

“Addressing the needs of children with complex communication needs and their partners in areas of extreme poverty: To Haiti and back”

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Disability in Low-and Middle-Income Nations

- ◆ 15% of the world’s population, or 1 billion people, experience some form of disability (World Health Organization, 2011)
- ◆ Individuals with disabilities are at significant risk for living in poverty (World Health Organization, 2011)
- ◆ Two-thirds of individuals who live below the international poverty line live in low-and middle-income nations (Rank & Yadama, 2007)
- ◆ According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities all individuals with disabilities have the right to freedom of expression and access to information using communication systems (United Nations, 2006)

Disability in Low-and Middle-Income Nations

- ◆ However, many individuals with communication disabilities, especially those who live in extreme poverty:
 - ◆ Are excluded from participation in daily activities
 - ◆ Have limited access to health care, education, and employment opportunities
- (World Health Organization & The World Bank, 2011; United Nations, 2006)

AAC in Low- and Middle-Income Nations

- ◆ AAC strategies can serve as tools to achieve basic freedoms and maximize participation in society
- ◆ The field of speech-language pathology is in its infancy in many low-and middle-income nations (Muttiah, 2015)
- ◆ Many opportunities exist for SLPs to travel to low resource areas on volunteer programs with non-profit organizations and university programs.
 - ◆ It is essential that individuals who participate in these trips are astutely aware of the needs of these highly vulnerable populations

Cultural Humility Approach

- ◊ A mechanism that can be used to develop **cultural competence**
- ◊ Comprised of three tenants:
 - ◊ **Self-awareness:** consideration of how one's background, beliefs, values, experiences, and biases shape the lens one uses to view the world
 - ◊ **Openness:** willingness to learn and acknowledge the cultural experiences and perceptions unique to each individual
 - ◊ **Transcendence:** "acceptance of something greater than self" (Morris, et al., 2005, p. 1331) and recognition that each individual plays a unique role within the process of achieving a common goal (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005; Ortega & Faller, 2011)



1. Consider the impact of poverty on the family's and child's sociocultural background

Haiti and Extreme Poverty

- ◊ Haiti is considered the **poorest country in the Americas** (World Bank, 2016)
- ◊ **54%** of the population lives **below the international poverty line** (UNICEF, 2016)
- ◊ **Adult literacy rate of 48.7%** (UNICEF, 2013)
- ◊ **2010 earthquake is second highest cause of disability** in the country (Danquah et al., 2014)

2. Consider access to goods and services



3. Work within a team to ensure the provision of ongoing, collaborative support



4. Investigate the strengths, needs, and goals of all stakeholders



5. Provide meaningful and relevant instruction to individuals with CCN and their communication partners



6. Create and evaluate sustainable AAC practices



