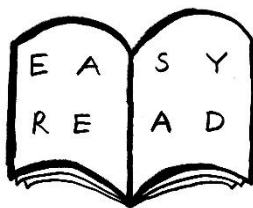


Connecting Disability and Inequality Activism



New Research Findings



Easy Read Version

Background



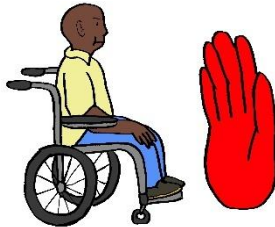
There are 1.3 billion people with disabilities in the world.



People with **disabilities** face problems in income, wealth, and having a voice.



People with disabilities are treated unfairly.



Activists who campaign against **inequality** often do not include the challenges faced by people with disabilities.



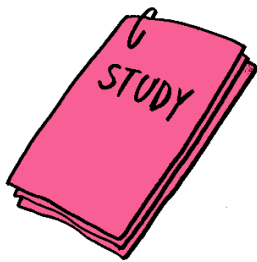
Disability campaigns struggle to deal with how **intersectional** inequality can be.



Intersectionality is the idea that people can experience many barriers because of their identity.



For example, a woman with disabilities may have barriers because she has a disability and because she is a woman.



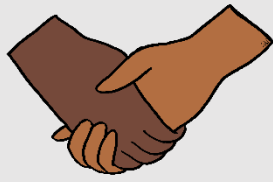
Our study looked at why **activists** haven't worked together.



We wanted to understand how activists in Ghana and Kenya think about disability and inequality.



The study looked at things that stopped activists from **collaborating**, and things that helped them work together.



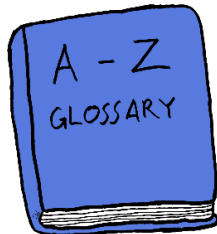
Collaborating is working with someone and working across movements.



We worked with activists to find ways of helping different groups to work together.



In this report, you can read a summary of our research, and read about our methods, findings, and tools.



At the end of our summary, there will also be a glossary to explain the terms and key words used.



These words will be in bold when they appear throughout the text.

Research study method



Our study looked at people's stories and experiences.



Based on what people said, we have included ideas for action that will benefit everyone.



Many members of our research team are people with disabilities.



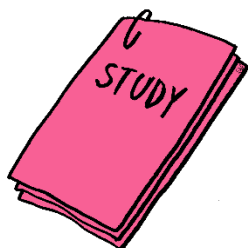
We have worked with a wide range of people who have relevant experience and take part in activism.



Over many meetings, we brought people together to share their ideas and talk about how to act on our findings.



The research is also meant to help disability and inequality activists work together.



We interviewed 30 people in this study.



Half of them were based in Ghana, and the other half were in Kenya.



In each country, we interviewed eight disability activists and seven inequality activists.



Our goal was to get a mix of people involved.



The people who took part were disabled in different ways and were also different genders.



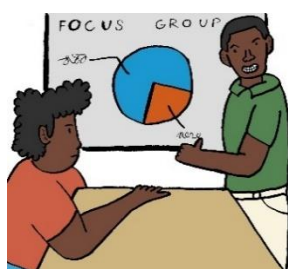
Some of them worked in cities, while others worked in towns or villages.



Some of them have been in activism for years, while others were newer to it.



We included a mix of local, national, and regional groups, and independent activists.



After the interviews, we looked at what we found and that helped us plan focus groups.



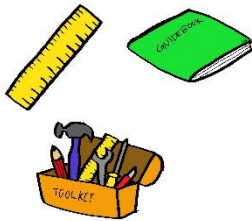
There were two focus groups for each country.



One was for disability activists, and the other was for inequality activists.



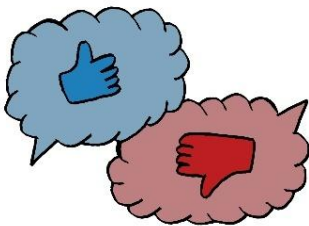
After these focus groups, we looked at our findings again.



We used this to work on strategies and tools to overcome barriers in working together.



Then we brought everyone together in a big workshop, one for each country.



