



3 HOW DOES INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION SUPPORT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT?

Among international cooperation agencies and the EU's development and humanitarian structures, who work with developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, there is a growing consensus about the importance of supporting local development and local democratic governance. Local leaders and locally elected authorities, or deconcentrated structures, are increasingly responsible for ensuring basic services, health care, transport and communication, city/town/village planning and other infrastructure for their inhabitants. Several of the MDGs need to be addressed at the local level under the management of local decision makers, but until now, local authorities and actors have not had the chance or possibility to achieve ownership of either the MDGs or national poverty reduction policies.

There is an increased focus from governments in developing countries, as well as from international donors, on **supporting decentralisation processes as part of development aid. The intention of these approaches is to provide local and/or regional authorities with wider capacities and obligations towards its citizens.** The idea is that pushing forward these reforms will provide more relevant answers (effective basic services and infrastructures) to citizens' needs, more participation at community level in development plans and thus better local governance.

3.1 INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

During the past decade, the international donor community and other policy making development institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations (UN) etc., have started to acknowledge some of the failures of previous development policies. With the dissatisfaction over the outcomes of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and the over-reliance on market mechanisms that have in fact led to a rise in inequality, the longstanding conviction that growth is the driving force behind poverty reduction is increasingly being questioned. There is mounting evidence that the impact of growth on poverty reduction is significantly lower when inequality is on the rise than when inequality is declining. Debates, research and policy discussions have been taking place in order to identify and define better methods for increasing international aid effectiveness, accountability and country ownership. But effective policies for inclusive local development, which also target the most excluded, are still missing.

PRSP: A HOPE FOR GREATER CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION AND LOCAL INFLUENCE?

The World Bank and IMF introduced a new tool with their Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) programmes in 1999²⁶. Once a country has developed a national PRSP they can be eligible for loans from the World Bank, as well as from other donor countries. PRSP outcomes and strategies are supposed to be owned by and under the control of the country concerned, and should ideally be developed by the national government in a participatory way involving civil society, local authorities representatives and the private sector. However, there has been only minor representation of local authorities and civil society organisations in this process, to date.

A PRSP process is supposed to support countries developing their own priorities and goals in poverty reduction, which are then linked to grants, loans and aid. The final document has objectives and outcomes that should be implemented at national, regional and local level.

The PRSP as a strategy to reduce poverty is being continuously debated and aspects have been severely criticized by several actors, mainly civil society organisations at national and international level²⁷. These organisations claim that the World Bank and IMF policies still largely influence the process and condition the grants, loans and aid, and that most donor countries align their aid to these conditions²⁸. One of the main conditionalities, sometimes defined as “performance criteria” or “prior actions”, which has to be accomplished before developing the PRSP, is often to increase private sector investment in service delivery, and reduce public expenditure²⁹. The PRSP has to be validated by the World Bank, thus sometimes pushing the government to pre-define goals and objectives that they know will be approved. In that sense real ownership is questionable.

A working paper by Queen Elizabeth House (QEH) in 2003, assessed to what extent PRSP processes have empowered poor countries and widened government and civil society participation in defining poverty reduction strategies³⁰. The paper reveals a remarkable similarity in terms of macro-economic strategies and policies with the previous SAP instruments. When it comes to participation of the poor, very few were actually represented by civil society organisations, only a small minority could show a significant participation of civil society or local authorities, and even then, their input and comments were seldom endorsed in the final version³¹.

26 More information on the PRSP can be found on the World Bank website: www.worldbank.org

27 ActionAid. *Money talks How aid conditions continue to drive utility privatisation in poor countries*, (ActionAid International: UK: 2004).

28 Yeo, Rebecca. *Disability, Poverty and the new development agenda*, (Disability KaR: 2005): 9.

The votes in the World Bank are proportional to the number of shares a country holds: the richest countries hold the most shares. Thus the US is the largest shareholder with 16,4% of total votes, followed by Japan 7,87%, Germany 4,49%, UK 4,31% and France 4,31%. Poor countries have few votes and thus very limited influence on policies being defined, the result being that the agenda of the World Bank is very unlikely to be based on the needs and rights of the poor.

