

END THE CYCLE.

OF POVERTY & DISABILITY



Empowerment, Disability and Poverty



Wadud, Bangladesh

EMPOWERMENT, DISABILITY AND POVERTY THE FACTS

- Persons with disabilities are the world's largest minority, making up 15% of the world's population.¹
- Approximately 426 million persons with disabilities in low and middle income countries live below the poverty line and are often among the 15 to 20 per cent most vulnerable and marginalized.²

SOURCES:

- 1 World Health Organisation and World Bank . World Report on Disability, WHO Press, Geneva, 2011, p.29
- 2 United Nations, General Assembly, Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: report of the Secretary General, A/66/230 (3 August 2011), p. 12

MY STORY: WADUD, BANGLADESH

When Wadud was just one year old he was affected by typhoid and became deaf. As a child, Wadud was excluded from school and regarded as unable to learn because of his disability. Wadud was forced to stay at home.

But so much has changed since Wadud was a boy. After receiving training through a local organisation, Wadud joined a group that represents people who are deaf or hard of hearing living in his community. There are now 72 group members who share their understandings of disability and raise social awareness of disability rights.

“The name of my group is the Saidpur Deaf Club ... we take sessions in the group and make our group aware about our rights.

Wadud, Bangladesh

The work that Wadud and others like him are doing to encourage participation and include persons with disabilities in low and middle income countries is crucial to ending the cycle of poverty and disability.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Experience has shown that empowerment – having a say in the decisions that affect your life – is one of the most effective ways to end poverty. However, persons with disabilities are often marginalised from the power structures of society:

- Negative attitudes or discrimination mean persons with disabilities are often not welcome in community decision-making forums.
- Information on services, public meetings and official administration can be hard to access, and persons with disabilities can often miss out.
- Parents may keep children with disabilities out of school and family members with a disability away from their community to protect them from teasing and discrimination.
- Persons with disabilities may exclude themselves from their community due to fear of not being accepted.
- Women with disabilities often face heightened or different kinds of discrimination because of their disability and gender.

When persons with disabilities are denied the right to make their own decisions or have a say in their family and their community, their voices go unheard and communities do not benefit from having diverse representation. The whole of society develops in a way that continues to exclude persons with disabilities.

‘**Nothing about us without us**’ is a slogan often used by persons with disabilities and their representative organisations. It is about persons with disabilities speaking up for themselves and being actively involved in all decisions that affect them, rather than having important decisions made for them by others.

EMPOWERMENT WE KNOW WHAT IT TAKES

Disabled People’s Organisations or groups like the Saidpur Deaf Club provide important forums for persons with disability to make decisions about what is a priority for them.

“We take sessions in the group and make our group aware about our rights.”

Wadud, Bangladesh

This understanding of rights is important at every level of society to ensure persons with disabilities participate in and have full access to education and training, healthcare, income and employment, and legal support. It is also important for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to be able to contribute their voice and be understood within the wider community.

“I have several dreams. First, we deaf people of Saidpur do not use standard sign language. It is difficult to communicate with other deaf persons in other districts of Bangladesh.”

Wadud, Bangladesh

DISABILITY, POVERTY AND THE SOLUTIONS THAT END THE CYCLE

In 2015 the world committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. The 2030 Agenda and the corresponding 17 goals, including Goal 10 on Equality, must be implemented according to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

By addressing the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in low and middle income countries, we not only achieve the human rights of persons with disabilities, but everyone benefits from their contribution.

Empowering persons with disabilities to have a say in decisions that affect them achieves the human rights of persons with disabilities and also helps end the cycle of poverty and disability.

**END THE
CYCLE.** 
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End the Cycle is an
initiative of CBM

END THE CYCLE promotes the human rights and lived experience of persons with disabilities in low and middle income countries.



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EMPOWERMENT, DISABILITY AND POVERTY THE FACTS

- Persons with disabilities are often not included in planning and policy making, meaning their needs are not considered by governments and the community.
- Disabled Person’s Organisations are organisations of and by persons with disabilities, fighting for their rights.
- Globally, Disabled Person’s Organisations greatly vary in scope, size and resources.

(Below) Wadud, Bangladesh

