

# Handout I

## MODELS OF DISABILITY

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### HOW TO USE THIS HANDOUT

Use this handout with the following activity:

- **Defining disability**

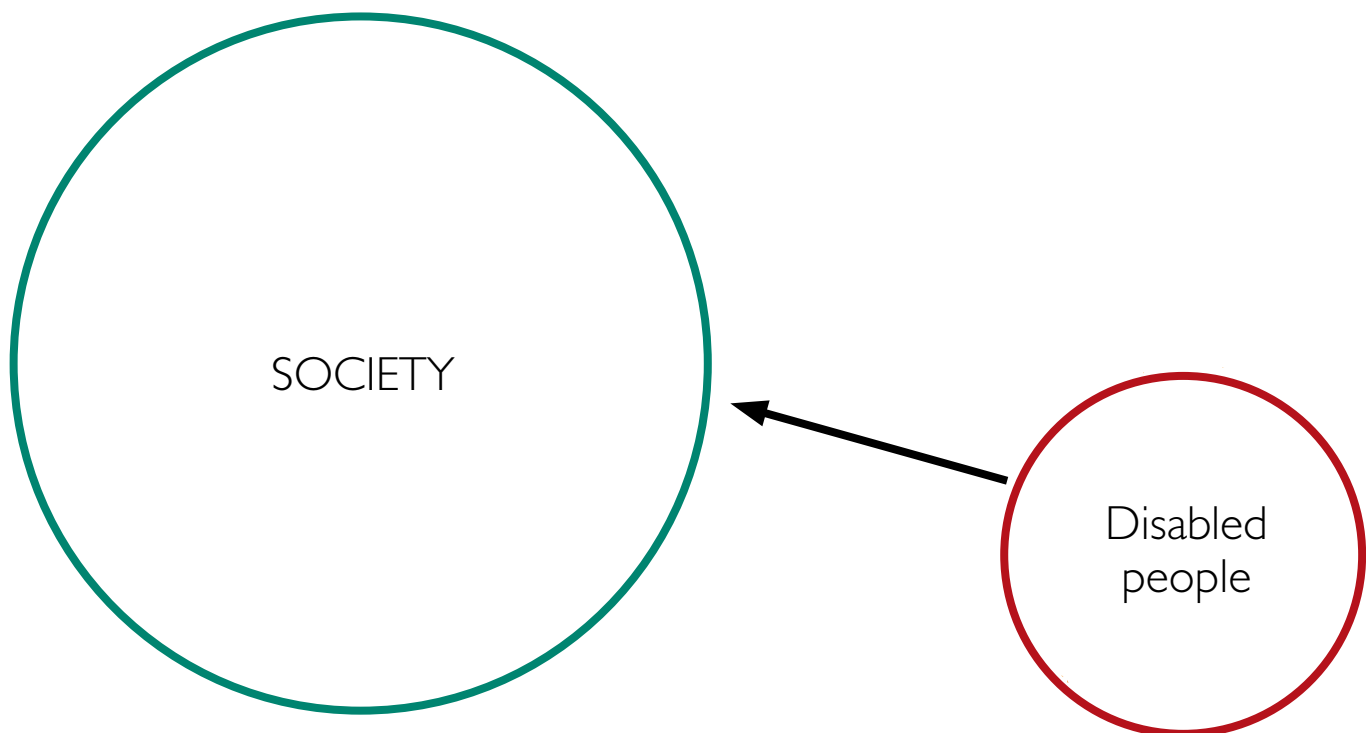
### INTRODUCTION

Everyone has a right to such things as health, education and income generation. But the needs of disabled people have traditionally been treated as separate and specialised which has put them outside mainstream society. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities challenges this narrow approach. The emphasis for inclusion is placed on society rather than on disabled people. They should be seen as whole people with the same needs as others, able to choose how they are supported.

There are three ways disability has been approached in development. The first two models – medical and charity approaches – focus on barriers to participation being with the disabled individual. The third way – the social model – focuses on barriers being with society's view of disabled people.

