

# Disability and Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion Forum 22 May 2019

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## Beyond the Statistics

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**People with disabilities continue to experience the highest rate of consistent poverty in Ireland of any group:**

154,351 people with disabilities (24%) live in consistent poverty, compared to 6.7% of the rest of the population, and compared to 1.4% of those in work.

# The Cost of living with a disability

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Almost half of people with disabilities have extra living costs.

These extra costs are estimated at approximately €207 per week on top of every day costs of living.

**Since 2010, average prices have increased in Ireland by 4.7%.**

- This money is taken from people's savings and incomes, with some individuals forced to take out loans to meet these costs.

**70% of people with disabilities on social welfare supports “find it difficult or very difficult to live on the income.”**

# Work does not immunise people against poverty

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Almost 12% of those at risk of poverty are in work already is very concerning in the context of encouraging people with disabilities to engage in work.

For those on Jobseekers payments, income would rise 40% upon taking up employment and less than 3% would be worse off for taking up work. The cost of disability ensures that this is unlikely for people with disabilities, once the cost of disability is considered.

## **Work does not immunise people against poverty – especially if you have a disability or chronic condition**

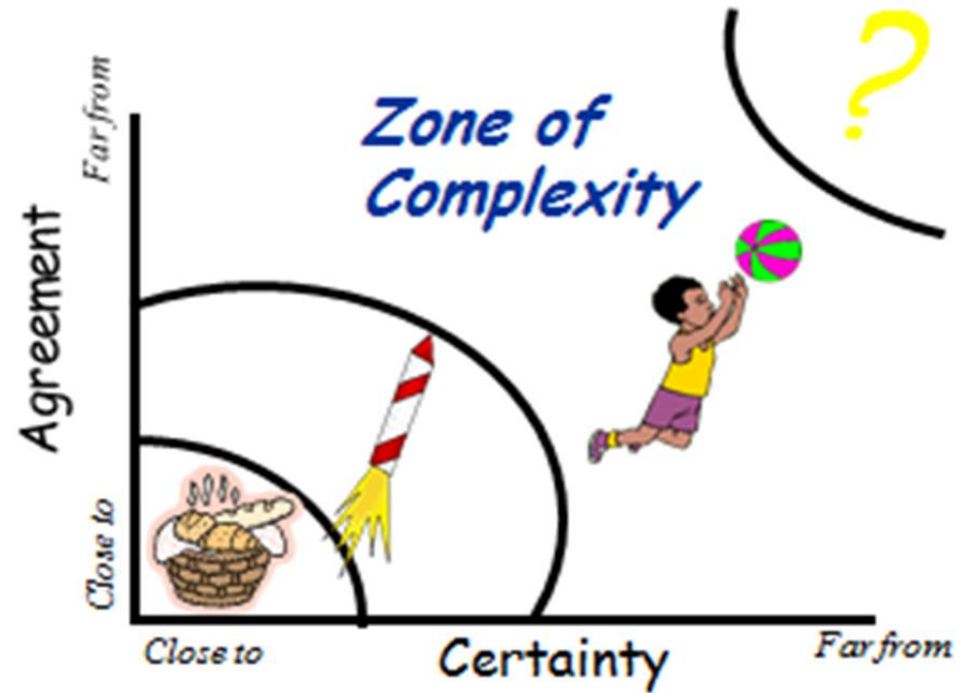
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‘I remember the feeling of, “shit what am I going to do, I don’t have enough money to do me for the next week?!”

I didn’t even have 40 euros a week to buy food; my limit was 40 euros a week. It would have had to come down to one or the other: food or inhaler.’

