Measuring Environmental Factors in an International Context: Proposal for an Extended Question Set
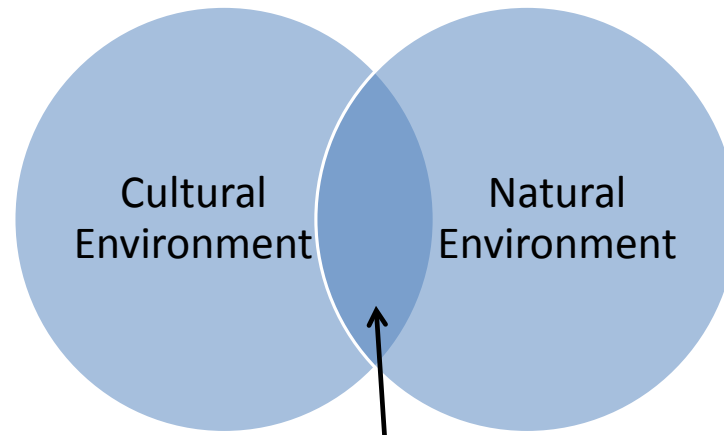
Barbara M. Altman

Presented by Mitch Loeb

Environment as it Relates to Disability

- Hypothesized to be an element as important as the limitation itself to the creation of disability.

- Work on environmental components in relatively early stages starting with the research of Fougeyrollas and his colleagues in 1995.

- Environmental effects demonstrated most prominently as related to mobility limitations including work of Whiteneck, Gray, Dijkers and others.

Components of the Environment

FIGURE 1

Four Models of Environment Now in Use

- Quebec Model, IOM Model, ICF Model and Whiteneck Model (see accompanying paper for brief description)

- Emphasis in taxonomies accompanying models are on culturally bound concepts.

- How do we approach this issue if we want to create measures for cross-cultural usage?

Two Approaches Proposed for Consideration

- Focus on more physical elements of the environment associated with the natural environment and the built environment.

- Recognize the hierarchical nature of environmental barriers/facilitators and begin within the center of an individual's life, moving out from the center based on where individual spends the most time.
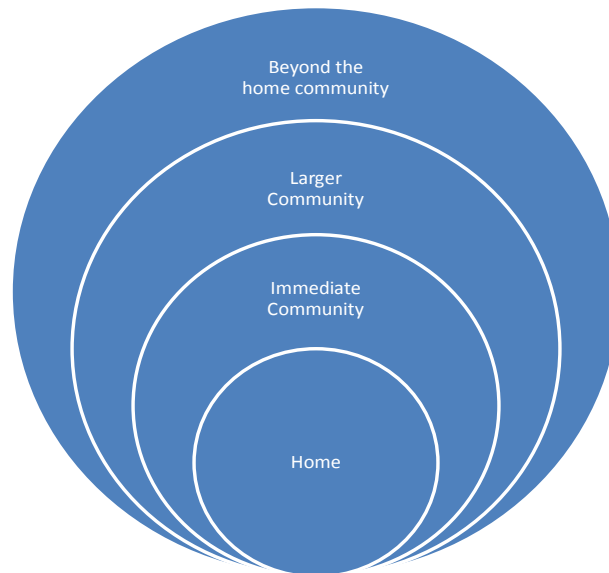
Focusing on Environmental Elements that Can More Easily Be Measured Cross-culturally

- Natural environment – climate, topography/distances, scarcity of water and other natural phenomena are easily understood cross-culturally.

- Interaction of culture with environment produces built environment and transportation which are also universal necessities.

Dealing with Cultural Elements of Environment

- Identify element of the cultural structure that are universal such as family and work.

- Identify elements of culture that are essential to the well-being of the individual such as safety.

- Both are possible cultural environmental elements that can be explored.

Identifying the Hierarchy of Environment

Possible Approaches to Cross-cultural Data Collection

- Starting with the home and moving outward:
  - The buildings associated with important activities, their accessibility and usability.
  - The transportation system and its adequacy
  - Availability of assistive devices
  - Other factors of importance more culturally related such as safety
  - The influence of climate and topology

Invitation to Participate

- Does the group want to pursue a set of questions on the environment?

- What feedback can you give us on this DRAFT proposal?

- Who would like to join with the workgroup to further develop the proposal?