

# How much does the society gain when persons with disabilities are included?

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*From left to right: Catherine Bearder, MEP at the European Parliament, Israel Balogun, Disability Advocate, Hannah Kuper, Co-Director of the International Centre for Evidence in Disability, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Diane Kingston, Deputy Director of International Advocacy and Alliances for CBM, Simona Giarratano, EDF Social Policy Officer and the President of CBM Dave McComiskey*

On Tuesday 9 December 2014, The CBM IAA team officially launched the report "The economic costs of exclusion and gains of inclusion of persons with disabilities" at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The report was developed in collaboration with the [International Centre for Evidence in Disability \(ICED\)](#) at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical

Medicine. For the official launch, CBM was welcomed by [Catherine Bearder](#), Member of the European Parliament (MEP).

## **The commitment of the European Union around Disability**

Catherine Bearder opened the conference by highlighting the link between poverty and disability. Her commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities comes from her personal and professional experience, by which she stated that “persons with disabilities should have the equality of opportunity”. Catherine has also declared that she will do her best to keep disability on the top of her agenda.

Dave McComiskey, CBM President, introduced the work and principles of CBM. He highlighted the role of the European Union by saying that “the European Union has demonstrated its commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities with the ratification of the Convention in 2011. While wide-ranging in scope, it is important to note that Article 32 of the Convention focuses on International Cooperation. It is for this reason, that CBM is grateful to have the opportunity to launch this important report in the European Parliament.”

## **This report can be used as a pillar for future academic studies**

Dr Hannah Kuper from the International Centre for Evidence in Disability (ICED) at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine presented the headlines of the report, its structure and the methodology. She spoke about how they have measured the impact of education, employment and health on persons with disabilities. The report includes statistics and Dr Kuper highlighted figures from Bangladesh and China, demonstrating that this report “can be a pillar for future academic studies showing where evidence gaps exist, and this information can be used for policies to demonstrate the impact of inclusion in society”.

Because there was no clear economic data around disability, Dr Kuper presented this report as a key reference for future academic research.

## **The economic reality for persons with disabilities**

Diane Kingston, Deputy Director of International Advocacy and Alliances for CBM, promoted the unique essence of the report, which joins together the “evidence based we want, the ammunition we need for decision makers and the language of economists to say that society cannot afford not to include disability”. She shared three case studies extracted from the report which demonstrate the real

impact of inclusion, reporting that these cases are the exception when they should be the norm for a more sustainable society.

Israel Balogun brought the experience of a person with disability in a developing country. Although many countries have signed or ratified [the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), there is a lack of policy will to implement it. He urged each government to take care of the future of their citizens with disabilities, not to assist them but to include them: “Give us a chance”.

## How to impact and change societies



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*Our panel of speakers at the European Parliament in Brussels*

[Heidi Hautala](#), Member of the European Parliament, raised her voice to express her commitment to include the rights of persons with disabilities at the European level. The value of this report is that “it adds the financial and economic argument to the human rights discussion”. The strong support of MEPs like Catherine Bearder or Heidi Hautala offers the opportunity of a closer collaboration, especially regarding the Post-2015 Framework.

Finally Simona Giarratano, Social Policy Officer of the [European Disability Forum \(EDF\)](#), spoke about how the economic crisis has affected deeply persons with disabilities. Despite of the current economic situation, she insisted that we should invest and focus more on those who have a disability. And as she said, “this is urgent to act”.

To close the session, we liaised with Mwesigwa Martin Babu via Skype. As a Member of the Committee of Experts of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, he shared his experience as Deputy Director and Head of Programmes of the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU).

The launch event covered several socio-economic topics. The discussions demonstrated how important this report is for our societies to take concrete actions looking at the economic factors. As Dr. Hannah Kuper said: "Can [we] afford not to include persons with disabilities?"

## **Download our report**

Download [The Economic Costs of Exclusion and Gains of Inclusion of People with Disabilities report](#)