

Policies on Gender in Relation to Disability: the Case of Spain

María del Carmen Martín Cano
Yolanda María de la Fuente Robles

Biographical sketch **Martín Cano. PhD in Social Work. Researcher with GEDEX group, Council of Andalucía/Universidad de Jaén.**

De la Fuente Robles. PhD in Law. EU Professor in Social Work and Social Services. Universidad de Jaén.

Abstract

Disability is an important factor of discrimination, and if we add the matter of gender, we find women with disabilities suffer double discrimination, placing them in an inequable situation compared to the population in general and to men with disabilities specifically. For this reason, through the present article, following an in-depth analysis of the binomial disability-gender, as variables to be taken into account due to the double discrimination which being a women with a disability means, the policies carried out at the international, European and national level are presented, using a triple classification: Policies for persons with disabilities; Policies of equal opportunities for women and men (with or without disabilities) and Policies for women with disabilities.

Keywords: Disability, gender, public policies.



1. Introduction

Among the many factors which may bring on situations of discrimination (gender, religion, age, origin, etc), disability is a very important factor to keep in mind, since it is socially conceived as a result of disadvantage when it is time to participate within society in equal opportunities, becoming an even more serious problem with added on factors. Therefore, if to the intrinsic difficulties faced by persons with disabilities, we add the matter of gender we find that women with disabilities face an especially intense double discrimination with the convergence of two important discriminatory factors: gender and disability, thus producing, an exponential effect of their inequality within society. (Sastre, Moral and Giménez, 2012)

In this sense, while there has been considerable progress in policies of gender equality and policies aimed at persons with disabilities, the situation of women with disabilities is not sufficiently known or recognized, leading to insufficient regulations protecting their rights and needs. Within the present legal framework there is an insufficient correlation between policies aimed at gender equality and those aimed at persons with disabilities, despite the significant progress being made with intervention in both spheres. As indicated in the I Plan de Acción Integral para las Mujeres con Discapacidad en Andalucía (1st Integral Plan of Action for Women with Disabilities in Andalucía) (2008-2013: 31) which says that we may talk about the parallel evolution of two lines which never seem to touch. This is reflected, as we shall see later on, in the main normative instruments developed over the past years at all levels (international, European, national and regional).

Accordingly, to analyze disabilities from the perspective of gender is nowadays a necessary matter, so that women and girls with disabilities are made visible. Traditionally they are forgotten, by gender studies as well as by research on disabilities, which makes for a double discrimination which affects the collective. All in all, following Soler, Tixeira and Jaime (2008), in spite of the fact that almost 60% of the total of persons with disabilities in Spain is women, the reality of these women has been defined by two key factors: invisibility and double discrimination. Therefore, the need to combine gender and disability is unquestionable since it will allow us to learn the reality of this great collective of women who also bear the label of disabled.

2. An in-depth look at the binomial disability-gender

According to the information available in various statistical sources on disabilities and the research carried out in preparation for writing the present article, we are sure that disabilities, among others, is closely related to the variables of gender and age. Thus, according to data obtained for the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Institute of Statistics) in 2012, we see a greater prevalence of disabilities among women (20.0%) than among men (13.3%) and although this fact is present at all age levels, beginning at the age of 35, the differences become more significant.

According to this data, until the range of 46-54 years, the rates of disabilities are slightly higher for men. However, this situation is inverted beginning with 54 year old women, progressing with age until it is double the rate for men, showing that the gender variable is significant in the analysis of dis-

abilities. Therefore, we are faced with dual problems: disability-gender, which, as a result, requires research which from the beginning incorporates the perspective of gender mainstreaming.

With respect to the differences seen on matters of gender and age, following Huete (2011), we point out this is fundamentally due to two factors:

- a) In the first stages of life men are more exposed to accidents, so up until 44 years disabilities are more common in men.
- b) Women have a longer life expectancy which increases their possibilities of becoming dependent as they age.

Moreover, in order to place the problems women with disabilities go through as a consequence of said binominal, we shall carefully look at the evolution analytical models of disabilities have undergone, from the medical model and the social model, to the critical model or model of human rights which prevails today.

