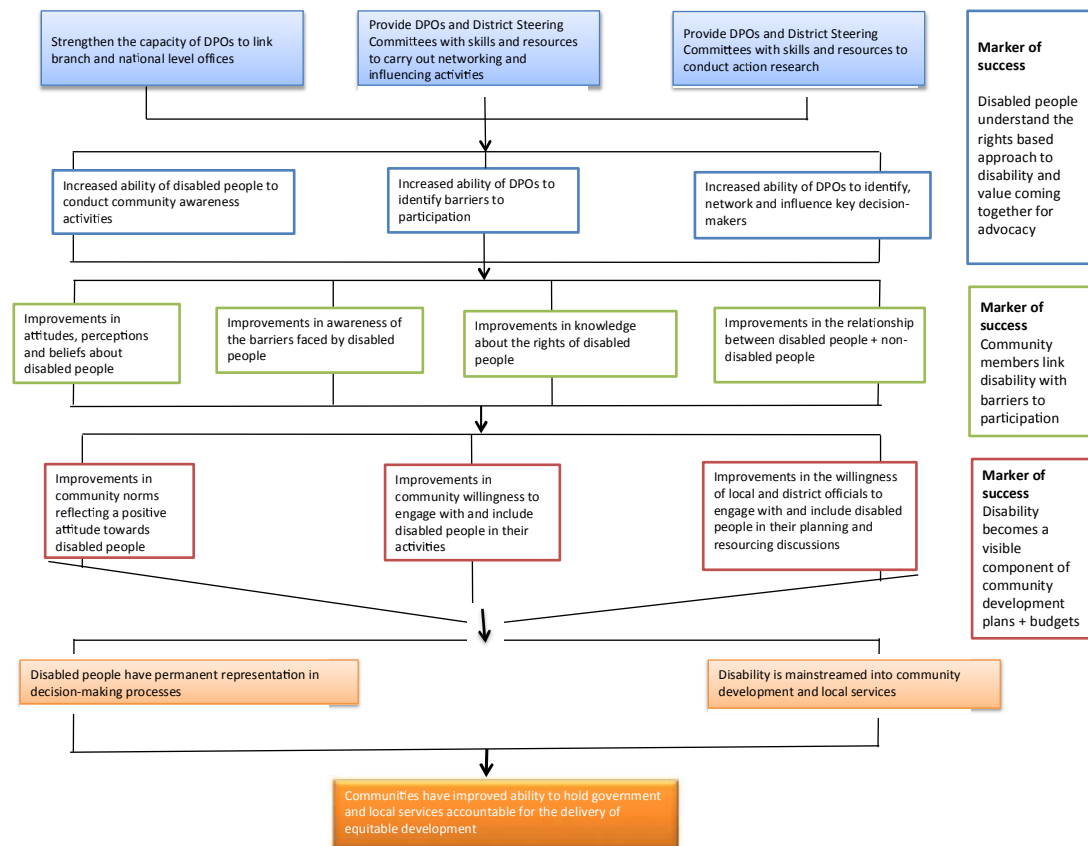


The theory of change

Theory of change matrix



Context

Disability as a development issue rarely, if ever comes up in regular planning or decision making processes and forums at any level in Tanzanian society. Disabled people are acutely aware that they lack representation and voice in community development programs from village executive to district and national level. They are not generally regarded as a stakeholder group which requires targeted interventions or efforts to include in mainstream programs. Rather their needs have tended to be dealt with on an individual basis, most often focused on the provision of medical or welfare services. It is because disability is still regarded as an individual impairment problem and not a rights based issue, that leaders and decision-makers have consistently failed to address the underlying barriers that exclude disabled people from community based services and development.

Preconditions for success

For this situation to change, there needs to be a paradigm shift from amongst communities and their leadership to understanding disability as a consequence of attitudinal, institutional and environmental barriers which exclude disabled people from participating in and benefitting from community based services and development. This begins with attitudinal change – disability must be seen as a rights based issue, not an individual medical problem and one that every leader has

a responsibility for responding to. Once a rights based approach to disability has been understood, then consultations can begin around the best ways to plan for the identification and removal of barriers and the inclusion of disabled people in all services and development activities. Communities and their leadership need to take responsibility for addressing disability issues and for ensuring that they engage directly with disabled people. These basic principles form the foundation of the CRPD and the government's own Disability Act but they are not yet widely understood or appreciated. If the government is going to be successful in implementing both frameworks and for improving the lives of disabled people, they will need to ensure this paradigm shift takes place.

