

September 2012

Disability Rights in Burkina Faso

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (NSID) 168,094 persons out of Burkina Faso's 14,017,262 inhabitants are living with a physical, sensory or mental disability. The numbers are questioned as the effort to collect in-depth statistics has not been great. Furthermore, much of the statistics is only collected in more densely populated provinces and towns and not in smaller rural communities. Handicap International (HI) estimates that the number is as high as 7 per cent.

On daily basis persons with disabilities in Burkina Faso face a number of challenges, ranging from lack of transport, access, support and income to stigmatisation, prejudice and social exclusion. Generally it means living in absolute poverty, as people with disabilities throughout the world belong to the poorest of the poor.

Basic education is denied many persons with disability from social exclusion or simply lack of physical access, non-accessible information or lack of sign language and specialized teachers. This limits the possibilities for employment and the ability to provide sustainable income for themselves and their family.

Government attitude


The Constitution guarantees civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights to all citizens. Burkina Faso has signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) including the optional protocol. In 2010 a law on promotion and protection of the rights of PWD was adopted, followed by a 3-year Program Budget and an Action Plan covering 2010–2012.

Disability is the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity, which also oversees the welfare of the family, children and youth, poor and disadvantaged. Mainstreaming of disability in state policies, strategies and programs is by principle the responsibility of different ministries but practically treated as a social welfare issue managed by this one Ministry.

The National Committee for Reintegration of persons with disability coordinates all disability related activities of the government. The Committee, under the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity, has been involved in different programs, including rehabilitation, capacity building of disabled people's organisations, income generation and sensitization campaigns addressing the general public.

Burkina Faso does not take an active part in the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities 1999–2009, extended to 2019. However, attention was given to the initiative as Burkina Faso ratified the International Labour Organization Convention on vocational training and employment for PWD in November 2008.

The first Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2000–2010, with its Prioritised Action Plan, recognizes the rights of men and women with disability and specifically mentions disability in a few places, e.g. as one of the main causes of poverty, followed by the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development 2011–2015. However, concrete and rights based plans for interventions beyond distribution of wheelchairs and prosthesis remains absent. Disabled People's Organisation's (DPOs) were consulted in the process of preparing the Poverty Reduction Strategy, which unfortunately did not lead to much reflection of the rights of persons with disabilities.



In order to promote and protect human rights of its citizens there is a Ministry for Human Rights, including a special section with the responsibility to oversee social exclusion of citizens. These bodies are important allies, when addressing disability issues.

In 2006, Burkina Faso completed its decentralization program, enabling more local participation in politics. Increasingly decisions and budgets have been decentralised, which is a new challenge for disability organisations and other human rights advocates that work for change. Transparency is limited. On the open budget Index for 2010 Burkina Faso has scored 5 out of 100 possible points.

Thanks to a special gender quota law passed in 2009 more than one third of the approximately 18,000 local councillors elected are women. The number of men and women with disability among the councillors is unknown.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) 82 per cent of all persons with disabilities in developing countries live in rural areas and of those more than one third are unemployed. In times of climate change and disasters, transient and/or marginal living and working environments combined with limited assets and social security make poor people with disabilities more vulnerable than others.

Education

According to UNESCO the national literacy rate of Burkina Faso was 36.68 per cent for men and 21.58 per cent for women in 2007. Almost 2 per cent of all girls and boys with disabilities never attend school and the country has the worst literacy rates among persons with disabilities in the world, according to UK's DFID. Of the children that do go to school only a few will pass the required tests, if at all remain enrolled. According to the World Bank literacy among women with disability is as low as 1 per cent.

“Education for All” is prioritized by the government of Burkina Faso, which has set themselves the goals of reaching an enrolment rate of 70 per cent by the year 2010, and education for all by 2015. So far, the results are far from reaching these targets, despite many efforts by civil society to supplement the government program, especially Handicap International (HI), Oxfam and Action for Disability in Development (ADD International).