Thus, through this brief explanation of the models of disabilities, we can observe the connection with the paradigms which have explained the phenomenon of disabilities in each historic moment, obviously without considering each historical phase and its respective theoretical approach as isolated one from another, but rather as elements which have repercussions on the daily life of many people with disabilities. The medical model defines disability as a defect, an inherent problem a person has, directly caused by disease, and thus the objective was based on, through welfare means, curing, prevention and adapting the person, considering medical care and reha-

Table 1 Explanatory models of disability

Medical model	Biological rehabilitation-prevention. Concentrates on the illness. There is a medical-biological report
Social model	Gestures of the social environment to the Disability deficit=social action
Critical/Human Rights model	Complements the previous models. Positive report on the identity of the person. Everyone is capable in the face of the multiple, changing demands of society.

Source: My own elaboration based on data obtained from: Iniesta, 2004; Soler, Teixeira and Jaime, 2008; JA, 2008

ilitation to be the main aspects and in consequence the governmental concentrated on reforming healthcare policies.

On the other hand, the social model, as its name indicates, considers disability to be a socially constructed problem, in which conditions and aspects related to the physical and social environment converge. Therefore its objectives are focused on social integration, through the necessary modifications in the surroundings so that persons with disabilities can participate fully in all aspects of life. Here we run into a problem, among others, of human rights (Soler, Teixeira and Jaime, 2008).

Finally we have the critical or human rights model which, without excluding the medical model or the social model, but rather operating jointly with both, strengthens the rest of the identities of persons with disabilities. Obviously, in the XXI century, when we

talk about disabilities, we are referring directly to human rights, these being understood not merely as a declaration of intentions but as a real fight for these rights.

Therefore, faced with the problem of disabilities, it is necessary to make a rapprochement, not only from the legal/guarantor point of view, but also from an active position which understands the reality faced by millions of people around the world, who every day come up against multiple difficulties which prevent the total development of their rights and capabilities. Thus, if we conceive of disabilities as a result of a social process, in which various dimensions combine (age, gender, social participation, job, etc.) we find ourselves faced with a collective in a permanent state of risk of social exclusion. According to Huete (2011), one of the dimensions which significantly reflects the disadvantageous position faced by a woman with a disability is the workplace. Access to the productive world is a key element in living a life with equal opportunities. However, according to information in statistical studies,¹ women with disabilities have an em-

ployment rate of 23.3%, while men have 31.4%. The difference obviously shows that the rate increases exponentially if we compare the employment rate of women without disabilities (54.1%). This once again shows that together with various other dimensions which affect the life of persons with disabilities, the gender variable should be prioritized in the analysis of women's situations and consequently measures should be adopted in this respect. However, despite the fact that it is estimated that one billion persons in the world have some kind of disability, of which approximately 70% are women (WHO and World Bank, 2011), there is little statistical data on the situation of persons with disabilities in Europe and the level of their participation in society. Therefore, this hampers knowing what the causes of their social exclusion are, at the European as well as the national level.

The lack of information on the number of women with disabilities makes it very hard to know their specific needs in various aspects of life (educational, job-related, health, social, etc.) which in turn hinders the adequate elaboration, implementation and evaluation of policies which are meant to answer their specific needs. Certainly, the scarce or null information on the situation of women with disabilities that can be seen in the periodic reports requested by the states parties to the Convention of the United Nations on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (Quinn and Degener, 2002) confirm the need for more in-depth studies which make the situation of multiple discrimination faced by women with disabilities

¹ In 2010 the National Institute of Statistics, in collaboration with the IMSERSO, Comité Español de Representantes de Personas con Discapacidad (CERMI) (Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities) and the ONCE Foundation, published the statistical study "El empleo de las personas con discapacidad" (Employment of persons with disabilities) (INE, 2010). This study was the first edition of an initiative which would be annual. For its elaboration, statistical data was used jointly from the Encuesta de Poblacion Activa (Survey of the Active Population) (EPA) and administrative data registered in the Base de Datos Estatal de Personas con Discapacidad (State Database on Persons with Disabilities) (BEPD). The data used in this section are from the report presented by the INE in June 2012. It must be pointed out that while the graphs are desaggregated by gender, in the press release of June 2012, through which INE

made the results of the 2011 study public, the main results were given for all persons with disabilities without making reference to differences by sex.

along with the various factors which trigger them from a more holistic point of view more visible. However, the lack of information does not prevent us from verifying the situation of inequality faced by women and girls with

disabilities. In fact, in the following table we will see, among other things, some of the most significant differences that women with disabilities face compared to women without disabilities.