# Handout 1

## INDIVIDUAL MODELS: **MEDICAL APPROACH**



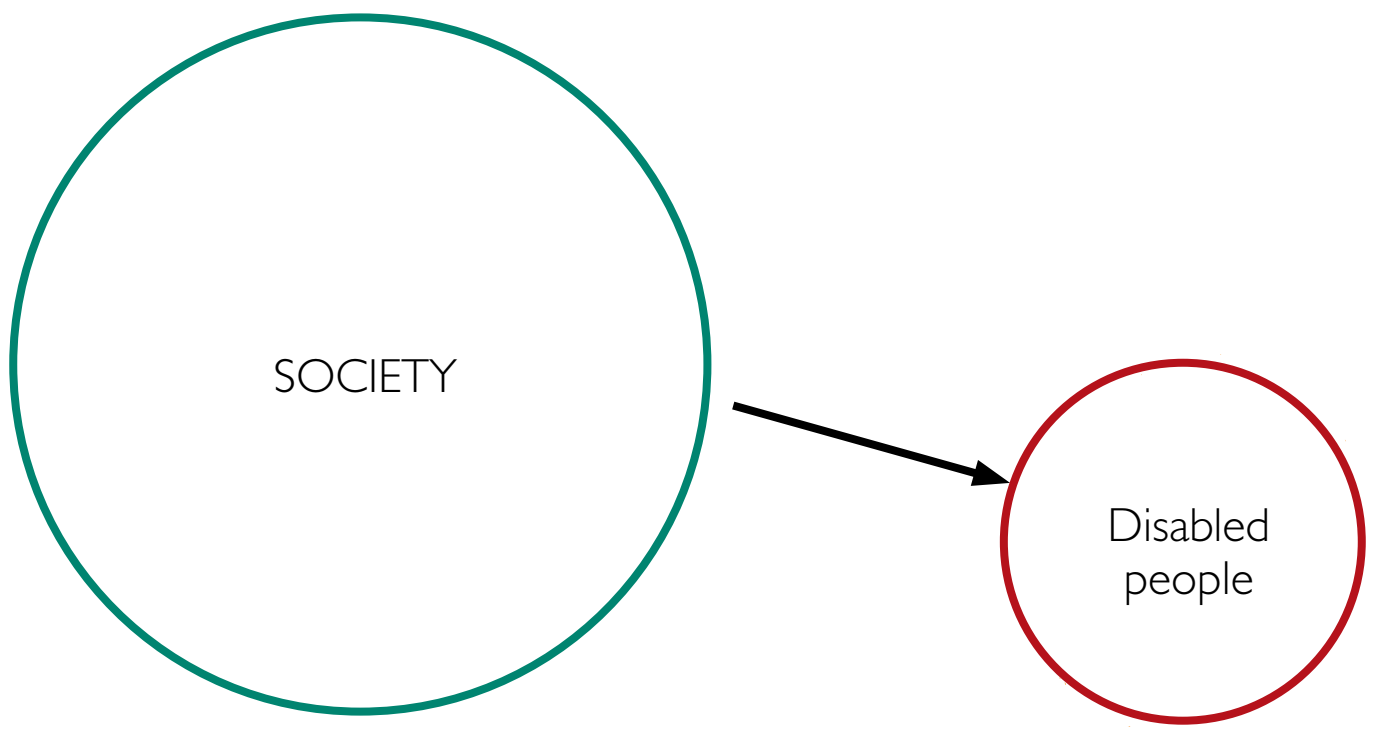
Activities 'fix' disabled person, who is 'sick', so they can join 'normal' society

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- **disability is a problem in the person**
- a traditional understanding of disability
- focuses on a person's impairment as the obstacle
- seeks to 'cure' or 'improve' individuals to 'fit' them into society
- defines the disabled person only as a patient with medical needs
- segregates disabled people from the mainstream
- offers only medical help, carried out by specialists
- expensive, tends to benefit relatively few

# Handout 1

## INDIVIDUAL MODELS: **CHARITY APPROACH**



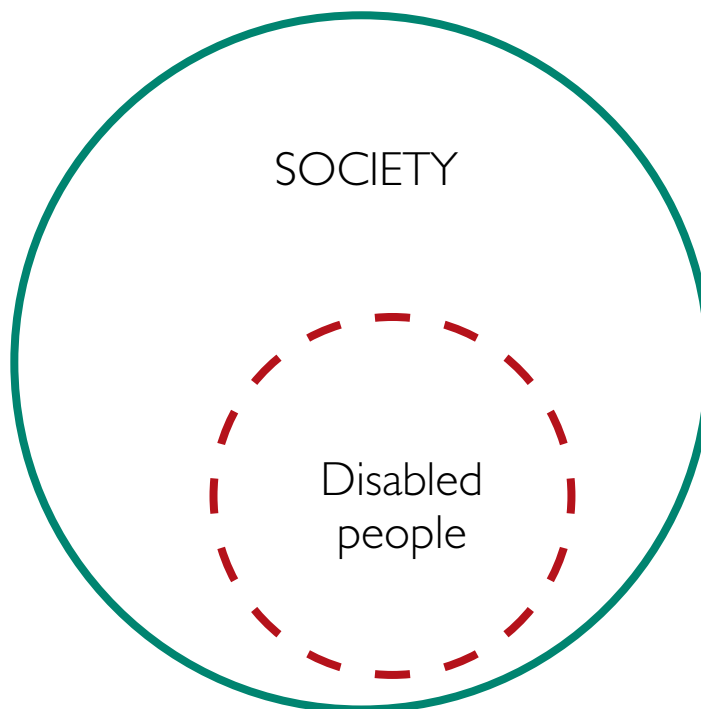
Activities 'help' disabled person who is 'helpless' and outside 'normal' society

- **disability is a problem in the person**
- they are seen as 'unfortunate', 'dependent' or 'helpless'
- they are regarded as people who need pity and charity
- assumes people with impairments cannot contribute to society or support themselves
- provides them largely with money or gifts, such as food or clothing
- disabled people become long-term recipients of welfare and support
- aid provided by specialist organisations not mainstream development
- disabled people viewed and kept as separate group

# Handout 1

SOCIAL MODEL:

## **INCLUSIVE APPROACH**



Activities focus on inclusion – disabled people are part of society

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- **focuses on society, not disabled people, as the problem**
- regards disabled people as part of society, rather than separate
- people are disabled by society denying their rights and opportunities
- sees disability as the social consequences of impairment
- disabled people's needs and rights are the same as non-disabled people's – e.g. love, education, employment
- activities focus on identifying and removing attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers that block inclusion