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# FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

# Assistance to Disabled Persons in Developing Countries

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**United States**
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**National Security and**
**International Affairs Division**

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The Honorable Claiborne Pell
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Jesse A. Helms
Ranking Minority Member, Committee on
Foreign Relations
United States Senate

As requested, we are providing information on assistance to disabled people in the developing countries. We will report separately on the procedures and directives that guide the Department of State in the construction and renovation of facilities abroad to ensure accessibility to the disabled.

Unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 15 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, and other interested parties. Copies will also be made available to others on request.

Please call me on (202) 275-5790 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.

Harold J. Johnson
Director, Foreign Economic
Assistance Issues

# Executive Summary

## Purpose

Economic and social conditions in developing countries prevent them from providing for the special needs of their disabled people, many of whom are poor and living in inaccessible rural areas. As a result, the United Nations, the governments of the United States and other developed nations, and nongovernment organizations have assisted developing countries by focusing attention on the needs of their disabled persons, establishing various programs, and contributing funds.

The Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations asked GAO for information on assistance to disabled people in developing countries. Specifically, GAO was asked to provide information on

- the activities of the United Nations, its member nations, and other international organizations;
- the support provided by U.S. government agencies; and
- the efforts by nongovernment organizations.

## Background

Although reliable statistics and data on the numbers of disabled people are not available, the United Nations estimates there are 500 million worldwide, with 80 percent living in developing countries. These disabled persons, a large portion of whom are women and children, face limited opportunities for assistance. Often living in remote areas—far from the services and facilities that may be offered in cities and towns—they are further isolated by economic constraints and social and cultural attitudes that create barriers and make them among the most neglected segment of the developing countries' populations.

## Results in Brief

The United Nations has succeeded in drawing attention to the situation and the needs of disabled persons in developing countries. Further, governmental and nongovernmental organizations have responded to this need with programs and money. The overall consensus of those who are involved, however, is that much more time and effort is necessary to meet the objectives that have been set.

- Programs offered by the United Nations have been significant and innovative but are not meeting program goals and are reaching only a small number of the people who need them.
- Developed and developing nations have responded to varying degrees, depending upon available resources and priorities assigned.

- U.S. government agencies have provided support both directly and indirectly through grants to private groups, but such support generally has been sporadic.
- Nongovernmental groups have played leading roles in providing programs and advocating equal rights for disabled persons. However, efforts have been limited because many of the programs they offer are understaffed and underfinanced.

# Principal Findings

## United Nations Serves as Focal Point of Assistance

The United Nations has taken the leading role in providing assistance to disabled persons through the U.N. Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna, Austria. In addition, several U.N. agencies operate or support community-based programs, providing services such as rehabilitation, as a component of primary health care and vocational training efforts.

Although developing and developed countries have responded to U.N. initiatives to varying degrees, depending on their priorities and available resources, much of what has been proposed or planned has not been implemented. For example, U.N. member countries in 1982 adopted the World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons, a global strategy to prevent disability, promote rehabilitation, and provide for the full participation and equal opportunity of disabled persons in social life. However, most of the support for the program has been expressed mainly through the annual resolutions of intergovernmental bodies. In addition, pledges to a trust fund established to support innovative programs for helping disabled persons declined from 1987 to 1989. As of June 1989, contributions totaled about $2.4 million, an amount that U.N. officials said is inadequate to fund the programs.

## U.S. Agency Assistance Has Been Sporadic

Among U.S. agencies, only the Peace Corps has a specific mandate to assist disabled persons, and it has emphasized special education and rehabilitation in the programs it has provided. Assistance from other agencies has generally been sporadic rather than part of planned programs with specific objectives to target disabled people. For example, the Department of Education supports research projects in India and has provided grants to U.S.-based nongovernment organizations for

research activities. The Inter-American Foundation and African Development Foundation have independently supported small grassroots projects involving disabled people. The Department of State has not provided funds but has been an advocate for U.N. programs.

The major U.S. development agency, the Agency for International Development, does not generally target the disabled in its regular bilateral programs but has provided several million dollars in assistance to the disabled in developing countries. Missions in 25 countries, in response to a GAO cable survey, reported that they provided $7.2 million in assistance over the past 3 years. In addition, the agency initiated a special program in 1989 to assist civilian victims of war.

## Efforts of Nongovernmental Groups Limited by Lack of Staff and Funds

Nongovernment organizations continue to provide a wide variety of assistance programs to disabled persons, particularly in the areas of advocacy, health and rehabilitation, education, training and employment, and technical aids and equipment. However, many of these programs remain limited in scope because they lack sufficient staffing and funding. In addition, disabled persons themselves have formed several groups to advocate on their own behalf. Experts in programs for the disabled believe that such groups should be given top priority because they will bring greater awareness to the needs of disabled people. A lack of skills and funds, however, has constrained the formation of strong advocacy organizations.

## Recommendations

GAO is making no recommendations.

## Agency Comments

GAO did not obtain written agency comments on this report because GAO did not evaluate agency programs. However, GAO obtained informal comments from selected U.S. agency officials and included their comments where appropriate.

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## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADF | African Development Foundation |
| AID | Agency for International Development |
| GAO | General Accounting Office |
| IAF | Inter-American Foundation |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| NGO | nongovernment organization |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Authority |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

# Introduction

People in developing countries become physically disabled from many causes, including war and civil disorder, disease, natural disasters, and living conditions in general. Reliable statistics and data on the number of disabled persons in developing countries are not available. The measure commonly applied is a U.N. projection that 10 percent of the population is disabled, which accounts for an estimated 500 million disabled persons worldwide. About 80 percent of them are believed to live in developing countries.

## Situations of Persons With Disabilities

Economic constraints and social and cultural attitudes isolate disabled persons, limit opportunities for treatment and rehabilitation, and create barriers to access to needed services and facilities. Many of these persons are poor and live in remote, rural areas. A large portion are women and children, an extremely vulnerable and neglected segment of the developing countries' populations.

Disabled persons share the basic economic and social needs as other members of their communities, but they often have special needs or requirements for treatment and rehabilitation and for related aids and devices, such as braille and wheelchairs. Equally important, most do not have equal access to services and facilities, such as those providing education, transportation, and employment, that may be available to the entire community.

According to the United Nations, disabled persons are usually destitute and live in areas where medical and other services are scarce, or not available, and where disabilities are rarely detected or treated in time. Institutions that provide rehabilitation and other health-related services are generally urban-based and available to less than 3 percent of the disabled population. According to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), 80 percent of an estimated 140 million disabled children in developing countries are without access to any kind of rehabilitation.

Local governments, with very limited resources, are hard-pressed to address the basic needs of their people, especially in rural areas. Health and educational services that are provided are often inaccessible to the disabled because of physical and social barriers. Consequently, outside assistance with emphasis on the special requirements of the disabled is needed.

## Organizations Assisting the Disabled

Organizations or groups of organizations that are working to help the disabled include the United Nations, its member nations, and other international organizations; U.S. agencies; and nongovernment organizations (NGO).

To stimulate awareness of the situation and needs of these people, the United Nations designated 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons. U.N. organizations and member governments, working with NGOs, established organizational, conceptional, and programmatic frameworks to address disability issues. The U.N.-designated Decade of Disabled Persons for the period 1983 to 1992 was aimed at keeping the issue in focus.

## Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

This report responds to a request from the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for information on assistance to disabled persons in the developing countries. The Committee asked us to review the assistance efforts of

- the United Nations, its member nations, and other international organizations;
- U.S. government agencies; and
- nongovernment organizations.

We attempted to obtain data on the assistance provided by all sources, but because of the large number of organizations involved and the broad-based information needed, direct access and contacts were limited and secondary sources of the data were often used. We did not evaluate U.S. government assistance programs or the practicality and feasibility of concepts involved, such as independent living and community-based rehabilitation. We relied mainly on the opinions and suggestions of knowledgeable officials and experts in this field.

Review work was conducted at U.S. agencies, U.N. organizations, and NGOs located in Washington, D.C.; New York City; Berkeley, California; and Vienna, Austria. We also visited organizations and projects in three countries in Africa (Kenya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) and two countries in Central America (Belize and Costa Rica). The countries we visited represented a varied sample of the activities provided on behalf of disabled persons, but specific information from these countries cannot be projected to other countries.

To obtain information on U.S. government activities, we interviewed officials and obtained documents at the Departments of State, Education, and Health and Human Services; the Agency for International Development (AID); the Peace Corps; the Inter-American Foundation; the African Development Foundation; the Veterans Administration; and the Social Security Administration. We also visited the U.S. missions to the United Nations in New York City and Vienna, Austria, and the AID missions in the countries visited in Africa and Central America. We sent a cable questionnaire to 77 U.S. missions worldwide, of which 53 responded. Information on U.S. efforts was also obtained from U.N. sources and various documents provided by NGOs.

