Introduction

Social development and progress is a key organ in making sure a society is able to sustainably prosper in the future. When each citizen can have access to simple and basic human needs such as food, water, energy, education and healthcare, the overall societal utility is increased, leading to not only more productive and economically advanced societies, but also more satisfied and happy individuals in a country. It is important that within a country, every citizen has the option to take advantage of opportunities that are given to them, and more than that, can access those opportunities in the first place. Those with disabilities in a country are often the most disadvantaged, as they commonly have to turn to more expensive institutions in order to receive their basic rights to education, healthcare and work. This is because the average firm or school will often not have the correct infrastructure as well as the correct aid in order to provide an environment where a disabled person would have the same opportunity as their able-bodied peers.

Disabled people are still not treated as equal citizens in countries and societies are frequently taken for granted and ignored due to conditions that are out of their control. WHO estimated that there are between 600 and 650 million people with disabilities throughout the world, 80% of which are living in developing countries and over 25% of the overall population is either directly or indirectly impacted by disability. Neglecting the needs that disabled people have can be simply claimed as a human rights violation, as they are denied their rights to education, housing and job opportunities. This, however, is only the baseline of the problem. This situation becomes far more severe when race, sex, language and nationality is counted in this as there are even further acts of discrimination. Women and girls are especially neglected as in many developing countries, they are seen as more domestic and ‘made to stay at home’ rather than have the ability and opportunity to enter the workplace.

In certain societies, there is a high amount of stigma that comes with both mental and physical disabilities and this leads to many people not receiving the correct aid as they've been told to simply ‘live
with it’. Due to this, governments become less encouraged to subsidise firms such as development and health centres as they believe that a very small portion of the population will go there.

Social progress is the backbone of the Sustainable Development goals, specifically focusing on SDGs 3 (Good health and wellbeing) and 10 (Reduced inequalities). With increased opportunities given to disabled people, economies will be able to prosper as there will be increased productivity, but more importantly, societies would be far more advanced as stigma and discrimination will be far reduced.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Sustainability**

The ability to develop current events without depleting the future’s resources focusing mainly around economic, social and environmental factors that can be impacted as a result of production.

**Social Progress**

The ability of a country to meet the basic needs of its citizens. These basic needs include water, food, housing, education and healthcare. Countries unable to get to these standards are often considered developing countries.

**Disability**

A physical or mental disadvantage that limits a person’s movement and other living processes. They often limit one or more essential life activities that the average person needs to do.

**Social Protection**

The set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income.

**Rehabilitation**

The act of restoring someone’s health through therapy over a long period of time. Rehabilitation is more commonly used for newly attained injuries, disabilities and mental health purposes and can be done through different forms such as speech therapy or physiotherapy for example.
Stigma

A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person. If someone has something uncommon or rare, they can be stigmatised against it.

Infrastructure

The basic physical structure that is seen every day in buildings, roads, bridges, power supplies etc.. Infrastructure is often manipulated to fulfil the needs of the population.

Background Information

For centuries, disabled people have been discriminated against and have been denied opportunities in society. This does not simply mean bullying or people saying mean remarks to those who are disabled, there are both active and passive ways that cause disabled people to be shied away from the rest of society. We mostly hear about the active ways which include blatant insults towards disabled people in the classroom and workplace as well as disabled people being denied opportunities in such places simply due to their conditions. Despite this, it’s the passive acts of discrimination that create the biggest effect on society and are the ones that the average able-bodied citizen will not notice but that disabled people have to struggle with daily. This includes a lack of appropriate infrastructure to help with a wheelchair or no braille being available for those wanting to use public transport. The neglect that disabled people face and have been facing their whole lives can commonly be resolved through minor solutions that can create a big impact at a low cost, and are very unlikely to have any impact on the able-bodied portion of the population. The simple needs that disabled people have such as time off work for healthcare, mental support, and home care are almost never taken into account. Family problems can also arise as a result of this and due to this massive amount of stigma, children do not go to school and feel a massive lack of love and care as they are only surrounded by stigmatising family members most of the time. Economics also plays a big part in this, as those who are disabled people create a double loss when it comes to productivity as their family members who have to take care of them are also disadvantaged in the workplace, making rehabilitation outside the household vital for social progress and independence of disabled persons

What is social progress

Social progress is the ideology that every citizen in any given country has access to all basic human needs such as education, healthcare and clean water, as well as the opportunity to further
prosper in the future as an individual or community and having the resources to do so. Full social progress can never be achieved as human behaviour is constantly changing and so their demand for certain goods can change over time. It can also never be achieved due to the scarcity of the goods in society; in certain countries, resources that are needed to provide these basic human needs are often not allocated correctly due to corruption and the privatisation of certain companies, but it’s important to recognise that those resources are there in the first place. Governments must ensure that they are as socially developed as they can give the resources and the funding that they have, as this creates a long term rippling effect on society as a whole for the better.