Barbara who has asthma and works in low paid precarious work

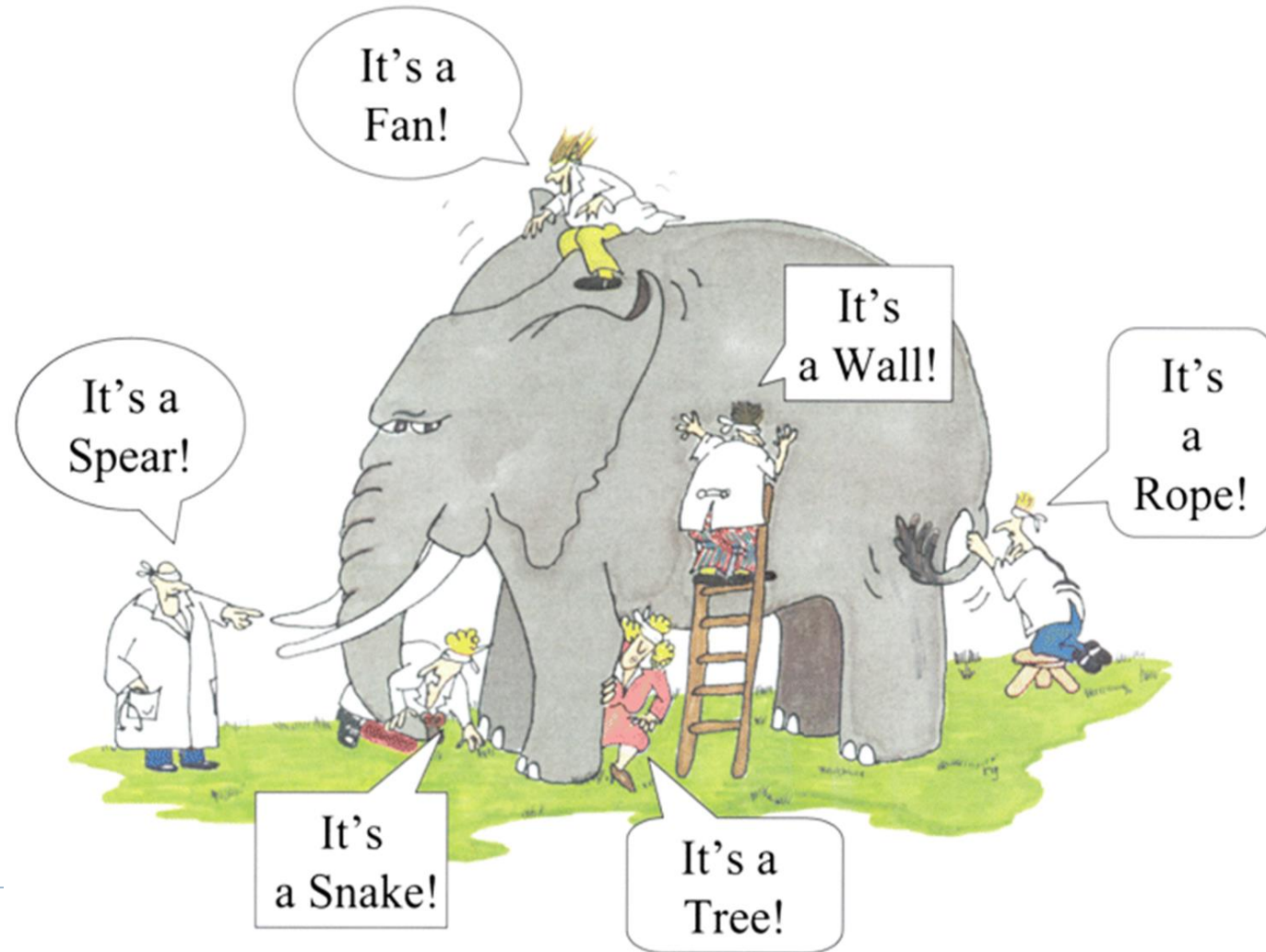
# Difference between Complex and Complicated



Michael Quinn Patton  
May, 2008



We need to look at the issue of social inclusion from lots of different angles: no one size fits all, no one person or organisation has the “right answer”



# Disability is Complex

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- ▶ There is **no one definition** of disability. People are different and the range of disabilities, chronic illnesses, are vast and individually experienced. Even two people with the same condition may have different identities: one may say they have a disability, the other person might not.
- ▶ Disability is a fact of life. **It is not something that can be solved: or cured.** It is part of the human condition. It is an on-going facet of our humanity.
- ▶ It is difficult to generalise about disability as **no one response will work for everyone.** Every person is essentially unique. People's needs are often contradictory, and they may have changing needs that are often difficult to recognise. They may have multiple disabilities.
- ▶ **Information is often missing or incomplete in any one policy response.**
- ▶ Every response is a **one-shot operation**: there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error as people's health and quality of life is on the line – making every intervention significant.
- ▶ There are **no “off the shelf” solutions**, often the response needs to be designed as a person's life evolves.
- ▶ Each person with a disability has **multiple identities and lives within a context**: considering responses needs to take the wider realities into account, including political, economic and cultural realities as well as values.
- ▶ The **way in which disability is framed hugely determines the response.** It is often characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity.
- ▶ **Policy makers have no right to be wrong**: People with disabilities have **rights under the UN CRPD**, responses must get it right for people with disabilities and be accountable to them. At the same time, there is no definitive right or wrong response. The consequences that arise from interventions are often difficult to predict.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked\\_problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_problem)





# Complicated issues can be addressed with targets

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Example:

Reducing the numbers of people turned down for Disability Allowance on first application

The department turned down 42% of all applications made in 2018 – more than in than 2017. At a time when people are at their most fragile; - coming to terms with a new diagnosis, or a deterioration in a chronic condition, or suddenly having to give up work, they are faced with a lot of additional stress, delays, and uncertainty about being able to eat and pay their rent or mortgage.