To gather information on the activities of NGOs in the United States, we interviewed organization officials as well as other individuals (some of whom were disabled) who are engaged in assistance activities. We also met with the Secretary-General of Rehabilitation International, which is a New York-based federation of national, regional, and international organizations and agencies representing 81 countries.

We met with Swedish Embassy officials in Washington, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and with Finnish Embassy officials in Zambia to obtain information on the activities of U.N. donor nations. Additional information on government and NGO activities of other member nations was obtained from U.N. sources, private and government sources in the countries visited, and documents provided by major NGOs such as Rehabilitation International.

We obtained U.N. reports and other documents pertaining to (1) the U.N. Year of Disabled Persons (1981), the associated World Program of Action, and the U.N. Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-92) and (2) the activities and efforts of member nations in support of these events. We also interviewed U.N. Secretariat officials in New York and officials at the U.N. Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna, Austria. We interviewed and obtained program documents from headquarters and field representatives of the following U.N. system organizations:

- U.N. Development Program,
- U.N. Children's Fund,
- International Labor Organization, and
- World Health Organization.

We also met in Washington and Central America with officials of the Pan American Health Organization and the Organization of American States.

We obtained information on indigenous NGOs and host government actions in developing countries from U.N. and NGO sources. In the countries visited, we met with host government officials and representatives of organizations of and for disabled persons and visited projects and facilities associated with disability programs, which included workshops, schools, rehabilitation centers, and vocational education centers.

We conducted our review from September 1989 to August 1990. Data-gathering for the purpose of identifying U.S. government assistance was generally limited to fiscal years 1988 through 1990. Our work was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Because the U.N. organizations, as well as those of other governments and private groups and individuals, are outside our audit authority, data gathered were generally limited to that available to U.N. member states and for public consumption.

We did not obtain formal, written agency comments because we did not evaluate agency programs. However, we did obtain informal comments from U.S. agency officials and have included their comments where appropriate.

# Efforts of the United Nations, Its Member Nations, and Other International Organizations

The United Nations, other international organizations, and a number of U.N. member nations have taken steps to address disability issues. The United Nations has served as a catalyst and focal point for worldwide activities, and several U.N. agencies include disability assistance in their regular programs. However, program goals have not been met; progress has been limited in some areas and nonexistent in others. The United Nations also has expressed concern over the lack of financial contributions in support of its programs and a voluntary trust fund for disabled persons.

## United Nations Has Focused Attention on Problems of Disabled Persons

In 1976, the U.N. General Assembly proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons and called for a plan of action for the International Year that would emphasize the equalization of opportunities, rehabilitation, and the prevention of disabilities. Later, the United Nations designated the period 1983 to 1992 as the decade during which the plan would be implemented. However, a mid-point review of the plan's progress revealed that it has not been widely adopted and has therefore fallen short of expectations.

### The International Year

The theme and purpose of the International Year were "full participation and equality," defined as the right of disabled persons to

- take part fully in the life and development of their societies,
- enjoy living conditions equal to those of other citizens, and
- have an equal share in improved conditions resulting from socioeconomic development.

Other objectives included increasing public awareness, understanding, and acceptance of persons who are disabled and encouraging persons with disabilities to form organizations as a means of expressing their views and calling for actions to improve their situations.

The International Year was deemed a success by the United Nations because it developed greater awareness of the problems, needs, and capabilities of persons with disabilities, while at the same time determining the dimension and complexity of disability issues. It also helped to raise the concerns of disabled persons to the political level by gaining the attention of government leaders.

## World Program of Action and the Decade of the Disabled

The adoption of the World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons by the U.N. General Assembly in December 1982 was considered a major outcome of the International Year.

The World Program is a global strategy to prevent disability, promote rehabilitation, and provide for the full participation and equal opportunity of disabled persons in social life and development. It also is a declaration of principles and guidelines for national, regional, and international action that includes (1) an analysis of principles, concepts, and definitions relating to disabilities, (2) an overview of the world situation regarding persons with disabilities, and (3) recommendations for action. An important principle of the World Program is that issues concerning disabled persons should not be treated in isolation, but within the context of the services that are offered to the entire population.

To provide for an initial time frame during which governments and organizations could implement the recommended actions of the World Program, the U.N. General Assembly in December 1982 proclaimed the period 1983 to 1992 as the U.N. Decade of Disabled Persons. The Assembly also requested that experts consisting largely of the disabled conduct a mid-point evaluation of the implementation of the World Program.

## Progress in Carrying Out World Program Has Been Limited

U.N. reports and the mid-decade review in 1987 clearly indicated that only limited progress had been made throughout the world, especially in the developing countries.

The framework of the World Program was a valid basis for ensuring progress wherever it was applied; however, the program had not met the expectations of the international community or disabled people. For example, by 1987 only a few national plans existed that were comprehensive, effective, and based on the concepts underlying the World Program. The political commitment of U.N. member states that adopted the World Program and proclaimed the Decade of Disabled Persons continues to be expressed mainly through annual resolutions of intergovernmental bodies.

## United Nations Established a Trust Fund and Appointed a Special Representative

The United Nations established a voluntary trust fund in 1978 for programs assisting disabled persons and later appointed a Special Representative whose responsibilities include raising contributions for the fund. However, U.N. officials said pledges have steadily declined, and overall contributions to the fund have been insufficient to widely implement assistance programs.

### Fund Supports Catalytic Activities

The Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons was originally established in connection with the International Year. Renamed the Voluntary Fund for the U.N. Decade of Disabled Persons, its resources support catalytic and innovative activities to implement the objectives of the World Program within the framework of the Decade. The U.N. Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the focal point for matters relating to disability, is custodian of the Voluntary Fund. The center has a Disabled Persons Unit that is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the World Program.

The types of activities supported by the Voluntary Fund include technical cooperation, training, data collection, information exchange, and other activities and projects identified by governments and organizations of or for disabled persons.

The majority of contributions to the Voluntary Fund come from individual governments, and its resources are augmented through cofinancing arrangements with bilateral development agencies, nongovernment funding entities, and the private sector. Chief among these relationships has been cooperation with the Arab Gulf Program for U.N. development programs.

### Contributions Received and Grants Disbursed

Since its inception through June 1989, the Voluntary Fund received over $2.4 million in contributions from 39 governments and a number of nongovernment organizations and private sources. The amounts contributed by individual governments are listed in appendix I. Since 1983, Arab Gulf Program agreements in the amount of about $1.5 million have been signed.

As of December 31, 1989, the Voluntary Fund had expended nearly $2.4 million in grants for 117 projects (see table 2.1). More than three-fifths of the projects have been implemented in the developing regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Western Asia. The

remaining projects have been of a global or an interregional nature (see table 2.2).

**Table 2.1: Projects Supported and Grants Disbursed by Area of Activity** (1980 to 1989)

| Area of activity | Number of projects | Value of grants |
|---|---|---|
| Promotional activities | 12 | $181,209 |
| Support to organizations of or for disabled persons | 20 | 475,192 |
| Data collection and research | 21 | 319,132 |
| Training | 37 | 1,111,021 |
| Technical exchange | 24 | 225,786 |
| Technical cooperation | 3 | 79,100 |
| **Total** | **117** | **$2,391,440** |

Source: United Nations.

**Table 2.2: Projects Supported and Grants Disbursed by Region** (1980 to 1989)

| Region | Number of projects | Value of grants |
|---|---|---|
| Africa | 30 | $847,131 |
| Asia and the Pacific | 27 | 394,022 |
| Europe | 1 | 1,440 |
| Latin America and Caribbean | 9 | 90,650 |
| Western Asia | 7 | 180,543 |
| Interregional/global | 43 | 877,654 |
| **Total** | **117** | **$2,391,440** |

Source: United Nations.

## Pledges to Fund Have Declined

According to the U.N. Secretary General, the Voluntary Fund continues to suffer from a lack of contributions. Pledges during the last three pledging conferences show a declining trend both in the amounts contributed and the number of governments contributing. For example, in 1987, 1988, and 1989, the Voluntary Fund received pledges in the amounts of $177,933 (11 governments), $91,000 (9 governments), and $64,776 (7 governments), respectively. Data were not available about specific reasons for the decline in contributions.

## Office of Special Representative

During the first half of the Decade, the U.N. Secretary General appointed a Special Representative to promote the Decade, increase awareness of the World Program, and raise funds for the Voluntary Fund.

Since the Vienna-based office was established in April 1988, several initiatives have been undertaken. For example, the Special Representative has (1) established contact with more than 200 organizations and agencies, (2) encouraged a coordinated approach to projects among U.N. agencies to avoid duplication of effort and resources, and (3) developed a fund-raising initiative.

