

***Abstract submission for special issue of Social Inclusion on 'Disability equality in theory and practice.'***

**ABSTRACT**

**Disability, access to food and the UN CRPD:**

**Navigating a rights-based equality discourse in the Netherlands**

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Disability Studies in Nederland

In 2016, the Netherlands ratified the UN CRPD, becoming one of the last developed nations to sign on. In this article, we will explore how equal access to food provides a lens through which barriers to implementing a rights-based approach to disability equality can be examined in countries that are historically resistant to rights-based equality discourses.

Through a literature review, policy research, and interviews with disabled people, representatives of disabled people's organisations, Dutch legal scholars and government representatives, food system researchers and food banks, we have explored barriers to equal food access in the Netherlands and multiple approaches to overcoming social, economic and physical barriers. Analysis indicates that implementation of the UN CRPD and other relevant international and EU policies continues to be limited in the Netherlands due to narrow interpretations, leading to policies and practices that do not foster equal access to resources and environments. Dutch understandings of disability equality are evolving, but encounter opposition from an entrenched system of separation and resistance to mandating change, including a reluctance to even collect data about inequality. From this basis, we identify gaps in the knowledge base, and make recommendations for steps the Netherlands could take to create truly inclusive policies and practices.