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Take Michelle from Cork, who was turned down four times for Disability Allowance, despite being unable to walk, all because of her age.

*“Its not like I could tell my spine, sorry, you can’t fall apart because you are too young. I could honestly have killed myself with the stress. I cried constantly, I hope to never, ever have to repeat anything like it. In eleven months, I had 7 medical assessments. Not being believed was one of the hardest things. It took 16 months in total to get DA -it was so cruel. On my last ever assessment the lady doctor was actually horrified I had been turned down so often she said she would fix everything, and she did”.*

**This is something that could be resolved if there was the will to do so.**



## Social inclusion of people with disabilities needs to cut across departments

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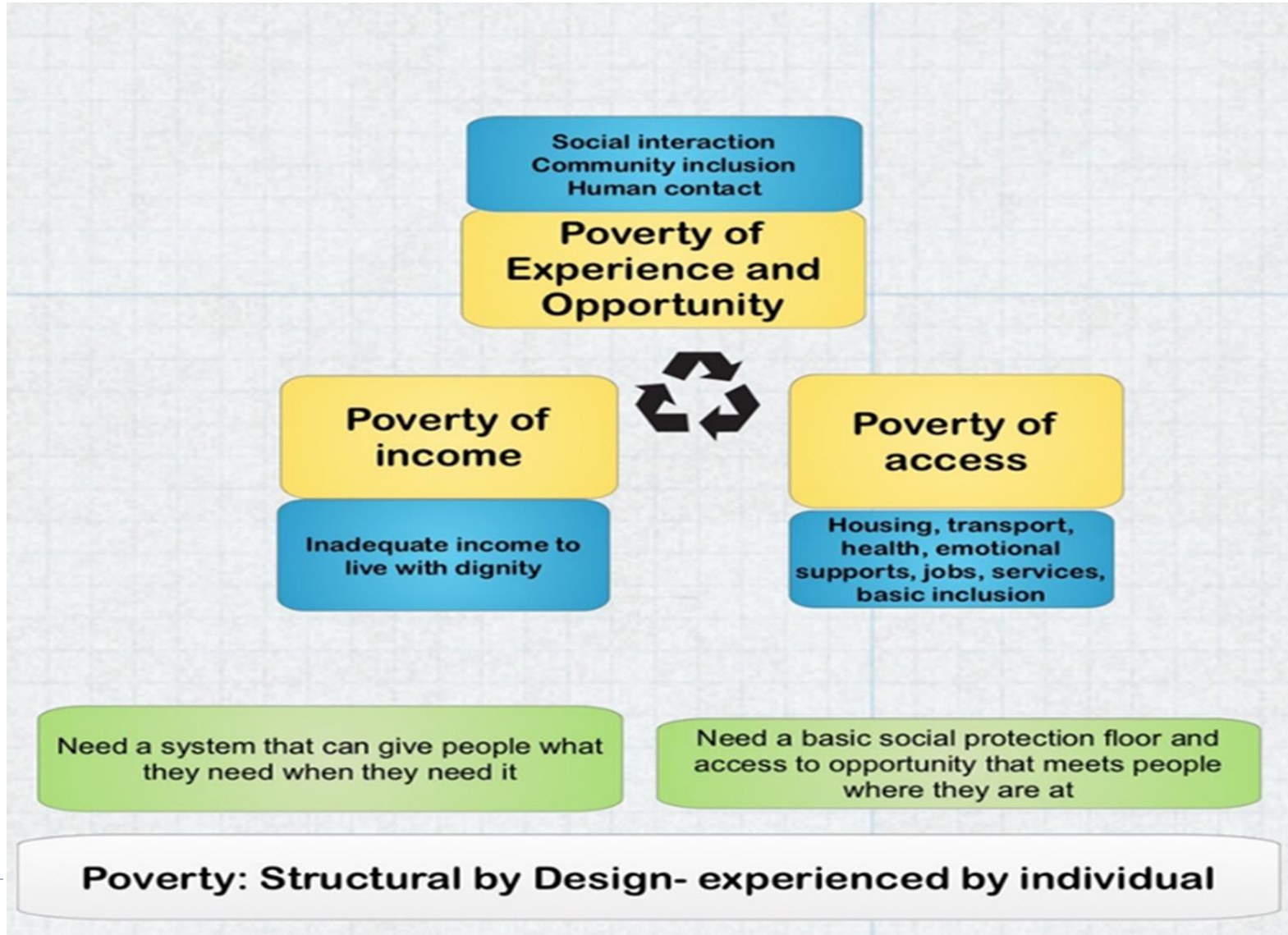
- ▶ **The National Disability Inclusion Strategy and Comprehensive Employment Strategy and the are not effective mechanisms that a roadmap for social inclusion needs to follow...**