29 ActionAid, 2004: 5.

30 Stewart, F., Wang, M. *Do PRSPs empower poor countries and disempower the World Bank, or is it the other way around?*, QEH Working paper Series 108, (QEH- Department of International Development at the University of Oxford: 2003): 26.

31 McGee, R. *Assessing participation in poverty reduction strategy papers: a desk based synthesis of experience in sub-Saharan Africa*, (IDS Research Report 52: Brighton: 2002): 13. McGee writes: “There is broad consensus among our civil society sources in Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Bolivia that NGOs and their coalitions have been totally unable to influence macro-economic policy or even engage governments in dialogue about it.”



PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND PRSP

Most of the EU member countries' development aid is linked to the outcome and conditions of the PRSP, which makes it important that actors at local level (local authorities, civil society representatives including DPOs) take part in this process in order to ensure that disability is mainstreamed adequately³². Funding for local development is thus often also conditioned by the PRSP and the World Bank / IMF policies. Experience has shown the importance of civil societies joining together in such processes, in order to have a bigger impact. This means that DPOs need to liaise with other social and human rights movements in order to be part of the global struggle against poverty, and to better analyse the current poverty reduction development agenda. In this sense, persons with disabilities and their representative organisation frequently need to be supported in their capacity to participate and join civil society in advocacy to get their rights addressed within the PRSP.

Making PRSP inclusive – the experience of Cambodia

BOX 2

The World Bank and IMF have such a large influence in development policies, strategies and aid conditions with the PRSP and other programmes, that many development actors consider it of vital importance to participate and advocate for the rights of excluded persons to be referred to in the document. A project called **Making-PRSP-Inclusive**, was developed by Handicap International and Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) in cooperation with German and Tanzanian DPOs. One of the outcomes was a handbook on how to make PRSP more inclusive, together with a website which gives information and provides examples of the successful participation of DPOs in PRSP processes³³. Some of those experiences have shown important results also at local community level:

Cambodia experience – in 2006, Handicap International together with five Cambodian DPOs designed a project on PRSP and disability. The aim was to mainstream disability in poverty reduction. Throughout the project four important phases were implemented:

1. Assessment of the disability sector and PRSP documents.
2. The formation of a PRSP Inclusive Committee among five Cambodian DPOs
 - ▣ One workshop on disability and PRSP,
 - ▣ Establishing contact with the NGO Forum, which is in charge of PRSP monitoring and representing civil society.
3. Parallel to identifying possible entry points into the PRS process, an in-depth analysis of the PRSP continued and resulted in the formulation of a two-fold strategy, which was later adopted by the PRS Inclusive Committee. The PRS Inclusive Committee agreed to be involved in the monitoring process

32 Miller, U. and Ziegler, S. *Making PRSP Inclusive*, (Handicap International and Christoffel-Blindenmission: Munich: 2006).

33 The website of the project, where more practical experiences of how disability has been included in PRSP can be found, is available on: <http://www.making-prsp-inclusive.org/home.html>

4. At the local level, a programme of micro projects was defined targeting DPOs and other disability organisations at community level.

Results at local community level from the implementation of the micro-projects:

- Increased awareness among local authorities on disability,
- Interest from community bodies to include disability in their community development plans,
- Improved relationships between DPOs and municipal councils resulting in regular consultations and discussions,
- A number of direct actions taken by the municipal councils, including a call for persons with disabilities to participate in vocational training programmes and the certification of persons with disabilities as part of the vulnerable population which benefits from free access to health care etc.

Lessons learned

1. It is important to identify an entry point into the PRSP process, which could be difficult if disability is not yet defined in the process. In the Cambodia experience, where the previous PRSP had no mention of disability, the opportunity arose when the group of DPOs were asked to be part of the civil society groups monitoring the PRSP.
2. Networking among DPOs and disability groups improved during this process, but it became clear that it was difficult to have a broad participation for some specific actions. Many DPOs simply don't have the capacity or resources to always be present.
3. Lack of representation among all diverse groups of persons with disabilities at national level. Particularly it proved that women with disabilities and persons with intellectual impairments were poorly represented during the whole process. It is therefore questionable whether the strategies proposed really respond to the needs of all persons with disabilities.