How social progress is measured

Social progress can be measured in several ways. One way is through the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is an index number given between 0-1 and it measures the quality of three different components of society: education, health and GNI. This is especially effective as it covers more than one aspect in society, but it also can be related to SDGs 3,4 and 8. HDI, however, can be ineffective when seeing progress over a period of time as statistics for it are often only calculated once or twice a year, but it is highly convenient as the index base number allows for easy comparison between nations and easy determination of which countries require more social needs than others.

The most effective way to measure social progress is through the Social Development Index (SDI) as this covers far more factors in a society than the HDI. The SDI includes 52 essential factors in society and calculates them into an index number out of 100. Similarly to HDI, the use of index numbers is highly convenient as it allows for easy comparison and determination of which countries require more social aid than others. The SPI can also be split into 3 main factors: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing and Opportunity. Basic Human Needs includes any type of good or service that is needed in the basis of society, this includes personal safety, shelter, nutrition, safe water and medical care. The Foundations of Wellbeing sector looks at how much each individual in a society has access to services that allow them to build a future of their own; this includes environmental sustainability, access to news, education, and healthcare. The final section of Opportunity covers how well the general population can access the resources available to them, which includes tolerance, access to higher education as well as rights and freedom. The SPI is also put in the context of a country’s GDP. As of now, the country with the highest SPI is Norway with an SPI of 88.36 and the lowest SPI goes to the Central African Republic with 31.42.

Education
As mentioned before, education plays one of the largest roles in determining whether a country is socially progressive or not. One of the biggest factors that impact the quality of a country's education is how widely available it is. In certain more rural areas of countries, public education may not be up to the standard of more developed and populated parts of the country. This creates a massive and everlasting divide between rural and urban communities as those in rural areas often don't get as many opportunities as their peers in urban areas and so they have less of an opportunity to progress as individuals in the future and often just remain in their rural areas with little to no social progression. Every child in a country must have equal access to education as this creates a long-lasting rippling effect on the economy as well as society as a whole. Theoretically, if someone has higher access to certain educational resources, they would want to take advantage of them in order to create a better future for themselves as well as the people around them, this therefore, motivates that person into working harder as an adult, therefore stimulating an economy and increasing the government's access to revenue in order to spend it on other basic social needs. While families can choose to pay for higher-quality private education, it is also up to the government to provide as good of an education as they can so that all of their citizens are provided with that same opportunity.

The large divide between disabled and able-bodied people also creates a massive restriction on improving social progress. The approach between physical and mental disabilities also differs which creates larger issues to reduce the divide between disabled and able-bodied people. People with physical disabilities can very often have difficulties navigating around school infrastructure if there is no aid towards disabled people as the average school campus is often filled with stairs and small, crowded corridors which can make it difficult for someone with a wheelchair, for example, to get their basic education. This leads many disabled people to lean towards homeschooling or specific centres that have the infrastructure to accommodate disabilities, and this just further widens the gap between those in public or private schools, as people who are homeschool/online schooled are often behind on work and knowledge compared to those in a full classroom environment by about 20%. It is also important to acknowledge those with mental disabilities, who are often most subjected to discrimination in educational facilities, especially if school districts or families are unable to provide educational help for the student. This can completely discourage the student and lead them into taking educational courses that are less effective than the average school, such as homeschooling.

Healthcare

Healthcare plays a major factor in social progress similarly to education, especially in the context of helping and aiding disabled people and how this can be examined is by looking closely at how governments deal with mental and physical disabilities differently. Physical disabilities are often dealt with more precision and care and often get more attention to healthcare centres. With new technological advances, physical disabilities can be treated far more easily...
than ever before and more aid is given to those with physical disabilities for them to be as close to able-bodied as possible as well as be able to live a life just like any other citizens. Physical disabilities are also harder to hide than those that are mental and so more focus is directed towards them. Nevertheless, there has been extensive research into reducing the marginalisation of those with mental disabilities. Those with mental disabilities are often more difficult to treat and recover from as they require heavy detailed studies into the person's brain and mentality which can take months to process. Furthermore, unlike physical disabilities, mental disabilities are often on a spectrum and so certain people might have certain symptoms that others don't or may have a larger impact due to a certain disability than others. This again, causes medical professionals to need extensive medical tests in order to find a correct and accurate diagnosis for the person. This can be especially expensive on families with lower incomes with little to no insurance as they will have to pay high costs if they want an accurate diagnosis. There is also a large amount of looking down upon people with mental disabilities, causing them to be more sheltered and have less access to what society can offer for them.

