

PREFACE

This book presents new research on disability, health, and wellbeing in four countries. The primary focus is empirical. It also makes a conceptual contribution as it presents a new model of disability based on the human development and capability approach.

The audience for this book are academic researchers and policymakers interested in disability, poverty, global health, and wellbeing issues in general and in low-income countries in particular. The book can also be used as a teaching tool for students in development economics, development studies, disability studies, or global health courses.

There are other volumes dedicated to disability and international development (e.g., Grech 2015, MacLachlan and Swartz 2009, Stone 1999). This book differs from these previous efforts in that it exploits new internationally comparable data on disability in low-income countries and offers a quantitative analysis. To my knowledge, it is also the first book on disability set in the context of the human development and capability approach, where human development refers to the expansion of freedoms (Sen 1999). My aim is to offer a new way of understanding global disability issues through the capability approach and panel datasets.

The ideas and methods in this book grew out of my work on disability and wellbeing over the past 15 years. I am grateful to several valued collaborators I have learned from and enjoyed working with. First, I owe many thanks to the late Monroe Berkowitz for inspiring me to work in the field of disability when I worked for the Program for Disability Research

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I had the opportunity to present different parts of the book manuscript and related results at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the 2015 and 2016 Annual Conferences of the Human Development and Capability Association, at Fordham University, Kolkata Institute of Development Studies, St Gallen University and the World Bank. Comments and questions received by participants on each of these occasions helped refine the analysis presented here. I am also very grateful for comments on the entire draft from Somnath Chatterji, James English, Jill Hanass-Hancock, Nora Groce, Daniel Mont, Julius Omona and Tom Shakespeare, and on drafts of selected chapters from Barbara Altman, Vandana Chaudhry, Kim Hopper, Eileen McGinn, Gerald Oriol Jr and Jean-François Trani. Last, but not least, I am grateful to Richard Mukaga who shared his life story to provide examples for several points made in this book.

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