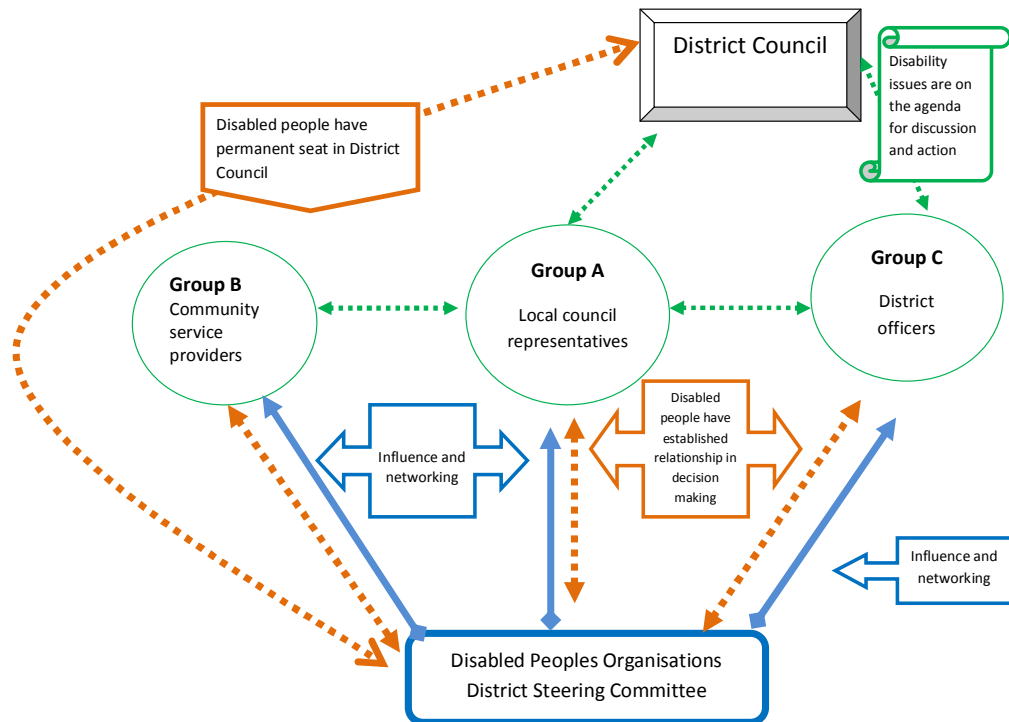
In addition, disabled people themselves need to become aware of their rights and to begin to understand disability as an issue of barriers and not their individual impairments. They need to be confident in coming together with other disabled people and non-disabled champions and challenging for their rights to inclusion. Therefore, an important element of successful change will be the capacity of representative groups of disabled people (DPOs) to identify, analyse and lobby for removal of barriers to participation.

Avenues for change

For sustainable change to occur, DPOs have to find ways to ensure their needs are visible within local planning and resourcing processes. Ultimately disabled people are aiming for a permanent seat on the District Council as special representatives within one of the committees which focus on the needs of vulnerable groups. The precedent we are working with, is the special seats allocated for PLWHA and women.

In order to secure this representation there are a number of different avenues, at different levels that DPOs can take in order to increase the visibility of their needs. It will be important to help DPOs identify key local contacts within the decision making process with whom they can engage on a regular basis to help guide them through the system.

Diagram to illustrate avenues for change



Key:

- Shows project inputs/activities designed to strengthen the capacity of disabled people to influence and network
- Shows non-disabled actors/decision-makers who have taken up issues related to disability
- Shows disabled actors raising disability issues/representing themselves

At grassroots level that will involve sensitising and networking work with key ward stakeholders including Village Executive Officers, Ward Executive Officers and Ward Councillors (diagram group a). At the same time, building on the pilot project's success with engaging the education sector, DPOs will work to sensitise and network with parents of disabled children, teachers, head teachers and school committees (diagram group b). Work at this level can lead to immediate local changes and disabled people can get some disability access issues discussed at Ward Councils. Village Executive Officers have the power to act on removal of some local barriers (such as was recently seen in Mahunga village, Ifakara when a VEO helped provide resources to build an accessible latrine and classroom block for physically disabled

primary students) and they can also help to bring issues and requests to the Ward Council.