**Poverty**

It has been statistically proven that those with disabilities are often more likely to be living in poverty than their able-bodied peers. on average, 24% of disabled people live under the international poverty line in comparison to 13% of able-bodied people. This is due to two main reasons. firstly, disabled people are often less likely to be employed into jobs when put against able-bodied people, leading them to have to turn to minimum wage jobs, even if they are qualified. Furthermore, many disabled people are simply unable to work due to inaccessible infrastructure and a lack of transport options available. Many disabled people may not even have the correct qualifications to work in the first place as they were unable to be offered an adequate education, again due to lack of suitable infrastructure as well as the large amounts of stigma and discrimination that can be seen in educational facilities. The second reason as to why disabled people are more often in poverty than able-bodied people is due to the extra costs that they have to pay such as healthcare and physical assistance. Especially in countries where access to insurance is minimal, disabled people are made to pay high prices for their basic needs and so, are able to make long term savings to improve their lives in the future and are simply just stuck in a cycle of poverty. Banks can also be inaccessible to disabled people, especially in LEDCs when banks have little to no IT software to allow easy access to savings or credit, as well as bad physical infrastructures that make it difficult for disabled people to have access to their finances. Governments also offer little to no social protection to their disabled citizens and if they do, there is minimal information about it in order to allow disabled people to have access to it. On average, only about 30% of the disabled population in a country can access social protective services to help them.
Major Countries and Organizations Involved

International Disability Alliance (IDA)

The IDA is one of the biggest organisations that help disabled people worldwide and they oversee several smaller organisations (eg: RIADIS, European Disability Forum, African Disability Forum, Arab Organisation of People with Disabilities) worldwide to ensure that disabled people are able to have access to all available societal resources. They have worked on many projects with the UN as well as smaller NGOs to ensure this. One of these previous projects is the Youth With Disabilities Program (2017) where the IDA worked with communities in developing countries towards two main goals which were helping sexual and reproductive health and reducing sexual violence towards disabled people as well as having the ability to increase communication between those with disabilities in order to increase information and awareness to those in higher governmental powers. One of their current projects is with the United Nations and is titled Bridge CRPD-SDG. This was created as a response to the increasing demands from disabled society in this fast progressing society. It aimed to support small organisations in countries by training members on how to manage the needs of disabled people in the classroom and the workplace. Many of these programs were also lead completely by disabled people so that there is a correct and accurate perspective towards the needs of disabled people. All of IDA’s programs have also massively focused on increasing diversity and inclusion of different races and genders to create sustainable solutions that work for the population as a whole.

World Blind Union (WBU)

WBU works through 6 regional groups throughout the world each with its president in order to provide aid for blind people worldwide. They work towards three main goals which are: Capacity building, accessibility and Information Sharing. The capacity building focuses on improving employment opportunities and sustainability; accessibility focuses on the infrastructure of countries and the technology that can be put to use; and information sharing focuses on partnership and collaboration between businesses, governments and citizens in order to provide aid. The WBU works with many countries throughout the world including the USA, New Zealand, Spain, France, India, Brazil, Lebanon, South Africa etc. These countries work around 20 central working committees ranging from advocacy work, employment, sustainability and finance. These committees also advocate for human rights, protection in natural disasters, women and youth rights, rehabilitation services as well as technological advances to aid blind people worldwide.

World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)

The WFD works mainly to ensure that the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities is set up to the top of its standard toward deaf people. They participate in both worldwide and nationwide
projects. One of these worldwide projects was The Global Education Preplanning Project on the Human Rights of Disabled People (2007-2008). This initiative identified several needs such as the need to increase awareness, the need to train staff to adapt to the needs of deaf people and empowering disabled people in business and the workplace. One of their smaller-scale projects, however, is the Preparatory Mission in the Maghreb Region. This was a four-day workshop for organisations in Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia to solve problems such as isolation of the deaf in mainstream communities, lack of communication between deaf people and the government as well as increased development of sign language in the region and worldwide.

