

## **Eradicating Poverty – Leaving no one behind**

Submitted by: Asian People's Disability Alliance (APDA)  
NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC of the United Nations

The Asian People's Disability Alliance (APDA) is most pleased to respond to this positive and important invitation from ECOSOC. However, as a user-led deaf and disabled people's organisation, our organisation would like to concentrate on addressing the poverty issues of disabled people.

Our written contribution is based on nearly thirty years of policy level activities of lobbying, campaigning and advocacy work regarding disability and race as well as providing of direct care and lifeline holistic support to disabled people and their Carers and Families.

During our many years of work with our client groups and associated stakeholders in the UK, we have come across so many cases of hidden talents of disabled people emerging to achieve successful social and economic developments and particularly noteworthy are cases of minority ethnic disabled members of APDA, a group who are multiply disadvantaged not only in the wider communities but also within their own community, achieving admirable success in independent living and in becoming contributing members of society.

APDA members in the UK secured economic independence mainly because the financial systems and other mechanisms operated enlightened systems towards disabled people thus allowing them to flourish and utilise their hidden talents for mutual gains. Just like any other customer, disabled people were welcomed to take income generating steps and towards success as well as allowing them to take risks just like any other entrepreneur.

APDA has also been involved in overseas development activities sharing its many years of experience gained within the UK disability movement with peer groups in developing countries of South and Southeast Asia in order to bring improvements in the lives of disadvantaged people globally. And, in the course of this work we found that the institutional, attitudinal and various other barriers which also include stigmas and superstitions in some parts of the developing world greatly inhibit potential disabled entrepreneurs from gaining access to resources and other facilities which could enable them to generate income and achieve economic independence and social development.

In our overseas development efforts in South and Southeast Asia, we came across cases of bank managers refusing to open bank accounts for hearing impaired people citing communication difficulties as a reason and getting away with blatant discrimination practices towards disabled people because disabled people in those places lack knowledge of disability equality, of assertiveness, empowerment and other measures that could help them and assist in integrating their unmet needs into policy planning and implementation.

Nonetheless, we also came across resilient group of visually disabled people getting strengthened in numbers by living and working in a clustered and cooperative manner, sharing earnings and the responsibilities together.

Upon reflection, we feel that awareness of the social model of disability and disability equality knowledge should be disseminated effectively amongst the key policy planners, key decision makers, village-heads, community leaders and others in developing countries, especially amongst those

responsible for rural districts. The media in those places are great enablers in changing the mindsets of those people entrenched with negative perceptions of disabled people and changing their mindsets and perceptions to thinking in line with correct positive thinking about disabled people, UN's CRPD, etc.

The environment for the development of disabled is very conducive in the developed west, particularly in the UK and we have disabled role models in the field of politics, in business, in science, entertainment and in other fields showing us the abilities and talents possessed by disabled people. Environment like this should be created in developing countries so that the advances we make here in the developed countries will begin to materialise gradually in developing countries, and their unmet needs addressed and integrated in mainstream policy and practices.