The office's administrative costs are financed by voluntary contributions. It reported that during the period March 1988 to March 1990, fund-raising activities produced $496,835 in contributions from governments and $407,429 from NGOs and individuals.

The governments of Finland, Sweden, and Norway have also established trust funds to support disability-related activities in conjunction with the International Year and the Decade. Finland established a fund of $700,000 to defray the personnel costs and planning project activities at the Disabled Persons Unit in Vienna. Sweden's fund, in the amount of $307,584, finances personnel costs and official travel. Norway's fund, as of December 1989, had a balance of about $90,000.

## U.N. Agencies Promote World Program Through a Variety of Activities

Several U.N. agencies and bodies within the U.N. system have promoted, individually and through inter-agency cooperation, the goals of the World Program and the Decade of Disabled Persons. Most active are the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, U.N. Development Program (UNDP), and International Labor Organization (ILO).

### World Health Organization

WHO is cooperating with member states to promote a comprehensive program for community-based rehabilitation of disabled people as a component of primary health care. Community-based rehabilitation, using existing local resources, focuses on the direct involvement of disabled people and their families and promotes the use of effective technology. This approach is seen as an alternative to the traditional rehabilitation programs that have been largely founded on costly, institution-based technology. While other views and approaches to community-based rehabilitation exist, WHO's community-based rehabilitation training manual is widely used as a model in the developing world.

The United Nations reports that WHO is helping Botswana and Malaysia to review and strengthen community-based rehabilitation. It also provides assistance to disability-related activities in several countries,

including Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, Senegal, and the Philippines. The WHO program is developing orthopedic technology to produce appliances using local labor, materials, and simple tools. This will allow countries to set up decentralized, low-cost orthopedic workshops.

The WHO country director in Zambia told us that WHO does not have ongoing or planned programs there for the disabled and that the degree to which the disabled people are assisted under the primary health care program depends on the district health worker. However, according to the director, WHO had recently participated in a seminar on community-based rehabilitation sponsored by the Christian Council of Zambia and had provided manuals and funding.

WHO's program activities were intended to foster national and international action so that by 1989 at least 50 percent of all countries would have initiated community-based rehabilitation programs that are available and acceptable to all sectors of the population, especially the rural and urban poor. Although only the Western Pacific Region achieved this target, assessments of established programs showed that 70 to 80 percent of persons with disabilities improved their ability to perform daily tasks.

WHO reports that shortage of financial resources and rehabilitation personnel continues to be the main limitation on national program development. Also, many countries still prefer the development of institutions that do not provide services at the community level.

## U.N. Children's Fund

UNICEF, in 1980, adopted an expanded strategy on childhood disability as part of its policy. The essential elements are (1) more effective prevention of childhood impairments, (2) reduction of the effects of disability through early detection and intervention, and (3) use of the family and the community as a primary vehicle for service delivery to those children who are already disabled. UNICEF believes a larger number of disabled persons can be reached through community-based rehabilitation services because institution-based services are available to less than 3 percent of the disabled population in most developing countries.

In its projects, UNICEF seeks to integrate goals for assisting disabled children with the overall development efforts of a country. This integrated strategy is being carried out in more than 30 countries.

- In Belize, UNICEF and the United Kingdom Special Fund have spent $97,000 over the past 3 years on a project emphasizing prevention, early detection, and community-based attention for disabled children.
- In Kenya, UNICEF has funded inter-ministerial meetings for overall coordination of a community-based primary health care program in three urban areas and six districts. Although the program does not include any specific efforts for the disabled, UNICEF has assisted in planning these meetings, producing community-based manuals for the disabled, providing management training for the community-based staff, and training the parents of disabled children.
- In Costa Rica, we were told UNICEF is trying—through various government ministries—to integrate disabled children, especially those of preschool age, into the regular classroom environment.

## U.N. Development Program

The UNDP is the central funding agency and coordinator for technical assistance in the U.N. system. Since 1980, UNDP has provided over $25 million for disability-related projects, as shown in table 2.3.

**Table 2.3: UNDP-Funded Projects** (1980 to 1990)

| Region | Number of projects | Amount provided |
|---|---|---|
| Africa | 28 | $17,632,190 |
| Asia and Pacific | 13 | 5,073,720 |
| Arab states | 12 | 2,087,325 |
| Europe | 6 | 222,688 |
| Latin America | 2 | 252,421 |
| Interregional/global | 2 | 15,500 |
| **Total** | **63** | **$25,283,844** |

Source: United Nations.

In 1990, UNDP started a pilot interregional program in community-based rehabilitation in support of the Decade of Disabled Persons. The seed money provided under this pilot initiative is intended to assist, in the first instance, a small number of interested developing countries in setting up national programs with and for disabled persons. Program components include rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities, and improved social integration of disabled persons. Chad and Cote d'Ivoire have begun to receive technical assistance, and four other countries (Guatemala, Ghana, Benin, and Egypt) are scheduled to participate in the pilot program during the initial 18-month phase.

## International Labor Organization

The ILO has become involved in creating vocational rehabilitation programs in the majority of the developing countries. These programs have expanded considerably during the Decade of Disabled Persons, with direct assistance to U.N. member nations increasing from $1 million in 1981 to more than $5 million in 1988.

The main objectives of ILO's vocational rehabilitation programs are to assist U.N. member nations to (1) develop and improve basic vocational rehabilitation and social integration policies, strategies, and programs for physically and mentally disabled persons; (2) train staff; and (3) encourage and facilitate regional collaboration. ILO also promotes rehabilitation approaches that have a clear community orientation, mobilizing community resources to provide the care, skill training, and employment opportunities necessary to raise the living standards of disabled persons.

As of January 1990, ILO had about 40 rehabilitation projects in various member states, with funding totaling more than $22 million from the UNDP and from multilateral and bilateral donors. Several developed countries have contributed to ILO's vocational rehabilitation projects. ILO reports that about $4.5 million has been provided, individually or by cofinancing, to support vocational rehabilitation projects in the developing countries and regions (see table 2.4).

**Table 2.4: Developed Countries' Assistance to ILO Projects**

| Donor | Country/region | Amount provided |
|---|---|---|
| Italy | Dominican Republic | $121,440 |
| Spain | Nicaragua | 692,776 |
| Finland[a] | Lesotho | 452,747 |
| | African region | 717,254 |
| Norway[a] | Namibia | 515,025 |
| Sweden[a] | African region | 78,000 |
| France | African region | 192,000 |
| Federal Republic of Germany[a] | African region | 1,700,000 |
| **Total** | | **$4,469,242** |

[a]These countries, as well as Belgium, are also providing $800,000 to finance associate experts to various countries.

Source: International Labor Organization.

Some ILO funding goes to countries through regional organizations. The African Rehabilitation Institute, a part of the Organization of African

Unity, was established as a result of the U.N. Decade. With its headquarters in Zimbabwe, the institute has received about $250,000 annually over the last several years, according to an ILO representative. The institute's projects, in turn, receive support from various donor governments, NGOs, and international organizations. For example, a regional training and employment program operated by the institute will receive funding from, among others, the Netherlands, Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, Arab Gulf Program, Royal Commonwealth for the Blind, U.N. Voluntary Fund, and European Economic Commission.

Another ILO project is designed to provide equal opportunities and improved living standards for disabled women who have been identified as potentially economically competitive in the five countries of the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Zambia). The 3-year project has received $1.7 million from West Germany.

During field work in Kenya, Zambia, and Zimbabwe we discussed several of these projects with ILO representatives.

- In Kenya, the ILO is working with the government to help disabled persons who have obtained skills find work in the private sector. The project is designed to alleviate a number of limitations experienced by the disabled, such as the low level of skills learned, the lack of entrepreneurial skills, and the lack of start-up capital. Funding of $3.2 million for the 4-year project will come from the UNDP. ILO is working with NGOs and will subcontract some of its work to them. For example, NGOs will monitor the use of ILO loans provided to disability-related businesses.
- ILO completed a vocational training pilot project in Zambia in 1988. The project, conducted with the Finland International Development Agency, provided materials to construct and operate a school for the disabled. Upon completion, the school was turned over to the government. We were told, however, that it has not been successful because of a lack of government funding and trained personnel. The school has a capacity of 300 but at the time of our visit had only 117 students, with about 30 to 40 coming from Namibia, Mozambique, and the African National Conference. ILO does not have any ongoing projects for the disabled in Zambia.
- One of several ILO projects in Zimbabwe helps disabled people earn a living from cultivating and processing sunflowers into oil. About 300 people are employed.

## Regional Organization Assistance

Regional organizations are assisting in disability-related activities in various developing countries. In Latin America, for example, the Pan-American Health Organization is supporting activities in Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, and Panama.

Since 1969, the Organization of American States (OAS) has had programs of special education and vocational rehabilitation in 20 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The focus of the programs is on integrating children with special needs into the general school program, as well as into the economic and social mainstream. According to OAS officials, special education projects funded by OAS have resulted in the creation of networks of communities that provide training in this area.

