T14P05 / Disability Inclusive Policy Development in the Asia Pacific Region

Topic : T14 / GENDER, DIVERSITY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Chair : Jennifer Smith-Merry (University of Sydney)

Second Chair : Helen Dickinson (University of New South Wales)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

State policy is often utilised as a mechanism to implement international conventions within local contexts. 185 countries internationally have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), including all countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The UNCRPD provides a set of principles that state parties are to adopt to ensure the rights of people with disability and the UN monitors the establishment of legislation and policies which support these rights. However, implementation often falls short of policy expectations. Both mechanistic and interpretive reasoning has been applied to understand continued policy failure and offer solutions (e.g. Steele, 2019; Verdugo et al, 2017). Disabled people and disability representative organisations have consistently noted that despite signing up to international expectations for disability inclusion, such as those expressed through the UNCRPD, local experiences do not match this. Further, in many cases the voices of people with disability are not central in policy design or implementation processes. All too often this means that the priorities for people with disability are not reflected in policy.

Disability is an under-acknowledged cause of marginalisation and poverty in developing and developed countries alike but is not always a core focus of current public policy research (Grech, 2009). This panel specifically focuses on centring discussions of disability as a case through which we can explore policy implementation for marginalised populations more broadly. This panel will focus on the ways that policies in countries in the Asia Pacific region foster the inclusion of people with disability and the barriers and enablers to implementation. We centre the discussion in the Asia Pacific region as a way of drawing attention to policy realities of countries outside of the existing Europe-North America contexts that dominate the policy research landscape.

Papers will focus on the following research questions to explore which circumstances impact disability policy implementation:

1. What strategies are most effective in creating policies that lead to effective implementation for disability inclusion?

2. How can people with disability be best included in policy implementation?

3. How can disability inclusion be prioritised in policy in low-resource settings?

4. What barriers exist to implementation of the UNCRPD goals in policy?

5. How does a focus on disability help us better understand policy design and implementation for marginalised populations?

References:

Steel, E. J. (2019). The duplicity of choice and empowerment: disability rights diluted in Australia's policies on assistive technology. Societies, 9(2), 39.

Verdugo, M. A., Jenaro, C., Calvo, I., & Navas, P. (2017). Disability policy implementation from a cross-cultural perspective. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 55(4), 234-246.

Grech, S. (2009). Disability, poverty and development: Critical reflections on the majority world debate. Disability & Society, 24(6), 771-784.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel aims to create a forum through which to explore factors that impact the implementation of disability policy in the Asia-Pacific region. We focus on disability because it is an area of international policy attention, with a clear international imperative to act, including through the United Nations Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but where most countries have not successfully enacted policies to meet these rights.

Accordingly, we welcome papers that focus on research related to any aspect of disability policy in the Asia Pacific region. Our forum centres on the Asia Pacific region to draw attention to policy realities and innovations outside of the Europe-North America contexts that dominate the much of the policy research landscape.

We are interested in how the circumstances of policy making, along with the local contexts in which policy is to be implemented impact the effectiveness of the policy. We welcome both empirical and conceptual work, including 'blue-sky' perspectives which rethink the way that policy should be made.

The following research questions can be used to guide thinking around the topic, but we are open to papers that focus on any area of disability policy implementation:

1. What strategies are most effective in creating policies that lead to effective implementation for disability inclusion? This

2. How can people with disability be best included in policy implementation?

3. How can disability inclusion be prioritised in policy in low-resource settings?

4. What barriers exist to implementation of the UNCRPD goals in policy?

We encourage participation from presenters who have disability and live and research in low- and middle-income countries.