Here, people talked about and confirmed our findings and gave feedback on the tools.



After these workshops, people had a chance to review the tools again before they were finished.

The importance of accessibility



Accessibility was important to our research and design.



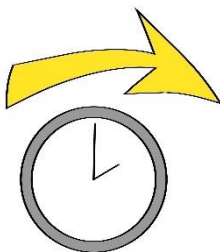
We asked everyone who took part to let us know what support they needed so they could take part.



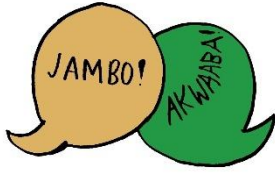
We also had a budget to cover support.



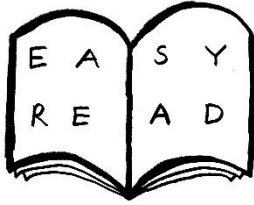
We checked people's access needs before all interviews, focus groups, and workshops.



This is because a person's needs can change over time or change with different contexts.



We have translated our materials into Swahili and Twi languages.



We had Easy Read and screen-reader-friendly material as well as large print for printed documents.



We provided support for childcare and covered the costs of personal assistants, aides, and support workers.

Ethical approval



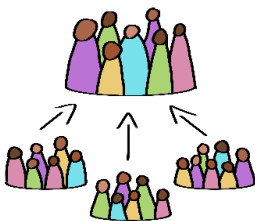
This study has been ethically approved by the London School of Economics in the UK.



It was approved by the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana and Amref in Kenya.



We also have a research license from Nacosti in Kenya.



This study was supported by an engagement group which included members of three different groups.



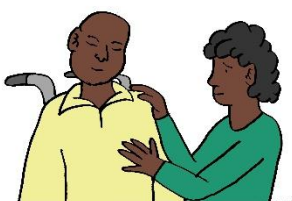
These groups are the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations, United Disabled Persons of Kenya, and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology



What we found out



Our research looked at three areas:



1. How people understand disability and inequality



2. Things that stop disability and inequality movements from working together



3. How to help disability and inequality movements work together

How people understand disability and inequality



People understand disability in many different ways.



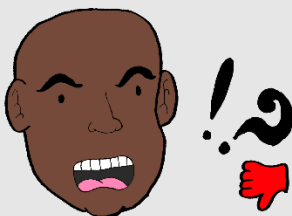
People who took part in our study shared a lot of different views about disability, inequality, and how they are connected.



Both disability and inequality activists said that disability is shaped by how people in society see it.



They talked about how **stigma** and false beliefs about disability shape how people see disability.



Stigma is thinking badly of people because of their identities.



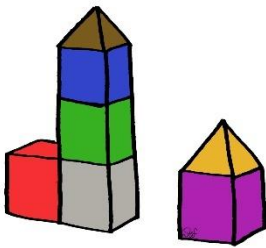
For example, some people see disability as a curse.



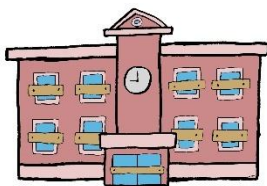
Everyone who took part saw stigma as a bad thing and rejected it.



But they also said that this thinking was still common in many communities.



Some people who took part presented disability as a result of **structural** causes, factors created by society.



These include lack of education, lack of opportunities, and services that exclude people with disabilities.



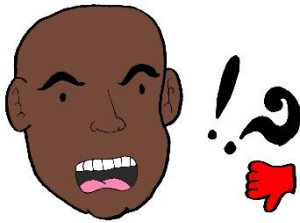
The people who took part saw inequality as something caused by society.



Alongside that, many people who took part saw disability as something that needs fixing.



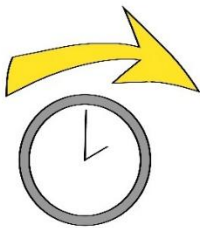
Some people saw disability as something that affects a person's ability to do tasks that they are expected to do.



This shows how negative attitudes towards disability are still a big part of society.



Negative views can be expressed even by people who understand how inequality affects people with disabilities.



Some people said that how they understand disability has changed over time.



They talked about how they went from seeing disability as something that needs fixing to seeing it as something shaped by society.