An OAS official, however, also told us that the special education program will soon be absorbed into OAS's umbrella basic education program. The shift, according to this official, will effectively eliminate the special education program because the basic education program will not include the types of activities needed for special education.

## Programs of Developed Countries

Developed countries are giving special attention to disability concerns in a number of bilateral development assistance programs. The U.N. Secretary General reports that this assistance represents an important source of financial support because disability-related issues touch upon all sectors of society. Moreover, U.N. reports show that a growing number of countries, within their bilateral assistance and technical cooperation programs, are giving priority to projects that focus on the disabled.

Some countries provide assistance through their development agency. Sweden, using the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) as the conduit for delivering assistance, spends about $10 million per year in overseas support for disabled persons, according to a Swedish Embassy official in Washington. SIDA has a special arrangement with a Swedish nongovernmental umbrella organization for disabled people, whereby SIDA funds 90 percent of a disability program if the organization defrays 10 percent of the cost. The nongovernment organization spends about $3 million a year on its disability programs. SIDA also has provided Disabled People International about $2 million per year.

To ensure that disability-related concerns are appropriately incorporated in its bilateral assistance programs, SIDA established a special study group. Swedish government officials in Zambia said that SIDA has provided about $7.16 million (the U.S. dollar equivalent to 40 million

Swedish crowns at the December 1990 exchange rate) per year during the last 3 years to rebuild vocational training centers and to train teachers of the handicapped.

Other examples of the assistance being provided by developed countries include the following:

- Belgium provides support to requesting developing countries through a public agency—the National Fund, the Social Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons.
- The Netherlands' bilateral assistance includes disability specialists, technical aids, and specialized treatment and rehabilitation of persons in Dutch facilities.
- Norway gives high priority to disability-related projects in its bilateral assistance programs and provides support for selected disability projects run by national NGOs.
- Denmark, through its Danish International Development Agency, emphasizes projects that integrate disabled persons into the general social system. In Kenya, for example, the agency is sponsoring (1) the Educational Assessment Resource Service, a decentralized diagnostic program to identify and assist disabled children and their families, and (2) the Kenya Institute for Special Education to train teachers to teach children with various types of disabilities.

## Programs of Developing Countries

Developing countries are addressing disability issues, many as a result of the International Year, and they have responded to the World Program to varying degrees, depending on their available resources and priorities. However, the United Nations reports that much of what has been proposed or planned has not been implemented.

The United Nations reports that, based on a small sample of responses from member states, much of their action revolves around several issues.

- India, Pakistan, China, and the Philippines were formulating plans for the integration of disabled people into society.
- Singapore, China, and the Philippines have central coordinating committees or bodies with inter-ministerial representation that are formulating policies on disability issues.
- Most countries have focused on the development of community-based services for the disabled and their families, as well as on the employment of disabled persons.

- Several countries reported recent legislation concerning such areas as education and training, employment, housing, and transportation.

Although some countries may have progressed with initial support from international agencies, others have taken initiatives within their own resources. Details on the initiatives we identified in the five developing countries we visited are in appendix II.

# U.S. Agency Activities

Several U.S. government agencies provide assistance to disabled persons in developing countries. However, with the exception of the Peace Corps, which has an explicit mandate to assist the disabled, U.S. assistance has been sporadically provided rather than included in regular programs and objectives.

The Department of State has been a leading advocate for the major U.N. efforts. The Peace Corps, to fulfill its mandate, includes assistance to the disabled in its programs, with emphasis on special education and rehabilitation. AID, on the other hand, does not design programs targeting disabled persons, with the exception of a program established recently for civilian victims of war. The agency, however, provides scattered assistance to disabled persons, particularly at the U.S. mission level, from small discretionary funds. In addition, several other agencies have provided monetary assistance, often in the form of grants and through nongovernment organizations.

## Department of State

The State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs has been the leading U.S. advocate for U.N. efforts as a catalyst and focal point for worldwide activities assisting the disabled. Through the Bureau, the United States proposed several initiatives pertaining to the World Program of Action and the Decade of Disabled Persons. For example, the United States co-sponsored resolutions on the disabled and supported the continuation of the voluntary trust fund established during the International Year of Disabled Persons.

As the United States has traditionally co-sponsored resolutions on the disabled, it has correspondingly opposed any resolutions calling for additional U.N. activities unless fully offset by reductions in other areas or carried out within existing resources. In addition, we were told by a Bureau official that the United States does not have sufficient funds to give in support of the Decade beyond its annual 25 percent assessed contribution.

The United States in 1983 made a one-time contribution of $103,000 (from AID funds) to the U.N. Voluntary Fund for the disabled. Since then, the United States has not contributed to the fund, nor has it financially supported the U.N. appeal for voluntary contributions for disability-related activities such as the Disabled Persons Unit. The Bureau's office responsible for disability matters proposed that $100,000 in contributions to the Voluntary Fund be included in the State Department's

budget requests for fiscal years 1985 and 1988. The contributions, however, were not included. A significant portion of the $103,000 contributed in 1983 was used in the United States in the form of a $45,300 grant in 1986 to train teachers from the developing countries and for computer work at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.

## Peace Corps

The Peace Corps, as part of its legislative mandate, has sought to address the immediate educational or physical needs of the disabled. Public Law 97-113, dated December 29, 1981, states that "the Peace Corps shall be administered so as to give particular attention to programs, projects, and activities which tend to integrate disabled people into the national economies of developing countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort."

Peace Corps officials in Washington told us that their aim in developing their programs is to try to ease the inclusion of disabled persons into the life of the community and the country. This approach to improving the personal and social condition of the disabled does not exclude traditional academic responses such as direct teacher training and curriculum development. Rather, the Peace Corps has chosen to build on these activities.

Peace Corps officials told us that in many countries the Peace Corps is a key player in introducing and supporting the concept of personal and community development regarding the disabled. For this reason, they believe that their efforts in special education and rehabilitation have the potential to achieve an impact far greater than the program's modest numbers of approximately 150 volunteers in 14 countries might suggest.

We found that the Peace Corps is implementing its mandate in many countries through various programs and projects. Some of these are carried out in cooperation with AID and NGOs. For example, in Jamaica, 14 volunteers are assigned to the United Way's Council of Voluntary Services, which has received $500,000 in AID funding to provide educational services to handicapped persons and disadvantaged high school students. In Morocco, volunteers helped an orthopedic center establish a workshop to make wheelchairs, crutches, and other aids for the handicapped. The center was able to purchase the necessary tools, machines, and materials with a $5,000 grant from AID's Small Project Assistance Program.

Peace Corps volunteers are also working with the ministries of several host governments. In Belize, a volunteer is working with the Ministry of Education in several schools to identify the needs of disabled children. In rural parts of Costa Rica, the Peace Corps is providing aid in such areas as special education, health, and vocational rehabilitation where little assistance has existed before.

A third Peace Corps initiative for helping disabled persons is its Partnership Program. A volunteer working in a community assists in putting together an informal project proposal seeking a U.S. partner (such as a church, school, corporation, or foundation) to provide funds. This approach has provided assistance to the disabled in several countries.

- Partners from two U.S. cities in California and Indiana have provided $3,150 to the Nylander Home for the physically handicapped in Sri Lanka. The Nylander Home plans to establish a light engineering workshop to produce wheelchairs using local resources.
- In Nepal, deaf people published the country's first sign language dictionary with $3,298 in assistance from a U.S. partner.

## Agency for International Development

AID does not generally attempt to target the disabled in its regular bilateral assistance programs, although agency officials reported that AID has provided millions of dollars in bilateral and multilateral assistance to the disabled in developing countries over the last 3 years. Nevertheless, AID officials indicated to us that, while opportunities may exist to assist the disabled, their primary focus has been on carrying out the agency's development objectives in the developing countries.

Even though AID does not target the disabled in its regular development program, we found that the agency has assisted projects and programs for and of disabled persons in developing countries. Additionally, since fiscal year 1989, AID has been authorized to provide assistance for civilian war victims.

AID officials said that while disabled persons are not excluded from the agency's programs, AID does not have an established priority for including them. However, based on AID officials' comments and the results of our cable survey of mission activity, it appears that (1) although many programs inherently include the disabled, no records are kept reporting the activity and (2) many additional opportunities exist for integrating disabled persons into the general development programs.