In addition, working directly with Ward Officers and Councillors disabled people can play a role in getting their needs voiced at district level since WEO and Ward Councillors have a direct link with the District Council.

Whilst this work is happening at ward level, DPOs will also be supported to engage directly with district officers (diagram group c). The District Social Welfare Officer is a key contact for disabled people and one that DPOs need to build a strong relationship with. The DSWO is directly responsible for dealing with the needs of vulnerable groups although a lack of engagement with disabled people often means they have failed to include disability to any great extent. They are also connected to the District Health department and the District Community Development department – two key departments for disability issues. If disabled people are able to establish a regular dialogue with the DSWO then their needs and issues can be taken to the DED who in turn can take requests to the District Council. Since the project is also engaging education stakeholders, a similar relationship can be built with the District Special Needs Advisor, linked to the Education department.

The aim of this networking and lobbying approach is for disability to become a routine part of ward and district level development discussions. If requests are coming from both the ward and the district, DED's and District Councils will have a much greater opportunity to plan for and respond to disability issues because it will be supported by evidence. It should create a more powerful drive to consider the inclusion of disability issues and may result in other departments becoming more interested in the issue.

At national level it will be important to ensure all nationally representative organisations are cognisant of the progress being made at district level by their branches and that they maintain regular contact. If gains at local level are to be translated into improved access for all disabled people, then the experiences and results of the grassroots work have to be used to inform lobbying and advocacy activities at national level. Close monitoring of successful and unsuccessful grassroots activities will provide the National Steering Committee with a growing body of data to use to construct an evidence based advocacy strategy as well as helping it to plan how to support the growth of branch activities in non-project supported districts. Overall this should result in a more effective disability movement, with greater use of grassroots members lived experiences to inform national level lobbying.

Strategic approach

In support of this formal process, our strategy will be to work on creating a stronger network of grassroots DPOs, active at the district with members who are more engaged in researching and identifying the barriers that lead to their exclusion. This will involve working directly with DPOs at branch level, to provide them with the tools, knowledge and resources required for: identifying disabled people in the community and encouraging them to establish or join DPOs; sensitising community members

(especially parents and local leaders) on the rights based approach to disability; researching and identifying barriers in access to services and development; and lobbying and networking with key decision makers.

Other key outsiders such as the local media, religious leaders, local development programs and private sector representatives will be identified to see if networking opportunities might exist for furthering sensitisation and awareness raising activities with them.

As far as possible all project activities will serve both to collect data for use in lobbying by branches and national representatives and to generate the possibilities for local debate and dialogue on the changes needed to bring about equity and inclusion. The process of carrying out activities like action research and barrier analysis provoke debate as disabled people learn about their entitlements at first-hand and question local service providers on their responsibilities towards access. At a local level this engagement, if done systematically rather than individually does result in service providers and local officials wanting to talk more about how to improve their services and at national level provoke debates as to how to institutionalise reforms to the benefit of all.

At the national level we will continue to work to encourage increased connection between national impairment specific DPOs and between national head offices and their branches, by supporting the National Steering Committee. The NSC will have a greater role in monitoring progress at district level and will be facilitated to work with districts to maximise their ability to assess the wider political situation so that branches can take full advantage of opportunities for change.

It will also be supported to analyse the current legal frameworks which promote disability inclusive development to help inform advocacy priorities. The work at district level will be crucial to understanding how far policies are being implemented so the NSC will be encouraged to look at the kinds of evidence coming from their branches about access to essential services. Any primary data collected by branches will be quantified and used as part of an evidence based advocacy strategy. Given the experiences of the pilot project, increased attention will be given to providing the NSC with opportunities to engage with other mainstream rights organisations to improve their overall understanding and provide them with additional tools and networking experiences.