**People's Republic of China**

China has the highest proportion of disabled people in the world, with 6.34% of the population (85 million people) being disabled. Despite this large number of people, disabled people are still invisible in Chinese Society and are rarely seen in public places. The Chinese government has attempted campaigns and laws in the workplace by creating quotas informing all large businesses to employ disabled people if they have all prior qualifications. However, through all this effort, disabled Chinese people are still rarely seen in society. This is firstly due to discrimination from the general population. For decades, disabled people in China have been called derogatory names such as ‘canfei’ meaning ‘incomplete’ and ‘canji’ meaning disease or sickness. This immediately reduces the inclusion of disabled people into society and they are being forced out of it due to family shame and stigma. A lot of China’s infrastructure is also incredibly unsuitable towards disabled people. Braille is often incorrectly spelt and wrong, ramps are too steep causing those in wheelchairs to fall over and handicapped bathrooms are always occupied with cleaning supplies.

**United Kingdom (UK)**

14 million people in the UK are registered as disabled. The National Health Service in the UK is consistently able to provide healthcare towards disabled people in the UK both under poverty and good financial situations. Within the NHS, the Disability and Wellbeing Network (DAWN) works on 3 main objectives which are: raising awareness, increasing contact and increasing communications through organising activities. Despite this, many disabled people in the UK are unsure about their future due to Brexit. A large proportion of the disabled population relies strongly on social care and one-on-one contact with medical professionals. Unfortunately, 70,000 of these social care staff come from EU nations and so their residency status after Brexit is incredibly uncertain and unclear, and this could lead
to over 100,000 social workers in the UK being lost by 2020. The uncertainty leads people to have to turn to expensive private healthcare to be able to sustain themselves.

Timeline of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>First Paralympics held in Rome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The United Nations Declaration On the Rights of Disabled persons is Ratified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>The United Nations adopts ‘The World Program of Action Concerning the Disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>UN declared international day of disabled persons is December 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities opens up for signatories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948)
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/22/00 3 January 1967)
- The Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (A/RES/34/47 9 December 1975)
- World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (A/RES/37/52 December 1982)
Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

While there has been a few worldwide implemented solutions on the issue of socially progressing the lives of disabled people, a bigger responsibility is placed on government representatives in education, healthcare and social welfare. This is because it can be extremely difficult to determine the need for every single country individually and then finding a worldwide solution using all of this information while still regarding the resources available in a country.

Blanket Approach

Governments do, very often create a very ‘blanket’ approach towards disabilities and tend to treat them all as one disability with one solution, and so this creates extremely simplistic approaches towards the needs of disabled people and they are often not accessed directly. This blanket approach means that individual needs are rarely met and those with rare disabilities are almost never accounted for in society. For example, while ramps for people in wheelchairs might be readily available for people to enter buildings, the inside of the building itself and the infrastructure around it may be completely inaccessible for disabled people. Economically, this is a very cost and time-effective solution as it often does not involve too many details and mainly just implements simple changes in the workplace or infrastructure. This can be extremely useful for those with less severe disabilities as it gives them more opportunity to be included in society and be seen as an equal, however, it creates erasure towards those with rare disabilities as they are almost always neglected and ignored by the rest of society.

Rehabilitation or one time treatment conflict

Many governments also have leaned more towards the option of one-time treatment rather than frequent rehabilitation as it cuts down on costs for them and they would be able to cater to a larger proportion of the population. This is a very unideal approach, especially towards those with mental disabilities who more than often need regular checkups and reminders in things such as physio or speech therapy. While there are many advances in medical care and many disabilities can be cured through surgery or regular medication, rehabilitation is still vital and needed for a large majority of disabilities, especially those which are mental as well as those which have been recently diagnosed. One time treatment, however, when accessible is extremely useful as it cuts down costs in the long run for the individual and family. This form of treatment is also most often used on children as it can prevent them from experiencing worse symptoms as they get older.
Workplace and education quotas

Several governments have often created quotas in workplaces in order to create further inclusion of disabled people in society. Overall, this has proven to be extremely effective as it not only improves the disabled person satisfaction, but it also opens up new opportunities for tolerance and inclusion from their able-bodied co-workers, as disabled people will, as they should be, be further treated as equal in society and be able to participate in everyday activities. However, this is just on a simple surface level. When looking closer into it, this can be extremely problematic towards certain disabled people. While these quotas are put into place, disabled people’s needs in the workplace are often never accommodated. Needs such as shorter hours, time off for treatment and unsuitable infrastructure in buildings can lead many disabled people to choose to stay at home despite being given the option to work, simply because it can be too difficult to even get to their workplace.