Health

Only 2 per cent of men and women with disabilities in developing countries have access to healthcare, according to a UNESCO report from 2004. In Burkina Faso, it is known that for each maternal death, 20 to 30 women suffer from pregnancy-related disabilities.

Burkina Faso has demonstrated a high level of political commitment to scaling up care and treatment for HIV/AIDS. The National AIDS Council is responsible for implementing and coordinating the multi-sectoral response and is supported by decentralized committees at provincial and district levels. Burkina Faso has a declining HIV infection rate, estimated by WHO, UNAIDS and UNICEF to be less than 2 per cent in 2007. The exact prevalence among persons with disabilities is not known, but studies made in developing countries indicate that persons with disabilities are more prone to become HIV infected for a number of reasons, including limited access to information. UNAIDS, WHO and Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) therefore strongly recommends that action be taken by all stakeholders.

Organisations active in the field of disability

The umbrella-like organisation Federation Burkinabe des Associations pour la Promotion des Personnes Handicapees (FEMPA) represents persons with disability and was founded in 1992. With its 350 member organisations it is regularly consulted by the Government on disability issues along with other significant disabled people's organisation's (DPOs), like Handicap Solidaire. FEMPA's work has been challenged and limited by internal disagreement over the past years, and the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity has provided assistance in order to solve the problems.

FEMPA took an active part in the elaboration of the law for promotion and protection of rights for PWD that was adopted in 2010. Other significant DPOs are the organisation of deaf persons: Centre d'Education et Formation Intégrée de Sourds (CEFISE), the organisation of visually impaired persons: L'Union Nationale des Associations Burkinabé pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants (L'ABPAM), and the organisation of families of persons with intellectual disabilities: Association des Parent Et Enfants (L'APEE), all of them globally recognised as national mouthpieces of these disability groups.

No Nordic DPOs are engaged in direct support to the disability movement, which to a large extent relies on support from French, British and Canadian partners, including Handicap International (HI), and Action for Disability in Development (ADD International) and UNICEF.

Swedish Diakonia supports a few civil society organisations in the country, and has been successful in assisting two organisations with monitoring the state budgets. They could potentially be interested to include the rights of people with disabilities in their portfolio.

Addressing Disability within the Cooperation Strategy

Coherent with the country strategy and Swedish cooperation with Burkina Faso, Sida could consider the following:

- Monitor the new poverty reduction strategy (2011–2015) to see how disability is covered and promote inclusion of a few disability disaggregated indicators in the monitoring mechanisms.
- Propose budget tracking of the national and district budget allocations for people with disabilities.
- Raise questions regarding access to primary school for children with disabilities and request disability disaggregated indicators to monitor progress. Proper assessment of children and quality teacher training are preconditions for successful inclusion and learning of children with various disabilities.
- Follow up on the results of the new legislation and action plan for persons with disabilities adopted in 2010.
- Raise questions about the role and responsibilities of The National Committee for Reintegration of Persons with Disabilities and consider supporting capacity building of the Committee.
- As part of the support to the National Democratic Institute ensure that women with disabilities are included in general women initiatives and that organisations of persons with disabilities are invited to be part of human rights and civil society networks.
- Work with other donors (Handicap International and ADD International) to strengthen the capacity of FEMPA in order to be a vibrant civil society actor with ability to address the present fragmentation of the disability movement. Capacity building in relation to budget monitoring and disability auditing could be prioritised to strengthen monitoring of public expenses at national and district levels.
- Raise the need for increased focus on disability within research in general and for reliable and timely baseline data on women, men, girls and boys with disabilities.
- In case of continued support to the water initiatives, raise questions about accessibility for persons with disability, in particular women with disability, to safe water and sanitation.
- Emphasise the need for more focus on the rights of women, men and youth of both sexes with disabilities in supported HIV/AIDS prevention and care training of health staff. Special focus on disability could also be proposed in relation to HIV/AIDS activities of the IPC/AIDS Alliance, supported by Sida and in particular programs targeting the youth.
- Promote the inclusion of girls and boys with disabilities in dialogue with co-donors in World Bank/IDA Education for all program.
- In order for staff to feel comfortable in discussions and promoting disability issues it is also recommended that trainings are organised for staff on disability rights. Local disabled people's organisations could be engaged as resource persons.