INTERNATIONAL POLICIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

An increased focus is being made to support development processes at local level within the EC. The **European Commission's Consensus in Development in 2006** provides for several commitments which foster support for local development³⁴:

- The principles of local ownership of poverty strategies and reforms, and co-responsibility,
- Poverty is seen as multi-dimensional, including economic, human, political, socio-cultural and protective capabilities, **thus it is very important to address poverty at the community level where scarce resources can be mobilized,**
- In its common principles, EC recognises the role of democratically elected citizens' representatives and encourages the involvement of national assemblies, parliaments and **local authorities in the development process,**
- Another principle is to encourage the participation of all actors in development processes, especially non-state actors,

34 European Commission. *The European Consensus in Development*, Directorate-General for Development, June 2006.



- **Acknowledging the importance of actions at community level and supporting capacities of so-called deconcentrated structures in a decentralisation process,**
- Support to agriculture and rural development are key areas for growth and poverty reduction,
- Human rights and good governance are core areas in all sectors.

The UNDP as well as the EC has developed various guidelines and policy papers on **local sustainable development and urban development**³⁵. These documents provide interesting tools for local stakeholders, donors and EC representatives on how to support strategic planning with local authorities; promote the participation of all local stakeholders in decision-making processes; development of community action plans; promoting good governance, local democracy and local financing. Some of the common issues in these documents are:

- The promotion of Agenda 21³⁶
- Good governance which implies the participation in decision-making processes at local level by citizens, civil society representatives and the private sector, accountability, respect of the law, necessary resources etc³⁷
- Improved access to services at community level, particularly for woman and “vulnerable” groups
- Need for strategic planning and long-term commitments from all stakeholders
- Partnerships and networking.

35 European Commission. *Draft - Guidelines for Sustainable Urban Development*, (EC: 2000).

UNDP. *Decentralised Governance for Development. A combined Practice Note on Decentralisations, local governance and urban/rural development*, (UNDP: 2004).

Gercheva, Dafina. *Local sustainable Development Planning. Manual for local sustainable development strategy formulation*, (UNDP: Bratislava: 2003).

36 Agenda 21 is a tool that was developed by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) within the Department for Sustainable Development in 1992, to encourage central and local governments to assume a wider responsibility in social, economic and environmental development. Chapter 27 of Agenda 21 describes the support for non-governmental organisations, and chapter 28 the role and responsibilities of local authorities.

37 European Commission, 2000: 31.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES APPEAR TO BE INVISIBLE

Persons with disabilities and their representative organisations are seldom mentioned or taken into account in those policy documents. Where they are mentioned, they are generally grouped into the so-called “vulnerable population”, to which “specific attention” should be paid. Unfortunately this is often translated into persons with disabilities needing specific and often expensive separate programmes and projects. This approach only further exacerbates the segregation and exclusion of persons with disabilities from mainstream development. It also blames their vulnerability for their poverty denying the discrimination factor, meaning that systemic and sustainable changes will never be achieved. Instead, measures should be taken and policies implemented to ensure that persons with disabilities benefit equally from local development projects, within all sectors.



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Improving access to water and sanitation in rural areas for example, should also include measures that ensure that persons with disabilities benefit from these improvements. When developing microfinance or income generating projects they should be designed in such a way that they do not exclude persons with disabilities as beneficiaries. When building schools and training teachers, accessibility and the concept of Universal Design as well as disability awareness should be compulsory.

INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN FRAMEWORKS SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AT LOCAL LEVEL

The role of, and the impact on, persons with disabilities in local development projects is a largely under-documented area. For example, various publications from the UN Habitat on participatory local development present a number of interesting tools on how to conduct a participatory process, but no link is made to disability or the participation of DPOs³⁸.

Within the **EU policy on rural development**, one of the key areas in development, the topic of “territorial planning” is for example, extremely important for persons with disabilities in terms of accessibility and the removal of obstacles for benefiting from local development. But in this policy, persons with disabilities and how their rights need to be addressed and included in all processes are again absent. In larger cities where many persons with disabilities and their families migrate to, a lack of consideration for disability in urban planning strongly compromises the access to infrastructure, social services and safety for persons with disabilities.