## Our Cable Survey of AID Assistance

In response to our cable survey of 77 AID missions, 25 of the 53 responding reported that they had provided assistance over the past 3 years to persons with disabilities. We do not know if the missions that did not respond have provided assistance. The total amount of the assistance reported was approximately $7.2 million, with $6.6 million of this in the Asia/Near East region, as shown in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Disability Assistance Reported by AID Missions**

Dollars in thousands

| Region | Number of missions providing assistance | Amount reported |
|---|---|---|
| Latin America and Caribbean | 5 | $307.5 |
| Asia/Near East | 9 | 6,593.8[a] |
| Africa | 11 | 278.8 |
| **Total** | **25** | **$7,180.1** |

[a]Amount includes $4.3 million for Egypt, with $3.4 million provided under the Commodity Import Program for orthopedic and prosthetic equipment.

The cable survey responses showed that the missions' discretionary funds were often the source of small amounts of money given to community groups and organizations. The Niger mission, for example, gave $26,000 from the "Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund" to assist Peace Corps volunteers and others in providing training to a group of 67 persons with physical, sight, and hearing impairments.

Some of the assistance represented relatively large sums and was tied to major AID projects. For example, Thailand reported three grant-assisted projects that were identified under the "PVO Co-Financing II Project." One of the sub-projects gave $449,000 to strengthen and expand educational and vocational services for the blind. Helen Keller International was managing the project, which provided technical assistance and community-based programs to some 10,000 blind persons and family members.

Other donations supported special education, vocational training, workshops, diagnostic equipment, and many other endeavors for all categories of persons with disabilities. Appendix III summarizes the reported assistance.

## Other Projects Funded by U.S. Embassies

In addition to AID assistance reported in the cable survey, we identified several other small projects that were funded by the embassies' self-help resources but were not included in the cables.

In fiscal year 1989, the self-help fund of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya provided assistance to three projects.

- The Kenya National Association of the Deaf received $1,000 to publish a newsletter.
- A secondary school for the deaf received $1,900 for a water supply project.
- A school for the physically handicapped received $2,000 to purchase sewing machines.

In Zimbabwe, the embassy's self-help fund provided about $9,400 in fiscal year 1989 for (1) a poultry project started by a cooperative for blind persons, (2) sewing machines for the physically handicapped, and (3) physical therapy equipment for the Association for Down's Children. We were also told that in 1987 and 1988 the self-help fund provided over $14,000 in assistance for disability-related projects. The self-help coordinator in Zimbabwe told us that for fiscal year 1990 the Embassy had received, but not funded, five requests for wheelchairs.

## Assistance for Civilian Victims of War

Starting in fiscal year 1989, AID has received $5 million annually in earmarked funds to be used in assisting civilian victims of war. AID has obligated the majority of the funding to programs in Uganda, Mozambique, and Laos. The legislation initially limited funding to providing artificial limbs, but fiscal year 1991 legislation expanded the use of the funding to assist with medical and related assistance, as well as vocational rehabilitation and training. The funds may also be used in part to help design and evaluate the programs.

Currently, AID has obligated the majority of the earmarked funds to the development of programs in Uganda and Mozambique, where a survey team concluded that "only an all-encompassing approach to the rehabilitation of disabled people will work." The goal of the programs is to establish the capacity to treat and physically rehabilitate all of the emergency-related civilian disabled and assist them in leading normal lives. The 1990 program also includes funding for a program in Laos and for the American National Red Cross. For fiscal year 1991, AID is considering providing funding for Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Ethiopia, as well as to the International Committee of the Red Cross for its program in Angola.

## Assistance for the Disabled Not a Priority in AID Programs

AID officials said that some programs funded by the agency inherently include disabled persons, and they cited training programs in Central and Latin America that are aimed at training socially and economically underprivileged people. Further, they pointed out that a number of major AID programs are aimed at some of the preventable causes of disability primarily in respect to disease prevention and control, malnutrition, and food production. One example cited was vaccine development and immunization delivery programs for diseases such as measles and polio which, if not treated, can cause one to become disabled. However, these officials acknowledged that the agency does not assign a specific priority to helping disabled persons through its development programs. In addition, they explained that AID does not document the extent to which disabled persons are included in or aided by the programs.

Officials in AID's Office of Program Policy Coordination and the Science and Technology Bureau explained that AID's mission is carried out mostly through large grants provided to host governments, with the focus on helping the population of developing countries by improving their overall economic condition. This focus on "macro" development, they said, may work against the inclusion of the disabled where the primary focus is on the grassroots level.

Bolstering this observation are the comments of AID officials from all five countries we visited. They said that other than small, random efforts, the missions had not provided any assistance to the disabled during the past 3 years and that the missions have no assistance projects planned for the future. Mission officials explained that their programs were focused primarily on the agricultural, rural development, and nutrition sectors and that assistance to the disabled has not been planned because the agency has limited resources. Officials also said that the countries have higher-priority developmental needs and that there was not enough money to broaden the agency's involvement.

AID officials, both in field offices and in Washington, cited many examples of existing opportunities for integrating disabled persons into their on-going development programs. Some of these suggestions are listed in appendix IV. The idea of integration was also echoed by major NGOs and U.N. representatives as being the best way for AID to become more involved in assisting the disabled.

## Other U.S. Agency Activities

Other U.S. government agencies also have provided assistance for the disabled in developing countries.

- The Department of Education has supported research projects in India and has provided grants to major U.S.-based NGOs.
- The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) and African Development Foundation (ADF) have provided grants to private groups in Latin America and Africa.

## Department of Education

Education Department assistance at the international level falls under the auspices of its Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services and focuses on research led and supported by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

The National Institute has worked with the government of India for a number of years to develop services and technology for persons with disabilities in rural communities. The Institute has supported two sequential, 5-year research programs, the second beginning in 1990. An Education Department official said that the programs are financed with U.S.-owned Indian rupees. The first program received about $1.1 million (equivalent to about 20 million Indian rupees at the December 1990 exchange rate), and $3.85 million (about 70 million rupees) is proposed for the second program.

The programs are intended to help the government of India to develop and implement rural-based models for rehabilitation training and job development. The Department official told us that the programs began in 10 rural villages and were expected to expand to 120 villages during the second 5-year period. The rehabilitation program conducted in each village included primary health care centers, special schools, locally-produced prosthetic appliances, and locally-made wheelchairs. The programs' coverage is modest compared to the total needs that exist, but according to Education Department documents, these and earlier projects have "provided the data for solid, governmental-level planning for the development of services and technology for many millions of Indians with disabilities, and have dramatically helped to mold Indian laws, regulations, project models, and the development of assistive technology."

In September 1988, the National Institute gave two $200,000, 3-year grants to the World Rehabilitation Fund and the World Institute on Disability for a program conducted in conjunction with Rehabilitation International to increase the worldwide exchange of expertise, research, and information on disability issues and programs. The World Rehabilitation Fund will focus on field projects in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Basin, and the Middle East. The World Institute on Disability's efforts will be directed to Canada, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

## Inter-American Foundation

The IAF, created by the Congress in 1969 as a public corporation, supports self-help efforts of poor people in Latin America and the Caribbean. It does not design programs in conjunction with host governments, but instead responds directly to the initiatives and requests for assistance from local and private grassroots organizations.

From April 1973 through June 1989, IAF signed agreements to undertake 22 disability-related projects. Grants totaling $1.3 million were provided to groups in 15 countries and regional centers. The size of the grants ranged from $3,700 to $203,800.

- In Costa Rica, $42,000 was provided in 1988 to an association of professional people to provide training and therapy to physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped people. Workshops in sewing, woodworking, mattress making, and cement-block making provide skills training and occupational therapy to between 40 and 60 persons at any one time.
- In Ecuador, $69,300 was provided in 1983 to the Society of Deaf Adults (100 members) to develop a broad program of informal education and of public awareness regarding deafness. This program included preparation of the first sign language text for the country. IAF supported this project because it would (1) improve the capacity to communicate, learn job skills, and improve employment opportunities and (2) assist in the integration of the deaf into the cultural and economic mainstream.

## African Development Foundation

The ADF started operating in 1984 and has much the same charter for Africa as the IAF has for Latin America. ADF officials gave us data on five projects in Africa that involve persons with disabilities: one in Cameroon, one in Zambia, and three in Zimbabwe. The five projects represent a total of $487,600 in grants from 1985 through 1989.

One 3-year project in Zimbabwe involved the Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled, a regional organization representing 10 countries. ADF funds were being used to conduct leadership and development seminars over the 3-year period, particularly to provide leadership skills to disabled women and to assist them in gaining support for self-help projects. Also in Zimbabwe, ADF granted $16,800 to a center that treats and houses persons with mental illnesses. The funds enabled the center to construct a chicken house, provide and maintain a poultry operation, and market the chickens and eggs produced.

# Efforts of Nongovernment Organizations

Nongovernment organizations were the first to offer assistance to disabled people in developing countries, and U.S. officials and experts in the field agree that NGOs remain an effective vehicle for providing assistance.[1] While numerous NGOs assist the disabled by serving as advocates for their rights and by implementing training, rehabilitation, and employment programs, experts also said that the needs of the disabled remain great. One means of more effectively addressing the needs of the disabled, according to the experts we interviewed, is to strengthen the growing contingent of NGOs run by disabled persons.