Disability organisations in Burkina Faso

Association des Parent Et Enfants (L'APEE): <http://www.apee.bf/>

Centre d'Education et Formation Intégrée de Sourds (CEFISE): <http://cefise.org/>

Federation Burkinabe des Associations pour la Promotion des Personnes Handicapees (FEMPA)
<http://febah.bf>

L'Union Nationale des Associations Burkinabé pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants (L'ABPAM)
<http://www.un-abpam.bf/>

Other organisations according to Mobility International USA (MIUSA), search engine for disability organisations
http://www.miusa.org/orgsearch/index_html/orgResults?regioncode=&countrycode=bf&disabilitycode=

Action for Disability in Development (ADD International): <http://www.add.org.uk/west-africa>

Diakonia: <http://www.diakonia.se/sa/node.asp?node=3694>

Handicap International (HI): http://www.handicap-international.org.uk/where_we_work/africa/burkina_faso

Handicap Solidaire: <http://www.handicapsolidaire.ch/>

UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/burkinafaso_59709.html

References specifically related to Burkina Faso

A force for the disabled in Burkina Faso, case study on education from DFID, 2009

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Assessment of pre-conditions for budget support to Burkina Faso 2009-2012, Sida 2008

[http://www.sida.se/Global/About Sida/Budgaetstod_burkina_faso_eng.pdf](http://www.sida.se/Global/About%20Sida/Budgaetstod_burkina_faso_eng.pdf)

Burkina Faso: Poverty Reduction Annual Progress report 2008, International Monetary Fund

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Evaluation of General Budget Support - Burkina Faso Country Report, Piet Lanser, Catherine Dom, François Orivel, Jean-Pierre Ouédraogo, May 2006

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/evaluation/general-budget-support/burkina-faso.pdf>

Human Rights Recommendations Related to People with Disabilities - more detail, by Human Rights Based Approach in Sub-Saharan Africa: <http://msc.st/ThemeDisabilities.html#BF>

Law on promotion and protection of the rights of PWD, 2010

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/85401/95613/F841317754/BFA-85401.pdf>

Mid-Term Evaluation of the EFA Fast Track Initiative - Country Case Study: Burkina Faso, by Mailan Chiche, Elsa Duret, Clare O'Brien and Serge Bayala 2009 (draft)

[http://www.camb-ed.com/fasttrackinitiative/download/FTI_Burkina_Faso_CR\(22June09\).pdf](http://www.camb-ed.com/fasttrackinitiative/download/FTI_Burkina_Faso_CR(22June09).pdf)

National AIDS Council: <http://presidence.bf/page.php?sid=31>

National Social Security Fund: <http://www.cnss.bf/>

School for all, International Aid Development project in Burkina Faso on inclusive education.

<http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Education/BF15EN.pdf>

Sida's tools on disability: Disability as a human rights issue – conducting dialogue, Base line Study and References
<http://www.sida.se/disabilityrights>

Sida 3-year Action Plan on Human rights for Persons with Disabilities, 2009
<http://sidapublications.citat.se/interface/stream/mabstream.asp?filetype=1&orderlistmainid=294&printfileid=294&filex=413825492388>

Sida: Country Team Mali and Burkina Faso 5113 Rev2, Context Analysis for Strategic Direction and Priority (2009-2011)

Social Security Programs Throughout the World, US Social Security Administration
<http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/ssptw/2010-2011/africa/burkinafaso.html>

This brief aims at providing Sida country teams with brief information on the situation of persons with disabilities in Burkina Faso as well as concrete advice on how disability issues can be included in dialogue and programming. This follows the Sida 3-year Action Plan on Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities, adopted in December 2009.