There are, however, some policy documents at EU level that could provide a framework for mainstreaming disability into local development planning. These policy documents and recommendations should be equally reflected in the EU member states’ support to local development.

38 UN Habitat and Transparency International. *Tools to support transparency in local governance*, March 2004; UN Habitat. *Tools to support participatory urban decision making*, July 2001.



European Commission frameworks on disability have been mainly developed as general policies for all development work, with little specifications for local development:

- The **Guidance Note on Disability and Development for EU Delegations and Services** from 2004 provides important information around how the EU and its delegations and staff should ensure that the projects they fund are disability inclusive³⁹. This Guidance Note also provides information on certain key issues around disability, arguing that disability needs to be mainstreamed across all relevant programmes and sectors. As this guidance note emphasises, and was described earlier on, mainstreaming disability is not enough. Supporting specific projects for persons with disabilities and building the capacity of their organisations is of vital importance, to ensure the twin-track approach described in scheme 2.

Participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations in the development of any programmes that affects them is also emphasized. All these issues are of course relevant at the level of local development. More specifically the EU guidance note mentions (in paragraph 12) Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR), which is an approach to build service capacity and empower persons with disabilities at local level⁴⁰. Most social services such as health, education, vocational training and employment, are becoming the responsibility of local authorities, and so is mainstreaming disability into these sectors, as argued by the guidance note in the paragraphs 1, 9, 11, and 13-14.

- The European Parliament adopted a **resolution in 2006 on Disability and Development**, which further enhances the importance of ensuring that disability is included in all policies and programmes funded and supported by the EU and member states⁴¹.
- Other EU instruments consider inclusion of persons with disabilities in different sectors of international cooperation, and are directly applicable to European cooperation⁴²:
 - ▣ The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) (18.12.2006)⁴³
 - ▣ The Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Action Plans (Signed December 2007- Launch Action Plans 2008)⁴⁴
 - ▣ The Investing in People – Strategy Paper for the Thematic Programme 2007 – 2013⁴⁵

39 European Union. Guidance Note on Disability and Development for EU Delegations and Services, July 2004. Available on: http://ec.europa.eu/development/body/publications/docs/Disability_en.pdf

40 ILO, UNESCO and WHO. *A Strategy for Rehabilitation, Equalization of Opportunities, Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion of People with disabilities*. Joint position paper 2004, (WHO: Geneva: 2004). In this position paper, the following definition of CBR is proposed: "CBR is a strategy within general community development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all people with disabilities. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of people with disabilities themselves, their families, organizations and communities, and the relevant governmental and non-governmental health, education, vocational, social and other services".

41 European Parliament Resolution on Disability and Development 2006. Available on:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2006-0033&language=EN&ring=B6-2006-0035>

42 For a short presentation of these instruments, see the Manual on Disability-Inclusive Project Cycle Management, Concepts and Guiding Principles that was produced within this project by cbm; available online at

<http://www.make-development-inclusive.org>

43 <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/vb/l14173.htm>

44 http://www.eu2007.pt/NR/rdonlyres/D449546C-BF42-4CB3-B566-407591845C43/0/071206jsapenlogos_formatado.pdf

45 http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/humandev/humandevhealth7_en.cfm

- ▣ EC Regulation on establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation⁴⁶
- ▣ The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) 2007-2010: the Strategy Paper⁴⁷

Extract from the NORAD Strategy for Poverty alleviation⁴⁸ - inclusion of disability

BOX 3

The NORAD Strategy for poverty alleviation focuses on six areas for development co-operation. People with disabilities must be included in all six areas in order to reach this objective, both in the administration of long-term government-to-government co-operation, and in co-ordinating co-operation with civil society and other partners.