Possible Solutions

Increasing Social Protection

Firstly, governments must be able to provide social protection for their disabled population and make their access easy and widely available. This includes insurance, housing and education. As mentioned before, disabled people are far more likely to live in poverty and so having access to welfare and social protection is crucial in order to ensure that this statistic goes down. Furthermore, access to banking and credit is also important to break the cycle of poverty in order to allow disabled persons to spend more on luxury goods rather than just simply spend their money on expensive medical treatment. This can simply be done by increasing government spending on the basic needs of disabled people such as housing, education and healthcare and ensuring that disabled people have easy access to social protective services. This can be further improved by creating online access to social service opportunities as well as creating a system for disabled people in order for them to see what they have access to based on their needs.

Awareness and training

Awareness is also crucial in socially progressing societies for disabled people. One of the biggest problems and barriers that has stopped societies form progressing the lives of disabled people is the stigma and ignorance that has been put against them. One way to do this is by increasing campaigns using media platforms in order to further integrate disabled people into society. This can simply be done through social media posts or advertising campaigns on TV. It’s also important that stigma is reduced.
within education and the workplace. In education especially, if children grow up to learn that their disabled classmates are just like them and are going through the same journey, this can most likely create a rippling effect into adulthood and on future societies to increase acceptance and tolerance towards disabled people. Furthermore, faculty such as teachers should be trained specifically on how to be able to teach children with special needs so that they are not put down against their peers or are made to fall behind on work.

**Access to opportunities and careers**

Increasing access to opportunities can also massively improve social progress for disabled people. This can first be done by providing financial aid or scholarships to those with disabilities for them to be granted the best tertiary education opportunities possible. This can allow them to be further employed in the future, which can also massively reduce the rate of poverty seen with disabled persons. Furthermore, governments should begin implementing quotas in order to allow disabled people to be employed in firms if they have better qualifications than their able-bodied competitors. These opportunities can further be granted by providing better infrastructure for disabled people and this can simply just include more usage of braille, more ramps, having more trained personnel who can use sign language. Most of these changes are very cost-effective and last for long periods. If disabled people feel more included in society, as they should be, they will be far more encouraged to participate in school or work, creating an overall better effect on society as a whole. This, however, may not be entirely effective as disabled people may choose to attend school or work in fear of being discriminated against. Furthermore, more severe disabilities can completely block the person from working or going to school and so possible working from home or online school alternatives must be used, which are becoming more and more available with increased advances in technology. It’s also important that we include programs for adults interested in an education but have not been offered it during their childhood and adolescence due to their disability, therefore allowing them to enter the workforce in the future.

**Stigma and discrimination**

One of the biggest reasons as to why many disabled people tend to be erased from society is due to the large amounts of stigma and discrimination. Able-bodied people can sometimes act as massive causes of stress to disabled people when they are being made fun of or discriminated against. If this is solved, it can be the first step to creating a rippling effect on making society better. This first starts by making disabled people more seen in society through having more media inclusion. Furthermore, it’s important to teach kids at a young age in schools to be accepting of their disabled peers, because if these children grow up with the idea to treat everyone around them as equal and with tolerance, this will...
most likely be an effect that lasts a lifetime. Its also essential that families, especially parents are able to create a support system for their diagnosed children and should focus more on finding their strengths rather than degrading their weaknesses. While this is the most crucial of changes, it's also the most difficult as it can require a lot of work and attention to change the mindset of a population healthily.

Guiding Questions

1. How are disabled people stigmatised in education and the workplace?
2. How is everyday infrastructure unsuitable for certain disabilities?
3. How often is there awareness about disabled people in the media?
4. Are there many facilities that provide financial aid for disabled people worldwide?

Bibliography


**Appendix or Appendices**


*This website offers resources about the CRPD. It has many UN published resources about progress they have done to help disabled people worldwide, their successes and failures as well as why they did them in the first place.*


*This is a UN published report with infographics about situations about disabled people worldwide in 2018. It’s fairly recent so it can be useful for delegates if they want any extra information or statistics about their specific delegations.*