Table 1 Differences between women with and without disabilities

Absence-prohibition of roles and arbitrary social values placed on women
Greater overprotection than for women without disabilities
More deterioration in self-esteem and self-image
More physical, emotional, economic and social dependence
Introjections of prejudices, myths, guilt
Anxiety when they experiment sexual concerns
More isolation and as a result fewer opportunities
Lack of training in socially acceptable behavior
More fears about sexuality
Less social respect in relation to their reproductive rights
Sterilization without authorization
More risk of their suffering emotional and sexual and other violence
Less knowledge on where and how to obtain pleasure
More poverty and illiteracy
Greater probabilities of being unemployed
Greater probability of forming a family compared to men with disabilities
Less access to rehabilitation
Less support from the family
Less access to work and education
Fewer probabilities of marrying or having a partner
Fewer probabilities of motherhood and support in this area
Less support when her orientation is not heterosexuality

Source: Oliver, 2007; Huete, 2011.

Undoubtedly, just like any other person, each woman with a disability is different from every other woman and each one has her own life experience. They have many aspects in common, mainly those derived from the social image they have, of the stereotypes of women and of people with disabilities which come into play and intersect, and affect them and contribute to discrimination against them. In this regard, despite the important steps forward which

are being made in the matter of policies of gender equality and policies aimed at persons with disabilities, data shows the distance women with disabilities still have to go compared to the general population and to women without disabilities, specifically.

Therefore, disabilities, understood as social phenomenon, are constructed and affect women and men differently, thus making it difficult for women with disabilities to develop fairly and equally in relation



to men, with or without disabilities, and other women. At best they can expect partial development. As an analytical element, the focus on gender is centered on the basis of feminist theory, providing the analysis, interpretation and explanation of disabilities, gender mainstreaming, in a way that discrimination faced by women in this situation specifically is made visible. Nevertheless, uncovering reality from the perspective of gender is not easy, while at the same time prioritizing social relations which are established between men and women since the equality between them, with or without disabilities, takes on two forms:

- Formal equality established by various norms.
- Real equality faced by women in everyday life at the family, social, job-related, etc. level.

We find various studies on analyzing disability from the perspective of gender (Campling 1979, 1981; Lonsdale 1990; Morris, 1996; García, 2004; Moya, 2004; López, 2005; Soler, Teixeira and Jaime, 2008; IAM, 2010).² All of these studies tend to place disabilities in a social context, in which they recommend that all necessary resources for women with disabilities should be used in order for these women to come out from their "invisibility,"

² For more information on women and disabilities in the academic sphere, see:

- Leeds University [<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disabilitystudies/archiveuk/titles.htm>]
- Center for Research on Women with Disabilities (CROWD) of Baylor College of Medicine, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation [<http://www.bcm.edu/crowd/>]
- Center on Human Policy [<http://thechp.syr.edu/wpreface.htm>]

so that their reality be known in order for them to negotiate the difficulties which prevent their access to full work, cultural, social, political, educational, etc. life, in equal circumstances with the rest of the population (men, with or without disabilities and women without disabilities). On the other hand, from the normative point of view, we find ourselves faced without much relation between the binomial gender-disability and, as a consequence, in the face of insufficient statistical information which would lead us to learning the reality of women and girls with disabilities as well as the kinds of discrimination they face. According to Sastre, Moral and Giménez (2012), in order to negotiate the obstacles which prevent women with disabilities from fully participating on equal footing with other people in all walks of life, it is necessary to carry out a mixed strategy which, through mechanisms of awareness, of reconsidering the measures of equality and the design of policies with gender perspectives, with respect to disability as well to equality, the rights and freedom established in the Convention of the United Nations on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, will be guaranteed.

In keeping with what has been presented and with CERMI (2014), women with disabilities face a reality with many more obstacles than men with disabilities which leads to various situations of discrimination and specific difficulties as can be seen in the following table.