## Nongovernment Organizations Provide Diverse Services, but Needs Remain Great

Numerous NGOs assist the disabled by providing a wide spectrum of programs. We were told that the areas in which NGOs are most active include advocacy, health and rehabilitation, education and training, employment, and technical aids and equipment.

These areas were also identified as the areas of greatest need. Experts told us that while thousands of organizations are involved with the programs for the disabled, many programs tend to be isolated experiences because they are understaffed and underfinanced. These experts also explained that few mechanisms exist for sharing information and providing critical evaluation so that different groups can learn from one another's successes and failures.

### Advocacy

Experts in the field of disability, as well as NGOs' staff members, told us that in addition to financial support, one primary need of disabled persons is advocacy on behalf of their rights.

International organizations, such as Rehabilitation International and Disabled People International, work as advocates by hosting worldwide conferences, advising U.N. agencies, and disseminating information to world leaders in the field that addresses the overall direction of disability issues. Organizations from developed countries, such as the World Institute on Disability in the United States and the United Kingdom's Action on Disability in Development, work with other countries' organizations to promote the needs of disabled people through information and personnel exchanges. Many indigenous organizations are pressing their governments to enact legislation to promote equal opportunities that

[1] "Experts," as used here, include participants of the U.N. global meetings of Experts on Disability held in Finland in May 1990 and Sweden in 1987; representatives from the World Rehabilitation Fund, the Hesperian Foundation, and Partners of the Americas; and other international rehabilitation specialists.

would ease the integration of disabled people into society. For example, the National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe campaigns for all community services, education, training facilities, and employment opportunities to be made available and accessible to disabled people—not as a special privilege, but as a right to which they are entitled.

## Health and Rehabilitation

Community-based programs are advocated as the popular way to address the pressing needs of the disabled in developing countries. Community-based rehabilitation means the use of simplified methods of rehabilitation and the promotion of awareness and responsibility for rehabilitation in the family and the wider community. A major goal of community-based rehabilitation is to train a cadre of workers from the community, whether they are health workers, teachers, social workers, or volunteers, who would then work at the community level.

Many of the community-based health and rehabilitation programs we identified were fashioned after the U.N. World Health Organization model and generally try to tie into the national health services of the country. However, because of limited financial support from governments, in some countries private voluntary organizations work closely with the government in the actual implementation of the program. For example, in Kenya, two private voluntary organizations, the African Medical and Research Foundation and Action Aid, established a comprehensive community-based program. This project is now the model for the Kenya Ministry of Health's three community-based pilot projects. According to a foundation representative, the activities implemented under the project ranged from forming play groups to developing social interaction between mothers and their disabled children to sponsoring surgeons' visits to the closest hospital to perform corrective surgery.

In addition to the U.N. models, other organizations have also developed appropriate materials for use in community-based rehabilitation. For example, the Hisperian Foundation has a highly successful project in Mexico where the primary community is formed by disabled persons themselves.

## Education and Training

Education programs usually include programs aimed at the existing schools, providing special education to aid school-age children with learning disabilities. For example, in several of the countries we visited organizations were promoting "mainstreaming" of disabled children into the education system as a new trend.

Training encompasses a variety of activities, including guidance to the disabled on how to care for themselves and instruction to local craftsmen on fabricating prostheses. The World Rehabilitation Fund, based in the United States, estimates that it has trained 40 million people throughout the world over the past 25 years to help disabled people.

## Employment

Employment, we were told by many NGO leaders, is the greatest divider between disabled and non-disabled people. Based on U.N. data, the number of disabled persons who are unemployed is increasing at a rate far greater than that of any other group in developing countries. We were told in several countries that disabled graduates of vocational training centers have difficulty finding jobs. Further, there are few indications that the situation will improve noticeably in the years to come.

To address this need, organizations such as Goodwill Industries of America, Inc., support programs that endorse disabled individuals helping themselves through employment. The programs provide financial support as well as a channel for the exchange of ideas, information, and persons. Partners of the Americas has a program offering numerous projects in special education; resource center development; and teacher, therapist, and technician training, as well as job opportunities and vocational development.

## Technical Aids and Equipment

Throughout the developing world, most rehabilitation aids and equipment have followed the Western prototypes, which are considered to be elaborate, expensive, high-maintenance, and often unsuited to the living and working conditions in a poor community.

We identified several organizations that were addressing this problem. The International Committee of the Red Cross became aware of the need to develop techniques adapted not only to the living conditions of the disabled, but also to the resources of their countries, materials, means of production, and skilled manpower. Appropriate Technology for Independent Living developed a wheelchair—currently manufactured in 12 developing countries—that is more suited to developing countries' environments because they use local materials and are easier to maintain. While these organizations and others are making major contributions, we were told that the production of practical technical aids and equipment falls short of the demand in many countries.

## Organizations of the Disabled Often Lack Necessary Skills and Funds

Since the International Year of Disabled Persons, the United Nations has documented that many organizations of disabled persons have formed. However, the United Nations also notes that many lack the necessary skills to organize and lobby effectively on their own behalf. In view of this, during a May 1990 U.N. meeting on worldwide disability issues, many experts in the field pointed to the need to strengthen existing organizations and to assist in establishing organizations where none exist.

### Groups of the Disabled

During our review, we identified organizations of the disabled in all five countries we visited. The level of sophistication varied greatly from group to group. However, with the exception of one country (Zimbabwe), most organizations were small, operated mainly in the urban areas, and lacked strong leadership. U.N. data also indicate that as a rule, organizations of disabled people are concentrated in the cities and are not well organized.

Organization leaders in the United States and the countries we visited cited two major causes for the groups' general ineffectiveness.

- Few disabled persons have the education and training in management skills and leadership techniques to pull an organization together and effectively lobby on their own behalf.
- The organizations are young and have not yet established strong funding sources.

### Independence of the Disabled Seen as a Primary Goal

Experts on disability issues believe the formation of groups to advocate on their own behalf would help disabled persons in two ways. First, it is the first step toward change; when people are brought together and strive for the same goal, a feeling of solidarity develops among them. Second, organizing provides a vehicle to allow the disabled to learn from one another's experiences.

During the U.N. meeting, one of the three areas of action identified as high priority called for strengthening the organizations of the disabled. The experts concluded the following:

"In view of the accumulated expertise of organizations of disabled people, their growing network of regional and national affiliates, and their strong commitment to the World Program of Action, programmes of organizations of disabled people

should be strengthened, supported, and provided resources to ensure their participation in the decision-making process."

In response, a global project is being undertaken by the United Nations to determine the type of assistance needed by new organizations. The aim is to develop guidelines for establishing and strengthening such organizations and for funding agencies and organizations that provide assistance.

Another vehicle for disabled persons to help themselves is the concept of independent living. The independent living movement is growing internationally through grassroots organizations of disabled people. The origins of the movement come from a group of disabled people in the United States about 20 years ago. We were told that many of the groups of disabled that formed since the beginning of the U.N. Decade have incorporated the independent living approach.

Disabled people in developing countries told us that an independent life is important to them. They explained that in the developing world "independent" may mean learning how to prepare a meal for oneself or having mobility to obtain employment. In other words, the definition of independent living is related to a person's own environment.

Larger organizations, such as Disabled People International and World Institute for Disability, have recognized the value of the independent living approach and are attempting to aid the smaller organizations by providing information and guidance. Disabled People International is developing an independent living resource kit that will contain accumulated expertise on issues relating to independent living.