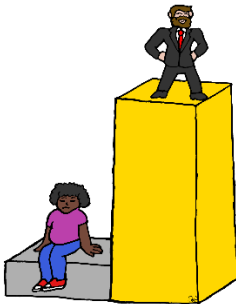
Many people said that some people with different disabilities are treated differently from others.



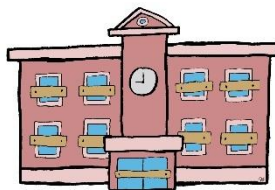
For example, some disabilities might be ignored if few people know about them.



People in the study had lots of different ways to talk about disability.



They agreed more about how to talk to about inequality.



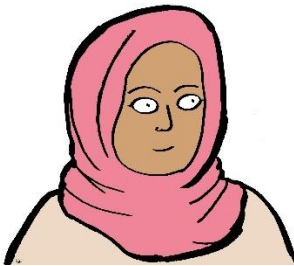
Most people defined inequality as a limited access to resources and chances in life.



This includes a lack of political voice and lack of access to decision making.



People see this lack of access as linked to their identity.



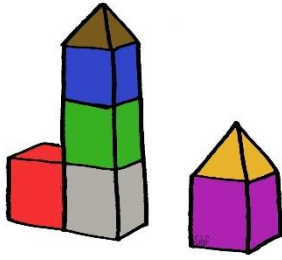
For example, some people may have less rights because of how society views their gender or ethnicity.



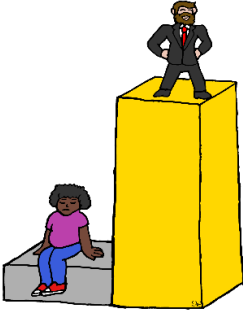
Disability activists made the strongest connection between disability and inequality.



They shared clear examples of how disability and inequality are connected.



Some people connected them as a series of disadvantages that add up like layers.



In this way, disability was sometimes seen as one of many forms of inequality.



A few people looked at it in an intersectional way.



That means they see that some people are treated differently in different ways based on their identity.



These views help us understand why there are barriers that prevent people from working together.



They also help us find ways to help people work together.

Barriers to working together

"I have attended so many forums where organisations talk about disability, yet there is no person with a disability in the room."

Inequality activist, Kenya





The people who took part in our study talked about why disability and inequality activists need to work together.



They felt that working together creates space for learning and different experiences coming together.



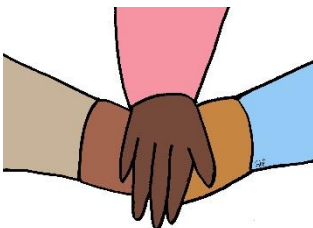
It can create new ideas for how to solve problems with different skills.



People also felt that working together makes it possible to have more opportunities for change.



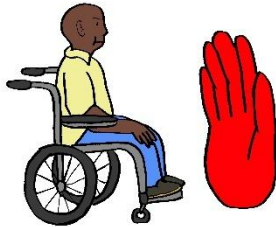
Many people said that there should be a clear purpose to it and that working together should be seen as a process.



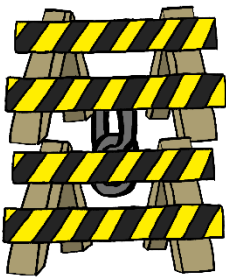
Disability activists focused on the need for **inclusion** and the need for access.



It is important to make sure people with disabilities can take part and make decisions.



Stigma and discrimination can result in people being left out.



Disability activists and inequality activists pointed out that many barriers are linked together.



These barriers cause problems at different stages.



Thinking badly about disability create barriers that make it hard for people to work together.



A lack of knowledge is also a big barrier.



People said that inequality activists don't understand disability very much.



This means that disability activists have to explain it, which makes it harder and causes even more barriers.



At the same time, some disability activists also did not understand specific experiences, such as those of women compared with men.



It is a problem that disability and inequality activists sometimes don't understand each other's point of view.



Disability activists also felt that some inequality activists were not comfortable working with people with disabilities.



Disability activists see this as a result of a lack of experience.