“These figures demonstrate ongoing inequality and discrimination. We will fail to address that discrimination if we continue to fail to get education right, to set services right, to get the infrastructure around employment right, and to get attitudes right.

If people with disabilities continue to fail to benefit from a recovering and growing economy, and from a demand among employers for loyal, committed and productive workers, it will be our failure, not theirs.”

The Chair of CES Fergus Finlay

# Social Inclusion is complex



# A snap Shot of what 9 disability organisations are doing on a day to day basis to ensure the social inclusion of people with disabilities

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## 1. **Give Information and advice**

- ▶ Welfare entitlements, employment advice, accessing healthcare needs

## 2. **Support accessing services**

- ▶ Letters of support, accommodation, medical supports,

## 3. **Provide emotional support**

- ▶ One to one support, formal counselling, marital support, palliative support, bereavement support, siblings supports

## 4. **Provide practical support**

- ▶ Grants for: equipment, heating, hardship funds, fertility treatments, counselling, Education grants, grants to participate in sport and yoga to ameliorate effects of condition, transport.

## 5. **Training**

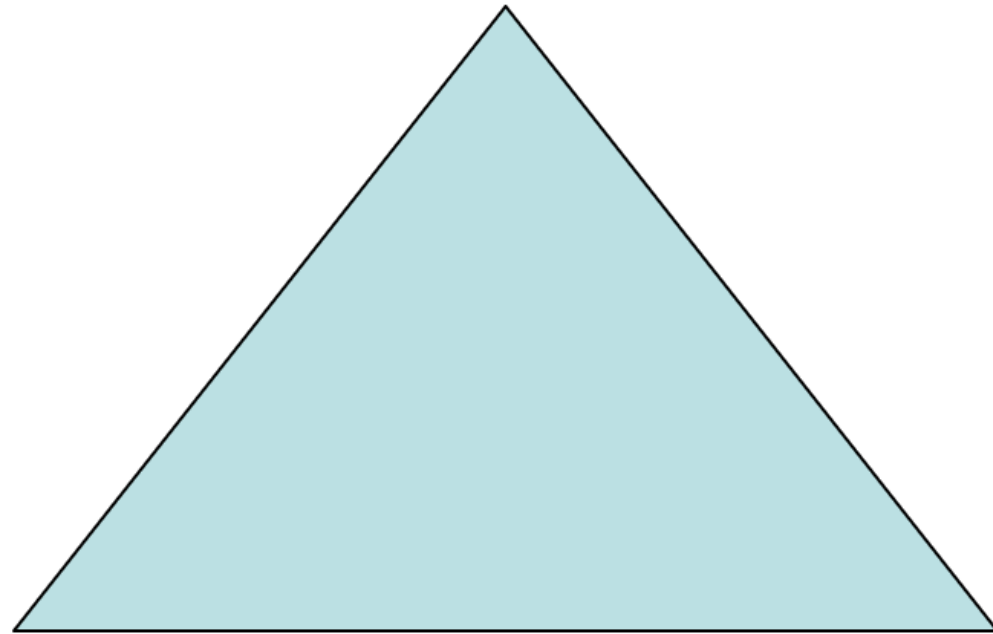
- ▶ Training on conditions, to people with condition, families, hospitals, schools

## 6. **Respite, summer camps etc.**

Complexity requires an approach that goes beyond targets and brings different players together in new ways

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## Interrelationships and dependencies



**Boundary Judgements**

**Multiple and Contrasting Perspectives**



# Social Inclusion must involve differentiating between complex and complicated

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- ▶ Requires better interdepartmental communication
- ▶ Requires cross sector communication
- ▶ Shared purpose
- ▶ Concerted action – not just about “Listening”
- ▶ Developing Collaborative relationships
- ▶ Political will

# Example of working across boundaries and developing relationships

## Community participation Network Mayo

- ▶ A model to actively support and encourage participation through community development methods and relationship building.





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# Thank you!

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