

# Disability, Liberation, *and* Development

Peter Coleridge



An Oxfam Publication



Disability,  
Liberation,  
*and*  
Development

Peter Coleridge

*'In nature there's no blemish but the mind;  
none can be call'd deform'd but the unkind.'*

(William Shakespeare: *Twelfth Night*)

**Oxfam**

UK and Ireland

© Oxfam (UK and Ireland) 1993

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

All photographs in this book were taken by the author, and are the copyright of Oxfam (UK and Ireland), unless otherwise credited.

Front cover photograph by Cheryl Koralik/ADD

*Integration in action: a primary school in Chinnamuster village, South India.*

ISBN 0 85598 194 6

ISBN 0 85598 195 4 pbk

Published by Oxfam (UK and Ireland)

274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ

(Oxfam is registered as a charity — No. 202918)

in association with

Action on Disability and Development

23 Lower Keyford, Frome BA11 4AP

(ADD is registered as a charity — No. 294860)

Designed and typeset by Oxfam Design Department.

Printed by Oxfam Print Unit.

112/PK/93 Palatino 9.5/12pt 80gsm Bookwove PMS 130&342

This book converted to digital file in 2010

# Contents

A note on language	v
Acknowledgements	vi

## **Part One: Introduction**

1	Why this book?	3
2	Setting out the issues: an interview with B. Venkatesh	13

## **Part Two: The issues**

3	The experience of disability	27
4	The politics of disability: what is at stake?	45
5	Disability and development: the basics	64
6	Towards social action	83
7	Language and numbers	99

## **Part Three: Case studies**

8	Zanzibar: starting from scratch on CBR and social action	115
---	---	-----

- 9 Zimbabwe: forming a disability movement 131
- 10 India: social action in a highly complex society 148
- 11 Jordan and the Occupied Territories: community action  
with disabled children in refugee camps 168
- 12 Lebanon: rebuilding civic consciousness 187

#### **Part Four: Conclusions**

- 13 Disability and liberation 211

Notes 222

Appendix: some organisations dealing with disability and  
development 228

Suggestions for further reading 234

Index 237

### **Arrangement of the book**

This book is arranged to proceed from the general to the particular, and is divided into four parts:

**Part One** explains the point of the book, and provides an introduction to the issues that will be discussed.

**Part Two** outlines the social, political, and developmental aspects of disability in general terms, mainly through interviews with disabled people who are engaged in development.

**Part Three** illustrates these issues through concrete examples from selected developing countries, and shows how social action on disability has been approached in widely different cultural and political contexts.

**Part Four** draws things together and tries to resolve some of the contradictions that are apparent in the arguments.

## A note on language

Throughout the text the phrases 'the Third World', 'the South', and 'developing countries' are all used to refer to countries which are, in the main, not industrialised and which are the targets of 'Western' aid and development efforts. Similarly, 'the North', 'the West', 'developed countries', and 'the industrialised countries' are used to refer to the wealthier nations of the world which are, in the main, donors rather than recipients of aid.

I am only too conscious that these terms are most unsatisfactory in all respects: their use implies a view of the world which I certainly don't like and do not wish to reflect. But what to do? These phrases are understood, and when making generalisations and comparisons it is more or less impossible to avoid such widely current labels. I can only say that I deeply regret their use, but have not been able to come up with reasonable alternatives.

The use of language in discussions about disability is a matter of sensitivity and concern. It deserves more than a cursory note at the beginning, and is treated in depth in Chapter 7.

## Acknowledgements

It is impossible to thank in person all those who have helped in the writing of this book: they number in the hundreds. Some of them are quoted and named in the text, and that is the best thanks. Although I take full responsibility for what is written here, it really has been a collective exercise.

To those who helped to organise my research trips I owe particular thanks: Peter Dube in Zimbabwe (tragically killed in a car accident some months later), Khalfan Khalfan and Ibrahim in Zanzibar, B. Venkatesh in India, Omar Traboulsi, Lina Abu Habib, and Nawaf Kabbara in Lebanon, Roberta Contin in Jordan, and Abdul Qadir Awad and Hussein Hussein in the Occupied Territories.

For their detailed comments on early drafts I owe warm thanks to Lina Abi Habib and Omar Traboulsi, Oxfam staff in Lebanon; Brother Andrew de Carpentier, Director of the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, Salt, Jordan; Angela Coleridge, my wife; Roberta Contin, Oxfam Disability Trainer in Jordan; Pippa Cope, occupational therapist working with CIIR in Zimbabwe; Rita Giacaman, Director of the Community Health Unit, Birzeit University, West Bank; Rachel Hurst, board member of Disabled People's International and of ADD (Action on Disability and Development) and Director of Disability Awareness in Action; Helen Lee, physiotherapist who has worked for Oxfam in Lebanon and Jordan; Nawaf Kabbara, director of Friends of the Handicapped, Tripoli, Lebanon; Jabulani Ncube, formerly director of NCDPZ (National Council of Disabled People of Zimbabwe) and now a consultant for ADD; Catherine Robinson, who edited this book; James Tumwine, of Oxfam's Health Unit; Chris Underhill, Director

of ADD; B. Venkatesh, Director of ADD India; Bridget Walker of Oxfam's Gender and Development Unit; and Pam Zinkin, Director of the CBR course at the Institute of Child Health, London.

Many authors owe a great debt to their partners for patience during a period of intense preoccupation, but in this case the debt to my wife Angela goes way beyond that: she has been a steady source of encouragement, inspiration, and stimulation throughout.

Finally, my thanks to Oxfam for giving me the opportunity and resources to undertake the work for this book, which has been one of the richest learning experiences I have ever had. ADD (Action on Disability and Development) also contributed financially to the project, thanks to the generosity of Joel Joffe, and Chris Underhill gave unstinting support in many other ways.

The book's strengths derive from all these people. Its weaknesses are mine.

*Peter Coleridge*  
*Oxford*  
*February 1993*