# Contributions to the U.N. Voluntary Fund

| Country | 1978-79 | 1980-81 | 1982-83 | 1984-85 | 1986-87 | 1988-89[a] | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | $0 | $0 | $55,810 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $55,810 |
| Austria | 0 | 22,479 | 0 | 13,916 | 23,962 | 39,115 | 99,472 |
| Belgium | 0 | 25,000 | 7,843 | 0 | 35,000 | 0 | 67,843 |
| Cameroon | 0 | 851 | 1,252 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,103 |
| Canada | 0 | 82,900 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 95,700 | 178,600 |
| Central African Republic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 767 | 767 |
| Chile | 0 | 5,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,000 |
| China | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | 20,000 | 30,000 |
| Colombia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,024 | 1,024 |
| Cyprus | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 |
| Ethiopia | 5,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,000 |
| Federal Republic of Germany | 0 | 276,775 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 276,775 |
| France | 0 | 0 | 19,481 | 31,023 | 30,546 | 64,516 | 145,566 |
| Greece | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 30,000 |
| Holy See | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,000 | 1,000 | 3,000 |
| India | 0 | 10,063 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,063 |
| Indonesia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Italy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100,000 | 107,473 | 207,473 |
| Japan | 0 | 200,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100,000 | 300,000 |
| Jordan | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 |
| Kuwait | 0 | 7,367 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7,367 |
| Libya | 100,000 | 250,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 350,000 |
| Luxembourg | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,095 | 2,095 |
| Malta | 0 | 250 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 1,250 |
| Mauritius | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 1,000 |
| Norway | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 304,391 | 304,391 |
| Oman | 0 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 0 | 0 | 15,000 |
| Pakistan | 0 | 10,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | 20,000 |
| Philippines | 0 | 5,000 | 4,985 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9,985 |
| Portugal | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 |
| Qatar | 0 | 4,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4,000 |
| Saudi Arabia | 0 | 0 | 150,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 150,000 |
| Senegal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,699 | 301 | 0 | 2,000 |
| Sweden | 10,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,000 |
| United Kingdom | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25,362 | 25,362 |
| United States | 0 | 0 | 103,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 103,000 |
| Yugoslavia | 0 | 104 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 104 |
| Zaire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Zambia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 435 | 0 | 0 | 435 |
| **Total** | **$115,000** | **$896,789** | **$349,371** | **$62,073** | **$212,809** | **$786,443** | **$2,422,485** |

[a]Figures do not include funds contributed from July through December 1989.
Source: United Nations.

# Activities of Selected Developing Countries

## Belize

The disabled movement in Belize began with the U.N. designation of 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons. The country's first serious effort to recognize the needs of disabled persons came in 1985 with the development of a 5-year national plan to assist the disabled. The plan was developed to serve those with impairments, as well as to work toward the prevention of disabilities. Also, early detection, rehabilitation, and equalization of opportunities were to be highlighted.

Although before the plan there had been no formal organized national program addressing the needs of disabled persons, Belize had taken other initiatives: (1) the formulation of the Belizian Assembly of and for persons with disabilities and (2) the creation of the Disability Service Unit. We were told that the previous government of Belize was progressive in aiding the disabled population and that the new government has not yet considered its own 5-year plan for the disabled.

## Kenya

Assistance for the disabled in Kenya is provided primarily by the government and nongovernment organizations (NGO). The President of Kenya has raised $4.2 million for the National Fund for the Disabled, and additional programs are undertaken by the Ministry of Cultural and Social Services, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health.

Kenya's long-term policy objective is to create an infrastructure for rehabilitation that will integrate disabled persons into the country's economic and social life. The National Rehabilitation Committee coordinates the work of the government and NGOs in implementing this policy. For example, the National Rehabilitation Committee advises the Kenyan government on policy for the physical, social, and educational needs of the disabled. The committee is composed of representatives from government ministries and NGOs.

The committee also supervises the National Fund for the Disabled of Kenya. The President of Kenya, who established the fund in 1980, has conducted two fund-raising campaigns that raised $913,000 in 1980 and $3.3 million in 1989. The committee distributes funds annually to various institutions and the 42 district commissioners.

The Ministry of Culture and Social Services is responsible for providing disabled persons (aged 16 through 45) vocational training so they can support themselves. The training is provided at the Industrial Rehabilitation Center in Nairobi and at rural rehabilitation training centers throughout the country.

The Industrial Rehabilitation Center provides training in carpentry, printing, secretarial skills, metal work, radio and television repair, and telephone operator services. The center has a capacity of 100 students, but only 56 were enrolled at the time of our visit. The Director noted that a lack of funding restricts the number of students the center is able to train.

The rural training centers were established from 1970 through 1986 with the assistance of the U.N. International Labor Organization. The specific objectives of vocational training are to (1) integrate disabled people into the social and economic life of the society, (2) provide them with the means to live in dignity, and (3) teach them skills that will enable them to seek employment. The vocational centers train the disabled for self-employment with courses in woodwork, tailoring, and leather work. When the students graduate, the government is supposed to provide them with tools to start their own businesses. Government statistics published in May 1989 show that the centers had trained 3,192 disabled people; however, information was not available on the number of training graduates that had started businesses. An official told us that very few graduates had been able to start a business because the government lacks funds to provide them with tool kits.

The Kenya Ministry of Health had not been active in providing assistance to the disabled until recently. In July 1989, the ministry launched a pilot, community-based rehabilitation project in three districts. The goal is to increase community awareness of the problems facing the disabled and to involve the community in integrating the disabled into society. The Swedish International Development Agency provided 4-year funding totaling $2.2 million for the project.

Children are the project's initial target population. Community health volunteers will be taught how to identify and assess children with disabilities. Then the volunteers will train disabled children and their families in daily living skills. An official told us that there was a lack of transportation into the rural areas and a lack of locally-produced aids, such as wheelchairs, for the disabled.

## Zimbabwe

The government of Zimbabwe's goal is to rehabilitate the disabled to be self-supporting. To achieve this goal, the ministry of Manpower, Labor, and Social Services operates the National Rehabilitation Center and provides per-capita and salary grants to organizations providing assistance to the disabled.

The National Council of Disabled People was created in 1975 as an advocate for the interests of disabled people. With 37 branches, 7 in urban areas and 30 in rural areas, the council is managed by disabled people and funded by a British organization and a Catholic mission in the Netherlands. The council's major advocacy effort has been lobbying the government to pass a "bill of rights" for disabled persons. The council prepared a report recommending areas that should be covered by the legislation. The areas include (1) ensuring equal opportunities for training, education, and employment; (2) providing mobility aids as part of the national health service; and (3) making the physical environment accessible to all. The Executive Director said the legislation is expected to be enacted by the end of 1990.

Ministry of Labor officials told us that the establishment of the National Rehabilitation Center demonstrates the government's commitment to the disabled. The center was built with assistance from Canada, and the first students were accepted in 1988. It provides training in leather work, garment making, storekeeping, woodworking, and accounting. The center has a capacity to handle 300 students, but only 94 were enrolled at the time of our visit. We were told that inadequate government funding keeps enrollment well below the center's full capacity. Only $54,000 of the $417,000 requested for 1990 was provided. The first class of 90 students has graduated from the center. Although no statistics were available on the number that found employment, the officials told us that about half of the graduates are employed in cooperatives formed among themselves.

## Zambia

A limited number of programs provide assistance to disabled people in Zambia. The government has no overall strategy for assisting the disabled and appears to provide only limited financial support for programs assisting the disabled. In addition, we found only a few NGO programs assisting a small number of disabled people.

The Zambia Council for the Handicapped was established in 1968 by an act of Zambia's Parliament. The council is responsible for (1) the rehabilitation of blind, deaf, physically handicapped, and mentally handicapped adults and (2) the coordination of all NGOs assisting the disabled in Zambia. The council's budget is about $300,000 per year, which is funded by the Ministry of Labor and Social Services. The council operates 14 agricultural centers employing a total of about 1,000 disabled people, who are paid about $22.50 per month. An official told us that the council does not have the technical expertise on the staff to develop

and implement projects for the disabled. The ministry has delegated responsibility for the welfare of the disabled to the council, and, according to the Commissioner for Social Services, the ministry directly assists 20 to 30 disabled people per year by providing wheelchairs.

The Ministry of Education operates two schools for disabled children and also supports a college for training special education teachers of the disabled. The ministry pays the salaries of teachers at missionary-run schools for the disabled. We could not determine the annual amounts of financial support provided by the ministry; however, one missionary told us that the government pays teachers, on average, about $25 per month. According to an official, the government's goal is to integrate disabled children into regular schools, but there is no strategy for achieving this goal. The official said that some disabled children have been integrated into secondary schools, but he was unable to quantify the extent of such integration.

## Costa Rica

Costa Rica has a long history, starting in the 1950s, in the areas of medical, educational, and vocational rehabilitation. It has strong urban institutional programs supported by the government but has only recently begun community-based programs in rural areas.

The National Council of Rehabilitation and Special Education, created by the government in 1973, defines policies relating to the disability sector and coordinates all institutional services on behalf of the disabled. The council's board of directors consists of representatives from various government ministries, several other government offices, the University of Costa Rica, and the Association of Parents of Disabled Children.

The council is in charge of the National Register and Central Depository, an information center on disabled persons throughout the country. It also provides technical and logistical assistance to other government departments, such as housing and transportation, and has an in-house rehabilitation function of evaluation, training, and placement. Two different vocational training methods are employed: on-the-job training and assignment to a specific school to learn a trade.

The government has several other programs that provide assistance to disabled persons. The first phase of a Ministry of Education-sponsored community-based rehabilitation program for students started about 3 years ago. We were told that this program has succeeded in reaching

those who would not otherwise go to school because of rural dispersion, physical, and transportation problems. The country's policy is to integrate special education students into the regular classroom.