1. **Social development:** To include people with disabilities in the development of mainstream services in all sectors: health, education, water and sanitation, transport, etc.
2. **Economic development:** Inclusion of disabled persons in employment policy, business, all aspects of income generating opportunities, and appropriate vocational training.
3. **Peace, democracy and human rights:** Participation in a human rights approach to community development, in the development of democratic decision processes, and in reconciliation efforts in post-war societies.
4. **Environment and natural resource management:** Prevention of pollution and the provision of safe work place in order to prevent disabilities; give people with disabilities equal share of access to, and management of natural resources.
5. **Humanitarian assistance in the event of conflicts and natural disasters:** People with disabilities as a group are frequently not included in emergency humanitarian assistance. Give access to and include people with disabilities into the assistance, aim at their participation in the planning process; focus on preventive measures in the assistance.
6. **Women and gender equality:** Make sure that women and children with disabilities are included in all aspects of programmes and projects.

46 Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/lex/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:378:0041:0071:EN:PDF>

47 http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/eidhr/index_en.htm

48 NORAD. The Inclusion of disability in Norwegian development cooperation. Planning and monitoring for the inclusion of disability issues in mainstream development activities, (NORAD: Norway: 2002): 6.

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CALLING FOR INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

First of all, the European Union has signed the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities** (CRPD), which came into force in May 2008, and so have most of the member states⁴⁹. That means that signatories to this convention should work to promote the implementation of all the articles, and they have a specific obligation under Article 32 in the framework of international cooperation. Article 32 states the importance of international cooperation in order to realize the objectives of the Convention, in partnership with international and regional organisations as well as civil society and in particular organisations of persons with disabilities⁵⁰. Article 32 states for example that State parties shall: *“Ensure that international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities”*. Box 3 shows the example of how the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) has included disability into its poverty alleviation strategy.

In addition, Article 11 of the CRPD obliges State parties to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities during emergencies, armed conflicts and natural disasters⁵¹.

The process of elaborating the CRPD, initiated in 2001, provided an important opportunity to manifest the paradigm shifts in disability. The long advocated **human rights and social approach to disability**, mainly from and by persons with disabilities themselves, is clearly manifested in this convention. Persons with disabilities' equal enjoyment of human rights and the need to change society to be inclusive of everybody is the focus of this convention. Another innovation during the Ad Hoc Committee sessions, responsible for defining the content of the convention, was the participation of international DPOs, representing persons with disabilities, together with other NGOs concerned by what was allowed by the convention. Several international disability, developmental and human rights organisations participated in each of the Ad Hoc committee sessions, making huge lobby efforts towards state representatives to ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of the convention.



During the CRPD 8th Ad Hoc Committee Meeting – New York 2006
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49 As of May 2008, only Latvia among the EU member states had not signed the CRPD. Spain, Slovenia and Hungary have ratified both the Convention and the Optional Protocol (as has Croatia). Several states among developing countries have also signed the Convention. More information on the process of the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities is available at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/index.asp>

50 Article 32, International Cooperation, can be read at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=292>

51 Article 11 Situations of risks and humanitarian emergencies, can be read at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=271>

Initially there was a strong discussion as to what this new convention should include: only a non-discrimination text, the interaction of disability and human rights or a more global approach? At the end, two main thematics became the base for the convention's elaboration, which makes it unique among the human rights conventions developed so far:

- The **Disability and Human Rights** dimension on one hand, and,
- Fundamental questions around **disability and social development** (gender, equality, poverty reduction) on the other.

The aim of the CRPD is thus to allow for persons with disabilities to enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other citizens. In this aspect, the CRPD also provides for an implementation framework and monitoring mechanisms, which should ensure that state parties fulfil their obligations. Without adequate mechanisms and tools for implementation the Convention will not be anything more than a declaration of rights. Several organisations and projects are working to develop these tools and this guidance paper would also like to contribute to this work.

3.2 DECENTRALISED COOPERATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Regional departments, municipalities and local authorities in several EU member states are taking on an increasing role in international cooperation policies and programmes, especially in supporting local development. City twinning programmes, municipalities supporting municipalities in developing countries, exchanges and networking between regions and departments in developing and developed countries are just a few examples of this cooperation. What they have in common is the support to the local level, in providing capacity building, an exchange of experiences and direct support to local administration as well as local civil society, which is all part of a local development process. This type of development cooperation has evolved concurrently with an increased decentralisation and autonomisation of local authorities in EU countries since the end of the Second World War.