Table 2 Specific difficulties faced by women with disabilities

Difficulty	Consequence
Overprotection by the family	Appearance of difficulties which prevent carrying out an independent life, such as establishing social relationships. In consequence, many women with disabilities are left in a position of social isolation. Thus, they develop less autonomy and decision making abilities than men with disabilities and than the general population.
Barriers	There are obvious differences in barriers depending on the kind of disabilities. Thus, women with sensorial disabilities are more affected by barriers of access to information and women with physical disabilities are more affected by architectonic barriers* with the consequent inaccessibility to various services and resources (malls, transportation, gynecology offices, women's refuges).
Access to employment	Implies economic dependence whether through pensions which are less than minimum wages and/or the administration of their own incomes by the family, which perpetuates their situation of invisibility and dependence.
Access to formation	Women with disabilities find it harder to access formation, in relation to men with disabilities and of course when compared to the general public. This derives in a high rate of functional or total illiteracy among them. The social perception of people with disabilities carries zero stimulation for participating in formative processes and training.
Corporal Image	Above all women with physical disabilities manifest the value society gives to body image, resulting in a process of negation of sexuality as well as diminishing self-esteem since their image is not in keeping with socially established beauty, thanks to the scarce or null sexual education they received.
Social Relations	Disability has a negative influence on the development of social relations, accentuated in the relationship of a couple. As was mentioned earlier, women with disabilities are socially considered sexless beings and not reproductive. This generalized concept results in lessened self-esteem, which may be translated into a reduced possibility of access to various social and work spheres.**.

* For further information on accessibility, see: De la Fuente, Y. M. (2012). *Accesibilidad* Hernández-Gallán, M., (coord). In *Manual de la transversalidad de género en las políticas públicas de discapacidad*.

** See the qualitative report on the situation of women with disabilities, Departamento de la Mujer. Confederación andaluza de personas con discapacidad físico y orgánico. CANF-COCEMEE. Andalucía, 2008, p. 11. Available at http://www.canfandalucia.org/pulic/meidaExhchange/Documentos,Informa_cualitativo.pdf

Source: my own making.

As can be seen in Table 2, the social perception of women with disabilities (asexual, little intellectual capacity, job-related and relational, etc.) emphasizes discrimination, at least twice as much (due to the condition of being a woman and the condition of being a person with a disability), faced by women, young women and girls with disabilities. Thus, when compared to men with disabilities and the rest of the population in general, women with disabilities are at a disadvan-

tage and face multiple forms of discrimination which are necessary to fully understand in order to adopt the necessary measures for its eradication. However, in spite of this obvious reality, obstacles to identifying the multiple discriminatory factors which affect women with disabilities are essentially derived from two concrete facts:

- a) Women with disabilities, like their demands and necessities, are considered a

subgroup within the collective of persons with disabilities with the subsequent exclusion that this implies.

- b) The variables of gender and disability are analyzed in parallel and independently by collectives of women and people with disabilities, respectively.

Thus, the feminine movement fundamentally fights for the rights of women in general, without any special attention paid to minorities such as women with disabilities. On the other hand, the movement of people with disabilities directs its efforts to fighting against the discrimination faced by the collective in general, without taking into account the specific situation of women who are a part of this collective. As we shall see in the following section, no normative coordination has been created which transversally joins focus on gender and on disabilities

3. Policies of gender versus *políticas* equality vs policies of disabilities

The significant evolution over the past years in the issue of policies of equality has been in parallel processes to the people or collective which they are aimed at. Sastre, Moral and Giménez (2012) and in the 1st Plan for Integral action for Women with Disabilities of Andalucía (2008-2013), three important groups or normative categories have developed:

1. Policies for persons with disabilities.
2. Policies for equality and equal opportunities for men and women (with or without disabilities).
3. Policies for women with disabilities.

While, as we mentioned earlier, the incorporation of the perspective of gender in policies on disabilities is notoriously deficient, almost null, we can point out the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 (CDPD)** as a starting point in a brief process of change in the matter of policies aimed at persons with disabilities. Since then and together with the progressive development of anti-discriminatory legislation, new ideological and structural focus has been perceived in government and legislative actions. According to Sastre, Moral and Giménez (2012, 43) to this event of unquestionable political, social and legal value, a triple dimension should be added.

