women killed by police are overlooked by media, policymakers, and politicians because there are two frames converging: gender and race. Since the two frames overlap, the issue is overlooked. Some ask why is a frame important. We have gender and race frameworks so those should apply to people with both identities right? As Crenshaw explains, “the simple answer is that this is a trickle-down approach to social justice, and many times it just doesn't work. Without frames that allow us to see how social problems impact all the members of a targeted group, many will fall through the cracks of our movements, left to suffer in virtual isolation.” Crenshaw goes further to explain, “African-American women, like other women of color, like other socially marginalized people all over the world, [face] all kinds of dilemmas and challenges as a consequence of intersectionality, intersections of race and gender, of heterosexism, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, all of these social dynamics come together and create challenges that are sometimes quite unique.”

Have resources on intersectionality to share with us? Please do! Email the TAAP Inclusion Team at taap@worldlearning.org.

Graphic: www.dayofthegirl.org/intersectionality
How do You Measure Progress in Agency, Access and Power? (Got indicators?)

The TAAP Initiative provides an organizational and analytical structure for validating the experiences of marginalized and excluded people, sources or causes of marginalization and exclusion, and potential interventions to enhance inclusion.

A working development hypothesis is that if we integrate the TAAP approach throughout the project cycle, then the Agency (self-determination - (capacity to control one's destiny, free of interference by others - and autonomy - independence or freedom over one's actions), Access (a person’s ability or right to take full advantage of equal and equitable opportunities that come from economic, social and political development) and Power (the degree of control over material, human, intellectual and financial resources exercised by different actors in society) of marginalized and excluded groups/individuals will be increased and will contribute to more peaceful and just societies.

What indicators of measurement would you use in your programs to measure progress against this hypothesis? Email the TAAP Inclusion Team at taap@worldlearning.org.

Photo courtesy of the World Learning's Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) Program in Algeria.
Got Inclusion?

We want to hear from you! Please share your inclusion activities, success stories, upcoming events, and intriguing resources. Send to TAAP@worldlearning.org.

New to TAAP? Read past newsletters and learn more by clicking here.