The university has a master's program in comprehensive rehabilitation that attracts professionals in special and physical education, as well as in medicine and psychology. One objective of the program is for the professionals to start community-based rehabilitation programs to help disabled persons define their own goals. The program, according to a university official, has motivated the country to shift toward a more interdisciplinary and cooperative approach to rehabilitation and has provided impetus for involvement in the disability field. Graduates of the program are working in two areas: at the university and on government programs. About 80 percent of the graduates are leaders in the rehabilitation field.

# Disability-Related Assistance Reported by U.S. Missions in Developing Countries (1988-1990)

| Region/country | Dollar amount | Nature of assistance |
|---|---|---|
| Latin America and Caribbean | | |
| Barbados | $2,800 | Education program for the Lucia School for the Deaf. |
| | 9,400 | Specialized equipment to school for children with special needs. |
| Ecuador | 5,456 | Wheelchairs for 60 persons. |
| | 7,326 | Special vocational training for 24 youths with mental retardation. |
| | 5,000 | Hearing aids for 19 children and adults. |
| | 2,500 | Wheelchairs for 50 persons. |
| | 4,872 | Special training and psychological help for 200 children with learning problems. |
| | 4,524 | Special vocational training for 50 youths with mental retardation. |
| | 5,000 | Rehabilitation for 200 blind persons. |
| Dominican Republic | 13,200 | Training for the handicapped through a local nongovernmental organization. |
| Jamaica | 10,000 | Equipment for a center for 180 children with Down's syndrome. |
| | 4,500 | White canes for 300 blind people. |
| | 8,757 | Income-generating project for 170 people with physical and mental impairments. |
| | 200,000 | Fully equipped mobile diagnostic unit and salaries for four specialists. |
| | 2,500 | Funding for a participant from the Jamaica Society for the Blind to study braille mechanical repair. |
| | 4,461 | Residential workshop for severely disabled children and their parents. |
| | 2,198 | Nutritional education and kitchen skills for 18 people with mental impairments. |
| | 5,025 | Public education program through dramatic presentations on various disabilities. |
| Paraguay | 10,000 | Two special rehabilitation workshops instructing trainers in physical rehabilitation. |
| Asia/Near East | | |
| Oman | 83,000 | Joint U.S.-Oman effort to design a survey strategy to gather data on handicapped people. |
| | 575 | Audio-cassette player and cassettes for state school for blind students. |

(continued)

| Region/country | Dollar amount | Nature of assistance |
|---|---|---|
| | $5,348 | Translation, printing, binding, and country-wide distribution of teacher's lesson books for state school for mentally handicapped students. |
| | 10,000 | Classrooms and enlarged dormitory for state school for blind. |
| Egypt | 420,000 | Funds for 47 small projects, including services such as physical therapy units, special residences for the blind, special rehabilitation equipment, audio-visual centers, artificial limbs, special classes, clubs and nurseries for the disabled, and special units for the deaf. |
| | 500,000 | Education of deaf and blind children, including teacher training and curriculum development. |
| | 3,420,000 | Orthopedic and prosthetic equipment and a magnetic resonance imaging system for university hospitals. |
| Thailand | 234,033 | Production and distribution of an advanced sign language dictionary. |
| | 448,953 | Expansion of educational and vocational services for the blind. |
| | 190,230 | Community extension center for the blind to provide basic education, counseling, and medical services. |
| Indonesia | 131,716 | Eye care, including training, screening, cataract surgery, and other services. |
| Fiji | 40,000 | Survey of rehabilitation needs and purchase of basic rehabilitation equipment. |
| Sri Lanka | [a] | Vocational training for 52 physically disabled women. |
| | 53,850 | Child assessment, public awareness, medical clinics, and vocational training for the benefit of 69 mentally retarded children. |
| | 50,000 | Blindness prevention, primary eye care, and community-based rehabilitation for 737 blind persons. |
| Jordan | 225,000 | Occupational therapy college. |
| | 20,000 | Classroom construction and technical assistance for vocational training curriculum development and business arrangements for 120 students. |
| | 90,000 | Sheltered workshop to provide woodwork training and job placement for 45 people. |
| | 865 | Braille printing press. |
| | 7,926 | Kindergarten equipment for 160 children with learning disabilities. |
| | 14,576 | Home-instruction furnishings for 450 children with cerebral palsy. |
| | 3,532 | Vision-screening equipment. |

(continued)

| Region/country | Dollar amount | Nature of assistance |
|---|---|---|
| | $10,205 | School for 50 children with learning disabilities. |
| | 4,484 | Vocational training for 100 adults with mental disabilities. |
| | 4,471 | Hydrotherapy equipment to treat 400 children with cerebral palsy. |
| Philippines | 23,810 | Training and employment opportunities for 150 deaf persons. |
| | 351,456 | Development of specialized medical and surgical care and supporting health services. |
| | 249,733 | Local industries development and small enterprise support projects. |
| Africa | | |
| Niger | 25,650 | Training in manufacture of fencing and literacy training for 67 physically disabled, deaf, and blind persons. |
| | 4,400 | Workshop for 50 blind people for leather manufacture. |
| Zaire | 5,000 | Distribution and use of community-level visual aids and instruction manuals designed to sensitize the general population to the special needs and problems of the physically disabled. |
| Central African Republic | 9,191 | Sewing machines, sewing kits, and building materials to create a training center for 25 women. |
| | 16,365 | Building and furniture at the School for the Deaf. |
| Madagascar | 10,000 | Retraining and reeducation for physically handicapped persons and amputees; materials to produce orthopedic supports, braces, and artificial limbs. |
| Swaziland | 2,288 | Equipment for speech and hearing therapy. |
| | 9,620 | Material for rehabilitation center; equipment, furniture, and books for training center. |
| | 1,760 | Material and tools for a furniture-making cooperative. |
| | 2,050 | Sewing machines and fabric for sewing group. |
| | 9,500 | Supplies for a training center for polio victims. |
| | 5,500 | Farming equipment for an agriculture project for polio victims. |
| Benin | 850 | Start-up costs for basket-weaving and sewing businesses for men's and women's cooperatives. |
| | 10,000 | Construction of a center for the handicapped. |

(continued)

| Region/country | Dollar amount | Nature of assistance |
|---|---|---|
| Burkina-Faso | $6,000 | Tools and equipment to help develop income-generating activities. |
| Cote d'Ivoire | 9,000 | Work center, materials, and sales outlet for artisanal crafts. |
| Lesotho | 150,000 | Special education for disabled children, including training, consultancy, and instructional materials development. |
| Gabon | 1,650 | Sewing machines and gardening tools for Deaf-Mute Association's training center. |

[a]Information not available.

# Opportunities Suggested for Integrating Disabled People Into AID's Development Assistance Program

The Agency for International Development (AID) operates in many different situations, and traditions and resources for assisting disabled people vary greatly from country to country. Therefore, AID officials believe that it is important to give AID staff the flexibility to choose the best way to integrate disabled people into developmental programs. The following represents opportunities suggested by AID officials, both in Washington and in field offices, to integrate disabled persons into programs without initiating new programs.

- Find established nongovernment organizations (NGO) that can work internationally and help them establish sub-offices in developing countries to assist in the development of disability organizations.
- Provide small amounts of funding to grassroots organizations for small projects through various umbrella contracts with larger NGOs. For example, in Jamaica, AID's Voluntary Sector Development Project provides assistance to the Council of Voluntary Social Services of the United Way of Jamaica, which in turn funds programs for the disabled.
- Because approximately 75 percent of AID funds are programmed and authorized by the missions, encourage mission staff to include topics concerning integrating disability issues in the annual regional mission directors' conferences.
- Focus on heightening awareness of disability issues, similar to what has been done on the issue of aging.
- Set funding levels of entire portfolios to include the disabled population. Then require the agency officials to report on the progress in meeting the targets.
- Increase awareness of the mission staff's counterparts in host countries by including disability issues during policy meetings and discussions.
- Suggest to the host governments that some of the local currency be used for projects assisting the disabled.
- Use the AID resource center in Mexico City to translate and produce technical material on the topic of disability for dissemination to missions and NGOs.
- Provide the Peace Corps with funding to implement small projects aimed at aiding the disabled.
- When developing program surveys for education projects, determine how many potential recipients are hearing, visually, physically, and mentally impaired.
- When conducting workshops, include sections relating to the disabled population.
- Advertise programs, for example, by informing local disability organizations and schools of workshops and training.

- When designing projects, consult with organizations of disabled persons to determine if the program could address some of their needs.
- Expand the training programs to include disabled persons.

# Major Contributors to This Report

## National Security and International Affairs Division, Washington, D.C.

Leroy W. Richardson, Assistant Director
Max E. Green, Evaluator-in-Charge
William G. Stepp, Senior Evaluator
JoAnn T. Geoghan, Evaluator

## European Office

Michael J. Kennedy, Senior Evaluator
Jeffery K. Harris, Evaluator

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