- a) The implication for society as a political, transforming subject which is co-responsible for the general wellbeing of the people.
- b) The implementation of an active policy designed to fight discrimination and promote equal opportunities for women with disabilities by means of various and varied actions.
- c) A renovated plan of the Third Sector which assures the total inclusion and participation of women with disabilities in its organizational and operative structure.³

In this way and within the international context of Human Rights, disabilities will be

³ For more information see: The European Disability Strategy, 2010-2020, a renewed commitment of a barrier-free Europe, published in the Official Journal of the European Union on November 15, 2010 and the Spanish Strategy on Disability 2012-2020, and dictated by the Real Patronato sobre Discapacidad (Royal Board on Disability), Madrid, 2011.

conceived as the result of the process of exclusion of a determined collective of persons within the great human diversity. This change in paradigm towards a social model of rights calls for normative adjustments and specific measures which take into account the issue of gender, allowing those persons with disabilities to achieve full and effective equality. In this sense, due to international relevance, the CDPD is a key step towards equal treatment of persons with disabilities. Due to the binding character of the Convention as well as its Optional Protocol, the States which ratified it should adapt their legal regulations in order to adjust them to the same, approve measures which promote the human rights of persons with disabilities and eliminate any practice which is in violation of these rights.

In keeping with various documents analyzed,⁴ we can confirm that the convention goes beyond the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993; the latter provides a clear example of the slow and still deficient evolution undergone by

incorporation of the principle of gender equality in international policies for persons with disabilities. Despite the fact that in the preamble reference is made to the regulations which would eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, designed to "safeguard the rights of girls and women with disabilities," specific mention to these principles is not made in the article, which, far from including gender mainstreaming, hardly mentions the double discrimination of women, young women and girls with disabilities; since only two concrete spheres are mentioned: family and education and personal integrity.

However, achieving an international legal instrument of this nature has probably been one of the most difficult jobs faced by the movement of persons with disabilities since, despite the common claims of various States, its translation of rights in one normative text has presented serious difficulties, above all, when dealing with the inclusion of the rights of women, young women and girls with disabilities. During the process of negotiation of the Convention there was strong opposition by some international delegations to incorporating gender streaming in the articles of the text, a difficulty which had to be fought in order to assure, at least formally, the acknowledgement of the rights of women with disabilities, an objective which in spite of its establishment as a priority of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing-Peking in 1995, was only partially achieved. Many delegations thought it unnecessary to make reference to the situation of women since it had already been put down in the Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1981. Finally, the solution which

⁴ Among others the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006; The Organic Law 3/2007, March 22, for the effective equality of men and women; Formación en género y discapacidad, Junta de Andalucía (Formation of gender and disability, Council of Andalucía); Plan de Acción Integral para las Mujeres con Discapacidad de Andalucía 2008-2013 (Integral Plan for Women with disabilities of Andalucía 2008-2013); Olivenza Report, 2010; Boletín Estatal del Observatorio de la Discapacidad (State Bulletin on the Observatory of Disability), nos. 3/2011 and 4/2012, CERMI, 2012; The European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life.

was agreed upon consisted of including in the Preamble reference to this respect as well as two specific articles which make direct reference to the matter.⁵

Likewise, in comparison to the predecessor, Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, the CDPD acknowledges as discrimination due to disabilities, the non-compliance with reasonable adjustments, pointing out the need for incorporating specific measures in order to achieve real equality for persons with disabilities. It is important to point out the reinforcement made with respect to gender mainstreaming by including equality between men and women as general principles, as well as the incorporation of the variable of age in the gender-disability binomial.

Nevertheless, while the Convention specifies gender mainstreaming in parts of the rights acknowledged by the international agreement, it is clearly insufficient with respect to the perspective of gender in policies on disabilities, above all, because it does not deal with fundamental aspects of women's development, such as the domestic aspect, nor the job-related aspect. Thus, like the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CDPD), assumes the concept of equal opportunities as the basis of non-discrimination, establishing a sphere of protection of the rights of persons with disabilities which would be implemented through national legislation of the States who ratified it. Thus, in the policies

⁵ For more information see the Preamble and Articles 6 and 28.

the fight against discrimination which are developed at the state level, should take into account the perspective of gender mainstreaming.