Inequality activists see it as being caused by problems organising access and not knowing who to talk to.



There are also limited resources, and activists say they often compete for them.



They say the way funding works makes people compete instead of work together.



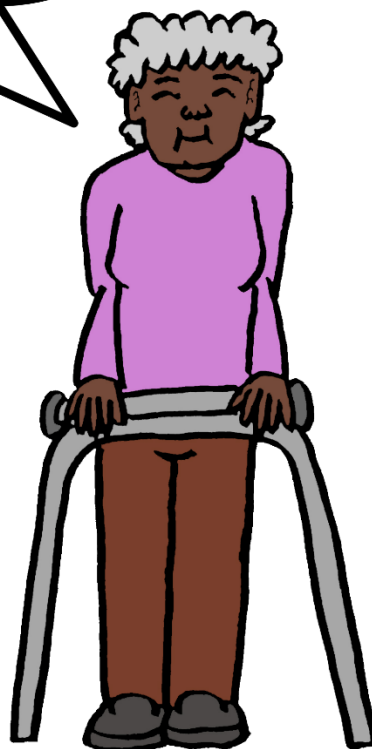
That creates a situation where activists are divided and knowledge is not shared.



Competition over resources also creates trust issues.

"For you to know a person with disability well, or to understand someone well, you need to stay with the person and understand the person. So, I would say that excluding disability from inequality conversations will perpetuate, marginalisation."

Disability activist, Kenya





Some activists were worried that other groups would take their ideas without involving them or giving them credit.



They worried that they would take those ideas and use them to get funding.



Some disability activists also reported issues with **tokenism**.



This tokenism is when a group may be involved but has no real influence and don't really **participate**.

"Great collaboration is where you come with success, there's synergy, creativity, there's celebration. When you collaborate, you try to push a voice, you amplify it. At the end of the day, you become grateful, you've seen that you've achieved the synergy."

Inequality activist, Ghana



How to help people work together



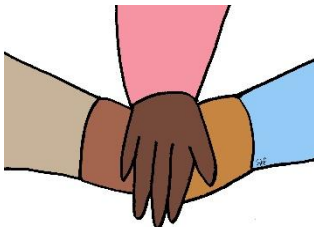
We found three main areas where we could help support people working together.



Problems related to resources can be addressed through:



- Training together



- Funding to support inclusion for people with disabilities



- Budgeting together



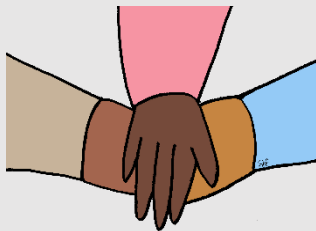
- Being clear about finance



- Making financial resources accessible to people with disabilities and their groups



It is also important for people to work together **intentionally**.



Intentionally means taking an active role in making sure people are included.



At the moment, some activists work together without really making proper plans to work together.



People can also present themselves as **inclusive** only to get funding.



There will also be problems if disability activists are only invited to get involved after planning.



Activists need to work together **intentionally** if they're going to work together.



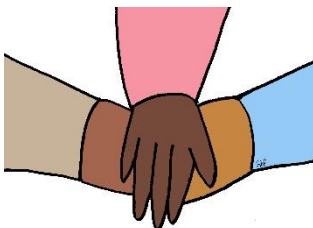
That means **collaborating** needs to be a process and not just a single event.



Working together should also be seen as a chance to learn from other people.



To help people work together, people who took part in this study suggested:



- Planning for disability access and inclusion in everything from the start.



- Building trust and openness.



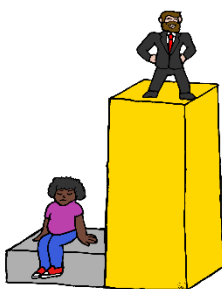
- Making advocacy goals and projects together.



- Sharing ideas more by talking to each other.



Disability affects people of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and other backgrounds.



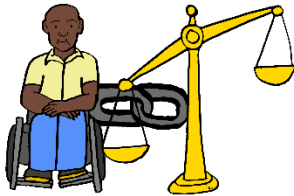
People with disabilities are much more likely to live in poverty than other people.



