

## UNICEF ETHIOPIA'S DISABILITY PROGRAMME

### KEY CHILD DISABILITY FACTS

% of world's population living with a disability:  
**10%**

Est. No. of disabled people in Ethiopia:  
**5 Million To 7.7 Million<sup>1</sup>**

UNICEF funding for OVCs and disabled  
children, (2006):  
**US\$ 1.6 Million<sup>2</sup>**

Est. funding needed for OVCs and disabled  
children:  
**US\$200 Million<sup>3</sup>**

### ISSUE

At least 10%<sup>4</sup> of the world's population lives with a disability of some kind. Assisting these people is a key part of achieving the Millennium Development goals. Disabled children and adolescents continuously suffer from social exclusion, rejection and stigma.

Reliable information on disability in Sub Saharan Africa is hard to find. Data from this region is poor and often states the disability figure to be an unrealistic five percent (compared to OECD countries, which shows a rate of 10-20 %). This low figure could be due to poor identification of disabilities, a lack of data collection or because few intervention programmes presently exist in Africa.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (2002) produced a country profile in Ethiopia on disabled people. It estimated that 7.6 % of the population lives with a disability (approximately 5 million). A separate WHO study estimates that it is 10%, meaning that 7.7 million people are living with a disability.

For some disabilities, such as social and learning disabilities, there have been no surveys and the few care workers that do exist often rely on guess work.

Disabled people living in Ethiopia have to cope with poor awareness and limited support. Begging is a prevalent method of survival in urban centers, as is help from religious institutions and charities.

Certain disabled groups are victims of prejudice, especially in rural areas. Children suffer from neglect and abuse. In the most extreme cases they have been shut inside their homes and deliberately kept away from other people because of the "shame" they bring their families.

<sup>1</sup> Based on studies from both the Japan International Co-operation Agency (2002) and the WHO

<sup>2</sup> All Orphans and Vulnerable Children as a whole in Ethiopia in Autumn 2006

<sup>3</sup> Based on Birr300 (US\$34) per child for a year (there are an estimated 6 million OVCs in Ethiopia)

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate that at least 10% of the world's population live with disability

## ACTION

The Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) asserts that: “A mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self reliance, and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.” UNICEF is looking for the resources needed to achieve this goal, ensuring that equality becomes a right for all children.

To this end, UNICEF Ethiopia has been conducting research into disability nationally and globally. The result is a new programme that aims to touch the lives of thousands of disabled children throughout Ethiopia.

The programme will focus on integrating disability into all aspects of child policy. A crucial part of this plan will be creating awareness and empathy amongst government agencies and the people of Ethiopia.

Leadership and coordination assistance will help train government departments at national and local levels. UNICEF aims to ensure that everyone working with children has the training to detect disability and provide assistance.

UNICEF will also look to its own activities, from education to water and sanitation, to ensure future projects will include the needs of some of the countries most vulnerable children.

Another aim is the creation of a national workshop involving all NGOs, government agencies and international organizations involved in the rights of disabled children. As partnerships and dialogue progress, UNICEF hopes to create a joint proposal on funding needs as well as combining activities between different groups.

## IMPACT

The preliminary text of the UN Convention on the Right of People with Disabilities should be approved by the UN Security Council before the end of 2006. Ethiopia will be one of the first 20 countries to sign the treaty.

Schools, high schools and colleges up and down the country will be encouraged to integrate disabled children and young people into everyday lessons. Resources will be made available to train classroom assistants, who can cope with the unique needs of these vulnerable children.

Many disabled children feel alone and uncared for. Following on from the success of HIV/AIDS Community Dialogue schemes in Ethiopia, UNICEF is planning to roll out a new series of dialogue sessions aimed at helping children cope with the mental and social challenges disability creates.

Home and school support will be provided for children with severe learning disabilities. Help will be given to purchase learning aids and trained therapists.

Technology designed to help disabled children in developing countries has seen a great deal of progress. UNICEF is planning to roll out specially designed horse-drawn carts for disabled people to travel the large distances between home and school in remote rural areas. They will be fitted with a disabled ramp and wheel suspension designed for rough roads.

A wheelchair designed to withstand long use without maintenance, including a mobility mechanism aimed for children, has been tested in India with excellent results. UNICEF is introducing a pilot scheme in Ethiopia as well.

## WHAT CAN FUNDING SUPPORT DO

**UNICEF is completely reliant on donations and does not have a guaranteed budget. We need the continued support of all our benefactors.**

- US\$30: Provides training for a teaching assistant, giving disabled children the support needed to attend school.
- US\$30: Monthly salary for a teaching assistant.
- US\$140: Purchases a wheelchair, giving one disabled child the freedom of movement again.
- US\$600: Purchases one disability carriage. A carriage in each region will make a school journey possible for hundreds of children.
- US\$1500: Provides a trained therapist for children with learning disabilities.

**For further information please contact:**

***Maurice Apted, Chief Communications, Rights and Advocacy Officer;***

**Tel: (+251) 011 544 44 00**

**Email: [mapted@unicef.org](mailto:mapted@unicef.org)**

***Indrias Getachew, Media and External Relations Unit head;***

**Tel: (+251) 011 544 43 64**

**[igetachew@unicef.org](mailto:igetachew@unicef.org)**