Oddly enough, in 2008, while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was celebrating its 60th anniversary, in Spain the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into effect. However, while these rights are conceived as legitimate, there is still a long way to go in obtaining this goal. Obviously they are not taken from a transversal point of view, but rather through the aspects established by the persistence of the concrete collective of the fight in favor of the rights of women and girls with disabilities which have been taken into account in so relevant an instrument at the international level. Since then many proposals, studies and analysis have been made in Spain on the impact said Convention might have on national legislation. Among others, the proposal carried out by the CERMI, and taken before the Comision de Políticas Integrales de la Discapacidad en el Congreso de los Diputados (Commission of Integral Policies on Disability of the Chamber of Deputies) in which the approval of a transversal law which adjusts the Spanish legal code to conform to the mandates and commitments of the CDPD.

Now that this instrument of international prestige has been analyzed, and considering it a key starting point for incorporating gender mainstreaming in policies of disability, we will proceed to a brief analytical review of the rest of the policy-normative instruments developed in the field of disability and gender, following the same categorization as was previously used.



3.1. Persons with disabilities

In Europe

European Action Plan on Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities 2004–2010, which while acknowledging multi-discrimination faced by women with disabilities, does not incorporate the objective of gender equality in a transversal form. However, once acknowledged, there is a commitment to include it at a second stage.

In Spain

Law 51/2003, December 2, Igualdad de Oportunidades, No Discriminación y Accesibilidad Universal de las Personas con Discapacidad (Equal Opportunities, Non-discrimination and Universal Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities), developed through the 1st National Plan for Accessibility (2004–2012) and the 2nd Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities (2003–2007), following the example of the supranational norms, the reference to gender equality is practically null. In this case, only in Article 8.2 is it mentioned in justification of the strategy for fighting discrimination based on the placing of positive measures of action. While in the 2nd Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities, 2003–2007 some progress can be seen, in section 2.3, with respect to general principles: Establishing respect for gender diversity and perspective as one of its basic principles; the explicit acknowledgement of the situation of women with disabilities and the establishing of gender mainstreaming measures and positive ac-

tion. These principles were put into practice through various actions⁶ which while taking into account some of its implications, did not introduce full rigor of the strategy of gender mainstreaming.

Law 39/2006, December 14, de Promoción de la Autonomía Personal y Atención a las Personas en situación de dependencia (Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Attention for Persons in Situations of Dependency), presented as the fourth pillar of the State of Wellbeing, part of the acknowledgement of an important positive principle: individual subjective rights of all persons in situations of dependence to receive attention. This created great expectations, above all among women due to their present day condition as principle caregivers, and also as the main recipients of this care.

Law 26 (2011, August 1, de adaptación normativa a la Convención Internacional sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad (Normative Adaptation to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), assumes the change of paradigm of the focus

⁶ Among other actions we can point out: generating data broken down by sex; the incorporation of the perspective of gender for analyzing the reality of persons with disabilities; considering the impact gender has on the actions of public services (employment, etc.) as reference for follow-up and evaluation of the efficiency of policies and practices against the discrimination of persons with disabilities; introducing gender perspective in formative programs and in special employment centers; awareness actions, formation and awareness on double discrimination; measures of positive action and attention to mistreatment; and elaboration and approval of the Primer Plan de Acción "Mujer y Discapacidad" (First Plan of Action "Women and Disabilities").

of policies on disabilities which definitively improves on the welfare perspective of disability in order to deal with a law based on human rights.

Spanish Strategy on Disability 2012–2020, which, according to the Servicio de Información sobre Discapacidad (SID) (Service on Information on Disabilities), has as its goal to compose consolidated, integral visions and actions in the long term, which serve as permanent reference and road maps for future public policies which will affect the sphere of persons with disabilities.

3.2. Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (with or without disabilities)

In the world

The successive Conferences on Women of the United Nations constitute the document of reference in the field of promoting gender equality at the international level.

In Europe

Los Programas y Planes de Acción Comunitarios para la igualdad de oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres de la Unión Europea (Programs and Plans of Community Action for equal opportunities for women and men in the European Union), which, like the International Conferences on Women, are based on the acknowledgement of diversity, establishing measures for women in general, and making specific mention of women with disabilities in relation to concrete areas,⁷ in which they are in situations of vulnerability.