Decentralised cooperation in France for example has today become a legal term, which defines a new approach to international development aid, driven by municipalities, urban communities, departments and regions and the relations that local French authorities engage in with foreign local authorities⁵². The regions, departments and municipalities have developed cooperation partnerships with more than 115 countries, providing support estimated in 2006 at 56 million euros. Spain⁵³ and Italy have defined decentralised cooperation in a similar way, and Spain spent around 388 million euros in 2005 on



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52 For more information on decentralised cooperation in France, visit the website of the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs at: http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=1054

53 Cooperación Municipal al Desarrollo. *Municipalismo y Solidaridad. Guía sobre la cooperación descentralizada*, (Cooperación Municipal al Desarrollo: Barcelona: 2001).



decentralised cooperation activities⁵⁴. **These decentralised structures are becoming increasingly organised into networks where they can share experiences and develop common frameworks and guidelines on how to support their partner cities, municipalities or departments in developing countries.**

One example is the development of the **World Charter for the Right to the City** in the wake of the rapid urbanisation process all over the world, and specifically in developing countries. Realising how the fast growth of cities actually increased urban poverty and inequalities, participants at the World Social Forum in 2001 decided to develop a charter of rights to the city whose aim is to *“gather the commitments and measure that must be assumed by civil society, local and national governments, members of parliament, and international organisations, so that all people may live with dignity in our cities”*⁵⁵.

The European Commission defines decentralised cooperation in a slightly different way. In their programmes they prefer to talk about the **support to local non-state actors** (implying local NGOs, CBOs and local leaders) **and local authority structures**. It does not necessarily imply that it is support from one decentralised structure to another. There are several on going programmes and support within the EC to local development actors such as the ‘Urbal’, which is a Regional Aid Programme to encourage exchanges between local authorities in Europe and Latin America⁵⁶. There is also the newly finished Asia-URBS, which supported regional networking on regions and cities in Asia⁵⁷.

Example of funding local actors in development by EU / EuropeAid

BOX 4

EuropeAid funding: Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development⁵⁸

The overarching objective of this programme is poverty reduction in the context of sustainable development, including the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and other internationally agreed targets. This new budget line in Europe Aid is the successor of the previous B7-6000 – Co-financing with NGO and the 21 02 13 – Decentralised Cooperation

It is an “actor-oriented” programme aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and local authorities as a pre-condition for a more equitable, open and democratic society through support to their “own initiatives”.

The programme therefore supports actions aimed at promoting an inclusive and empowered society in partner countries and its specific objectives are:

- Benefit populations out of reach of mainstream services and resources and excluded from policy making processes;
- Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and local authorities in partner countries, with a view to facilitating their participation in defining sustainable development strategies and in implementing actions aimed at poverty reduction;

54 Intermon Oxfam. *La realidad de la ayuda 2005-2006. Cooperación Descentralizada*, estudios 16 (II), (Intermon Oxfam: Madrid: 2006). <http://www.intermonoxfam.org/es/page.asp?id=394>

55 The quote is taken from the website of Habitat International Coalition, where further reading can be made on the World Charter, as well as the European Charter, for the Rights to the City. <http://www.hic-net.org/documents.asp?PID=62>

56 For more information see the website of the EC on: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/urbal/index_en.htm

57 For more information on the Asia-URBS programme, see the website of the EC EuropeAid on: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation/index_en.htm

58 Further information can be found on the EuropeAid website: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm
The Programme is presented on <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12554.htm>

- Facilitate interaction between State and Non-State Actors in different contexts and support an increased role for local authorities in decentralisation processes.

Such actions can cover a wide range of activities and in particular:

- Innovative approaches of Non-State Actors and local authorities in the provision of social and other services (notably in the field of economic as well as rural and urban development);
- Institutional and technical support (internal governance, dialogue, strengthening of implementation and networking capacities etc.);
- Advocacy and monitoring of public policy making and implementation;
- Awareness raising and policy research (data gathering etc.) aimed at a better formulation, implementation and evaluation of development policies at all levels.