Despite that, people often only focus on someone's medical diagnosis when talking about disability.



This can result in different groups of people not having their issues dealt with.



People in our study suggested that working together needs to involve seeing disability and inequality as being linked together.



They think activists need to be aware of the diversity of disability and how it links to other identities and conditions.



They think that activists should learn how to recognise and challenge **stigmatising** approaches to disability.



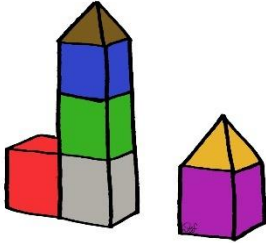
Finally, they said that **collaboration** should reflect lived experience and reflect many different inequalities.



To help people better understand **intersectionality** and disability, people who took part suggested that:



- Movements should help activists reflect on different lived experiences of injustice.



- Activists should address power structures by reflecting on their impact and try to share power and resources.



- Movements should try to make sure people who experience oppression and discrimination can have an impact.

"If we want to have an equal society a society that is fair there should be reasonable accommodation for persons with disability to accommodate our differences and our individual differences based on our different impairment and disabilities."

Disability activist, Ghana



Practical tools



We have found three main strategies to address the barriers that stop people working together:



These strategies address:



- The need for fairer resourcing



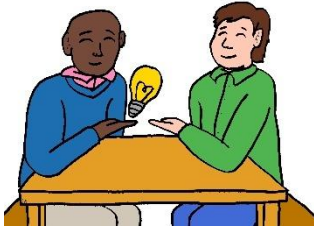
- More intentional collaboration



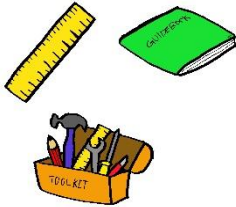
- The need to better understand intersectionality and disability.



We worked with disability activists and inequality activists in our research study to develop six tools to help activists **collaborate** better.



These tools will not fix every problem, but they will help activists reflect, share ideas, and make progress.



The six tools are:



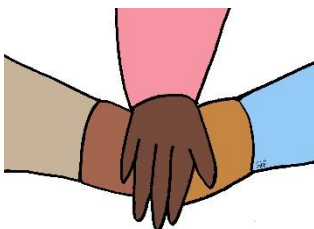
1. An inclusive budgeting checklist



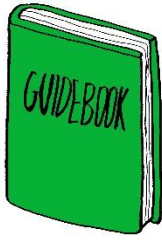
This will say what should be part of a budget from the start to include people with disabilities.



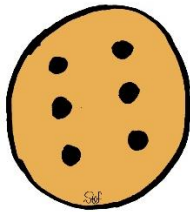
2. An inclusive and accessible activity checklist



This will help activists think through how to make events, meetings, and other activities more inclusive.



3. An inclusive and accessible communications guide



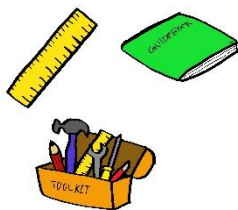
This will show you how to make the design and layout of prints and documents more accessible.



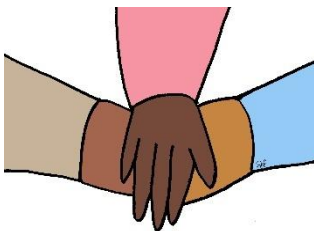
4. A reasonable accommodation guide



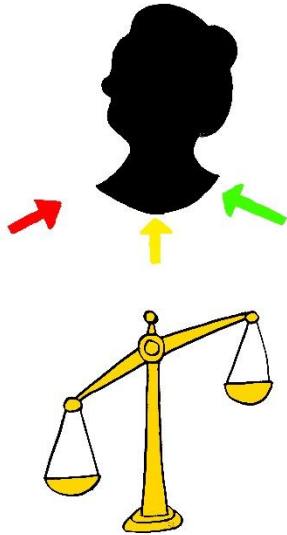
This will show what **reasonable accommodations** might look like and why they are needed.



5. A disability inclusion self-assessment tool



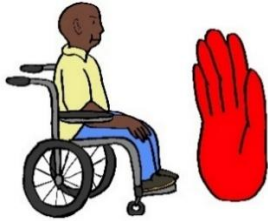
This is to help groups explore their level of inclusion for people with disabilities so they can be more inclusive.