⁷ Poverty and social exclusion, access to formal education and employment, health, violence, self-esteem and empowerment, and accessibility.

In Spain

Los Planes de igualdad de oportunidades (Plans for equal opportunities). Measures included in plans for equal opportunities are aimed at women in general, which include specific actions for women with disabilities, related to matters such as social protection, inter-institutional coordination and co-operation with the third sector, prevention and awareness, formation or research, etc.

Organic law 3/2007, March 22, on Effective Equality for women and men, whose aim is to establish a framework for assuring the principle of equality in treatment and opportunities between women and men are real and effective through the elimination of discrimination faced by women in all walks of life, with the understanding that women with disabilities would have the same benefits from these measures.

Los Planes de Acción contra la Violencia Doméstica (Plans of Action against Domestic Violence) and the **Ley Orgánica 1/2004 de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género (Organic Law 1/2004 of Measures for Integral Protection against Gender Violence)**, contemplates actions for women with disabilities, conceiving these women to be a collective especially vulnerable to gender violence.

3.3. Women with Disabilities

In Europe

Manifiesto on the Rights of Women and Girls with Disabilities in the European Union 1997, which is configured as a reference document in matters of gender

equality policies for women with disabilities. Its elaboration is the result of an explicit proposal to integrate the gender perspective into the analysis of the situation of persons with disabilities, as well as to make the multiple discrimination faced by women with disabilities more visible. It contains recommendations for areas considered as priorities of action.⁸

In Spain

El I Plan de Acción para las Mujeres con Discapacidad 2007 (The 1st Plan of Action for Women with Disabilities 2007), which may be considered to be the normative instrument within the framework of policies on gender equality for women with disabilities. This plan, whose explicit objective is to "remove obstacles which cause the grave citizen deficit of women with disabilities, through measures which guarantee the exercise and enjoyment of their rights and full participation in social life," part of the acknowledgement of the double discrimination faced by women with disabilities, which entails the need for action by public powers. To obtain these objectives, a dual strategy of action is established: positive actions and transversal measures, in the various spheres of action.⁹

⁸ Among others, Education, employment, professional formation; marriage, relationships, maternity, family life; violence, sexual abuse, safety; training, preparation to become leaders, participation in decision making, technical needs and assistance, advice; Social Security, medical and healthcare attention; Accessibility...

⁹ The spheres of action are: Image and prejudice; Family life, relationships and maternity; Education; Employment; Power and Participation; Violence; Health; Social and Legal Protection. Said areas are development as measures of research, informa-

El I Plan Integral de Acción para mujeres con discapacidad 2005-2008 (The 2nd Plan of Action for Women with Disabilities 2005-2008), springs from the desire of being an instrument for planning of the various organisms responsible for guaranteeing the real right to equality of girls, young women and women with disabilities in Spain. While it is not a government document,¹⁰ it contains proposals for action for developing "co-operation among the various sectors of public administration, the movement itself of persons with disabilities and various social entities." At the same time it sets forth clearly the necessity and interest of women with disabilities.

4. Conclusions

All in all we can point out that the traditional focus which has been given to strategies on gender and disabilities up to now, has not taken into account interaction between these two variables, which prevents real insertion of all of its members. That is, focuses on gender and disabilities up to now have resulted in the analysis of only one factor of discrimination: women or disability. Thus, this unidirectional perspective has hampered the development of proper policies which would provide real answers to the inequalities faced by wom-

tion, formation, communication and awareness, and lastly, as evaluation.

¹⁰ The Plan was elaborated and approved by the Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI), an organization which stands out for its activism in the matter of fighting discrimination and making the situation of women with disabilities more visible. Said activism has materialized since the year 2000, in the creation of the Commission of Women and the elaboration of the aforementioned Plan.



en with disabilities. Therefore it is necessary for policies in the sphere of disabilities to be reviewed in depth so that measures which inexorably include gender mainstreaming, including the whole range of actions are adopted. In this sense, according to Sastre, Moral and Giménez (2012), the measures to be taken into account would be:

- Implementation of a system for compiling, analyzing and following up data.
- Adaptation of the normative in order to guarantee women with disabilities their rights.
- Control and demand for compliance by the public.
- Promotion of a sanctioning regime.
- Information on the rights and instruments for fights against discrimination.

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