Whenever possible, particular attention should be paid to cross-cutting issues contributing to the achievement of the global objective of poverty reduction, such as the promotion of gender equality, human rights and democracy, the protection and promotion of children's rights, integration of environmental questions, respect of the rule of law and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The fact that disability still remains invisible in most local development policies and programmes and given the increased focus from international development actors on supporting decentralisation processes and local development programmes, there is an urgent need to provide information and guidance on how disability can be included in these programmes. The objective should be for all stakeholders to have a "disability reflex" when designing local, transversal and multisectorial public policies⁵⁹. These policies should go towards the final objective of mainstreaming disability in local development plans, and even better, of adopting a local Disability Action Plan.

As discussed in the first chapter, supporting local stakeholders in their development process has become increasingly recognised as a way to combat poverty and discrimination as well as promoting democracy and good governance. The decentralisation processes are strategic and considered to pave the way for defining local development processes which should be more responsive to citizens' needs and rights, and bring about more participative decision making processes. A complete and well-implemented decentralisation usually also brings with it locally elected decision makers, thus it has a component of increasing democratic governance at local level.

59 Association des Paralysés de France (AFP). *L'ambition d'une politique locale transversale et intégrée du handicap. Plate-forme de proposition*. Elections Municipales 2008, (France: AFP: 2008): 7.



3.3 DECENTRALISATION PROCESSES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Local development support programmes always need to take into account the presence, or possibly absence of, a decentralisation process. Over the past two decades, decentralisation together with support for local governance have become increasingly popular in international development cooperation, through programmes of bilateral aid and decentralised cooperation. It is generally considered that **decentralisation of political decisions and services results in improved citizen participation; better adapted solutions to problems, and should provide greater opportunities for poverty reduction**⁶⁰.

Decentralisation though is a complex process, highly political and not necessarily driven from central government. There is a risk of new political power groups and governmental in-fighting struggles, and it needs long-term commitment from donors and national structures. If not well implemented, there is a risk that decentralisation of services for example, actually worsens access for the poorest, and for persons with disabilities this could have a severe impact. **Decentralisation has to go hand-in-hand with capacity building**; not only of local governance structures, but also of civil society groups for them to be empowered to participate in decision-making processes and actively contribute in the political process.

IMPORTANT CONDITIONS FOR DECENTRALISATION

Decentralisation is a term that can be interpreted in various ways depending on the type of state (unitary or federative). This guidance paper understands decentralisation as described in the 2004 OECD report: *“the transfer of authority to plan, make decisions or manage public functions from the national level to any organisation or agency at the sub-national level”*⁶¹.

In an analysis of five eastern and southern African countries and their decentralisation experiences made by the UN Habitat in 2002, four issues emerged as important for successful decentralisation⁶²:

- The need for a link between local financing and fiscal authority and the service provision responsibilities and functions of local government. Otherwise it is difficult for the local government to be able to finance its promises.
- Local communities need to have access to adequate information about the cost of services and the delivery options, in order to make meaningful decisions. This information needs to be provided in accessible ways for persons with disabilities in order to promote their autonomy and their right to choose services in the same way as any other citizen in the local community.

60 OECD. *Lessons Learned on Donor Support to Decentralisation and Local Governance*, DAC Evaluation Series, (OECD: Paris: 2004). This evaluation shows though that the aspect of poverty reduction in several programmes has not been emphasized enough or dealt with. There is a need to further study how decentralisation benefits really reach the poorest part of society (where persons with disabilities often figure).

61 OECD, 2004: 16.

62 UN Habitat. *Local democracy and decentralization in East and Southern Africa. Experiences from Uganda, Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania and Ethiopia*, (UN Habitat: Nairobi: 2002).

- Communities need a mechanism for **participating in decisions** that affect them; persons with disabilities and their representatives need to be ensured equal access to the information, access to meetings and forums, and to be consulted in all matters that concern them.
- The strong need for a **system of accountability based on public and transparent information** that enables communities to monitor the performance of the local government effectively and to react appropriately to that performance.

The following chapter will provide information on how local development programmes can become more inclusive and better address the rights of persons with disabilities.