6. A positionally mapping facilitation guide

This will help identify any **imbalances in power** or **exploitative** behaviour before people start working together.

Glossary



Ableism: Treating people badly because of their disability, illness, or impairment.



Accessibility: Removing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from taking part.



Activist: A person who organises for a goal or cause.



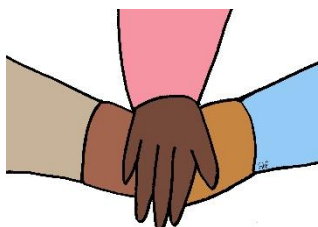
Collaboration: Working with someone and working across movements or groups.



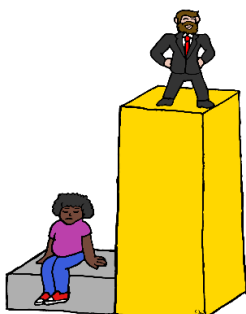
Disability: Impairments are physical and mental conditions. Disability is the way society treats people badly because of their impairments.



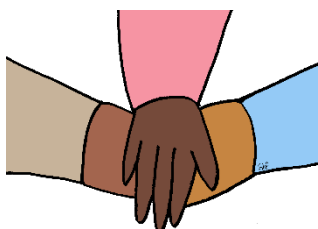
Exploitation: When people with disabilities are used for someone else's benefit and not theirs.



Inclusion: Making it so people who are left out unfairly, like people with disabilities, can take part in society.



Inequality: When people are treated differently because of who they are.



Intentionality: Taking an active role in making sure people are included.



Intersectionality: The idea that people can experience multiple oppressions because of their identity.



Movement: Groups and individuals that come together with a shared goal.

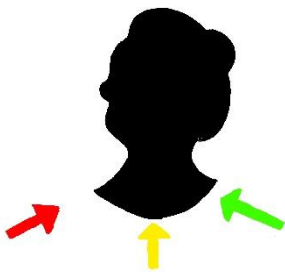


Organisation of people with

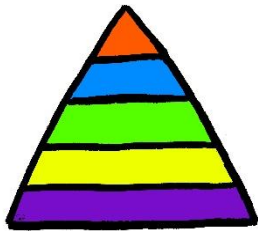
disabilities: A group run by and for people with disabilities.



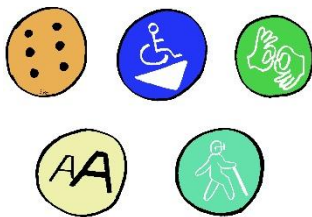
Participation: Taking an active role in a group, event or campaign.



Positionality: Thinking about how you fit into society and how that makes a difference to how you can change things.

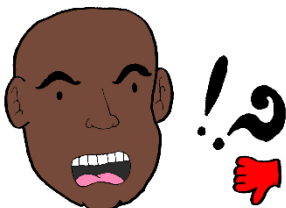


Power dynamics: How power, voice, resources, and chances in life are spread in society.

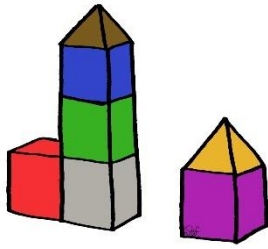


Reasonable accommodation:

Removing barriers to make it possible for people with disabilities to take part fully.



Stigma: Thinking badly of someone because of who they are.



Structural: How the world is set up. This can change how some people have a voice and have the chances to change things.



Systemic: How society works. Sometimes in favour of some people and against other.



Tokenism: When certain groups of people are present but have no influence or role in making decisions.



Unconscious bias: Ideas about people that influence how we think and act without us thinking about it.

“That is what we mean by nothing for us without us. If you want to do something for us, consult us to find out how best you can do it to help us, instead of thinking or assuming the way that you do it for us is the best way you can help us.”

Disability activist, Ghana



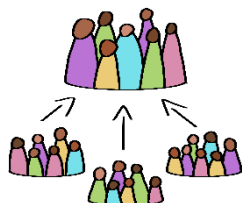
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