

Key Notes for the Department of Social Welfare for Persons with Disabilities

#4. Government social protection programmes for persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities often face extra expenses as a result of their disability and have higher poverty rates. Social protection schemes such as disability allowance are crucial in supporting persons with disabilities to survive and reach a decent standard of living.

Persons with disabilities often have lower income than persons without disabilities. At the same time, they have higher costs of living compared to persons without disabilities due to costs associated with health care, transportation, assistance and assistive products. The average extra cost for households with disabled members is 40 USD per month in Cambodia. Households with a disabled member require an additional 17% of income to reach the same standard of living as households with no disabled member¹.

Social protection schemes, such as disability allowance, are crucial to help persons with disabilities survive and reach a decent standard of living given the extra costs of having a disability and the higher rates of poverty amongst persons with disabilities. To improve access to social protection schemes for persons with disabilities, mainstream programmes need to become more inclusive, and there needs to be more investment in disability-specific social protection schemes. Without government support, households with disabled members will face higher levels of financial disadvantage and poverty compared to other households. This becomes key if they are not to be 'left behind' in a country's development.

Why should the government invest in achieving employment for persons with disabilities?

1. Social protection benefits reduce individual and household poverty^{ii iii}

- Disability-specific benefits supports persons with disabilities and their families in covering their basic needs including food and clothing.
- Social protection reduces the household poverty rate.
- Social protection benefits enable households to participate in the labour market and invest in livelihood activities, leading to improve household income.

2. Social protection improves household health^{ii iii}

- Receiving disability-specific benefits improves the general health of the individual and the household due to the consumption of higher quality food and the ability to buy medicines and pay medical fees.

3. Social protection leads to increased self-respectⁱⁱ

- Access to disability-specific benefits increases self-confidence amongst persons with disabilities, as well as reduces the level of stress experienced by persons with disabilities and their families.

4. Access to social protection for all persons is recognised as a basic human right across a range of human rights conventions

- Although NGOs and families, in some cases, support persons with disabilities with cash transfers and other items, these are often quite small. The government is the only agency that can fully support persons with disabilities in facing the extra costs.
- Access to social protection programmes would level the playing field for persons with disabilities, as they are often disadvantaged due to their higher cost of living.

National and International Legislative and Frameworks / Provisions

National Social Protection Policy (2016-2025)

The government defines a social protection system based on inclusiveness as a tool to reduce poverty. Implemented social security schemes aim to provide protection with regards to income insecurity which may result from disability.

National Disability Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Aims to reduce poverty and increase access to health services through, amongst others, the implementation of a social security fund, as well as the expansion of the social support system which ensures that persons with disabilities access quality and free health services.

Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Article 12 of the law dictates that “the state shall develop supportive policies and allocate an annual budget in order to assist persons with disabilities who are very poor and do not have support.”

Sub-decree (88 OrNoKro.BorKor) about the implementation program on Cash Transfer to Poor and Vulnerable Families during COVID-19

Persons with disabilities are designated on the list of target groups who will receive a cash transfer.

Incheon Strategy

Goal 4 specifies to strengthen Social Protection, and states in Target 4.B. to “increase coverage of persons with disabilities in social protection programmes.”

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Article 28 of the UNCRPD recognizes that persons with disabilities have the right to an adequate standard of living, as well as the right to social protection and poverty reduction programmes.

Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 1.3. states to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.”

ⁱ Palmer et al. (2016). *The Cost of Disability in a Low Income Country*.

ⁱⁱ Kidd, S. et al. (2019). *Leaving No-One Behind: Building Inclusive Social Protection Systems for Persons with Disabilities*.

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations. (2018). *Disability and Development Report*.