

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE POLICY

A DCDD SERIES OF PUBLICATIONS
ABOUT INTEGRATING DISABILITY INTO
POLICY AND PRACTICE



COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION

A key strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities



Three members out of a family of seven, living in Vietnam, have a disability; the father has epilepsy and two of the children, the oldest son of 29 and a 20 year old daughter have a progressive muscle dystrophy. The son is dependent on his family for mobility and daily care. The daughter can walk with crutches. When this family came into contact with a CBR programme, the family was very poor and the disabled girl did not go to school, despite the fact that she wanted to go. The programme encouraged the family to send the girl to school. They got support from the local school to accept her and asked her friends to take her to school by bicycle. She is now in secondary school. Using the credit programme of the CBR project, the family was able to borrow money to grow mushrooms and raise pigs. The local authorities provided materials for rebuilding their house and the local community helped with the building work. Together with rice farming, and their new economic activities, the family can now raise enough money to eat well, to send the children to school and even to buy a motorbike to enable one of the other children to work.

Hundreds of millions of persons with disabilities do not have access to the opportunities and resources to fulfil their basic human needs. Together they form a substantial proportion of the world's poor. The global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be met without specific effort being made to include persons with disabilities. Key measures need to be taken to provide them with access to education, employment and other essential facilities that will give them the opportunity to participate fully in society.

What can be done to address this world wide need? In December 2006, the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted. This convention provides a framework and legal basis for taking action to address disability across all levels and in all spheres of life. The convention emphasises the perception of disability as primarily a social problem and a human rights issue which demands a social and political response.

A key large scale strategy which springs from this right-based approach to disability is Community Based Rehabilitation. *CBR is a strategy within general community development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities, and social inclusion of all people with disabilities* (Joint Position Paper on CBR, 2004,

by WHO, ILO & UNESCO). In CBR strategy, social, developmental approaches and the use of specialised medical and other services are all integrated. CBR is implemented by the combined efforts of the persons with disabilities themselves, their families, organisations and communities, and the relevant governmental and non-governmental health, education, vocational, social and other services. In the first paragraph of Article 26 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities the rights for habilitation and rehabilitation are formulated in this way:

States Parties shall take effective and appropriate measures, including through peer support, to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain their maximum independence, full physical, mental, social and vocational ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life. To that end, States Parties shall organize, strengthen and extend comprehensive habilitation and rehabilitation services, particularly in the areas of health, employment, education and social services.



Activities to improve livelihoods are often key components of a CBR programme. In this project in India, members of the Women's Self Help Group are making bamboo products to generate income. In this integrated group, 20% of the members are persons with disabilities (hearing impairment and physical impairment) and 20% are mothers of children with disabilities.

The scope of CBR

CBR is a concept with a very wide scope, since disability can involve every aspect of life. CBR activities may range from giving personal assistance to someone needing an aid like a pair of crutches or a wheelchair, to political lobbying for inclusive education or the other human rights that persons with disabilities should have. CBR is a strategy which targets social inclusion, and aims to overcome activity limitations and participation restrictions and thus improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities. The community-based approach facilitates the acceptance and participation of disabled persons in their communities. CBR can respond flexibly and builds on existing community traditions, structures and networks, such as the extended family, local committees, and pre-existing activities, such as informal education schemes.

However, the community-based nature of CBR does not mean that all services are provided in and by the community itself. It is currently estimated that 70-80% of rehabilitation needs can be met within the local community, but some people still need referrals to specialised services at a higher level, for the provision of prosthesis, for example, or other disability aids. A CBR programme can develop referral networks through which needs such as these can be addressed. CBR programmes utilise local resources, people, materials and finance. Low cost aids and equipment can be produced by local people from local materials. CBR programmes can empower disabled people and their families/parents to take an active role in their communities and in the implementation of a CBR programme.



The support of the local chief and the community helped the family in this village in Ghana to follow the advice of the CBR worker.

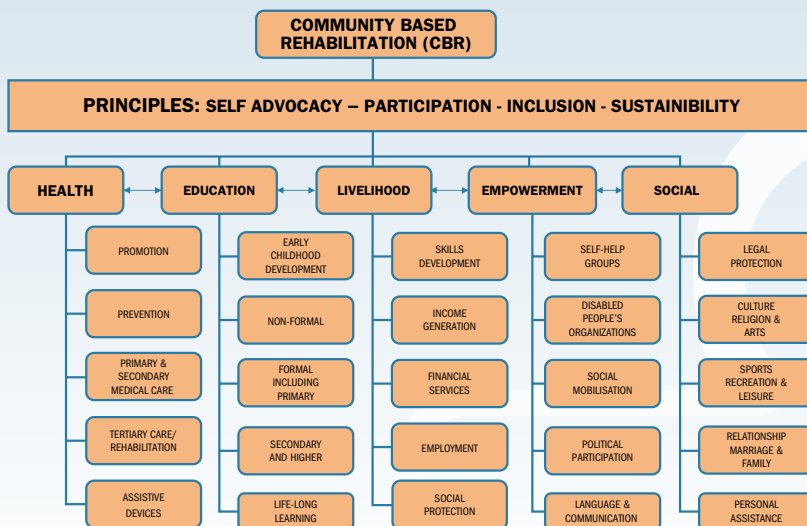


Figure 1: CBR matrix of the WHO (2005)

The matrix above shows the full scope of CBR and emphasises the holistic approach towards disability which is now propagated by the WHO.

The Main Principles of CBR programmes

Although CBR programmes are very diverse both in nature and in the way they work, a few key principles can be distinguished that characterise a CBR programme.

Community participation

Ideally, a CBR programme should originate from and/or be owned by the community. In practice this is rarely the case. However, some degree of participation by the community is essential and must be promoted. Often, the main participants are the disabled persons themselves and/or their immediate families. The activities should be community-based in the sense that regular activities should take place within the community, most frequently in the home of the disabled person.



The workers in the sewing workshop in Vietnam are either from a poor family or have a disability. Sign language training is organised after work for all the workers and their families.

Inclusion

CBR programmes try to include persons with disabilities in mainstream services and activities, rather than developing separate facilities for them. These programmes facilitate equal opportunities for access to education, employment, health care, etc. This may require special efforts being made by the government, the community, or the CBR programme, but the primary objective is that persons with disabilities should participate in society in the same way as everybody else does.

Sustainability

CBR does not use a campaigning or a short-term project approach. Many persons with disabilities have needs which will exist for life, e.g. for a wheelchair or other aid. Long-term services are therefore needed. CBR programmes should work on the sustainability of these services by capacity building, local fund raising and the use of low-cost, appropriate technology.

Self-advocacy

Persons with disabilities need to acquire the necessary skills to optimise their own quality of life and to make use of all the opportunities that arise in every aspect of life. One of the key requirements for this is empowerment. Persons with disabilities and their families need to be empowered to take control of their lives, and assume their rightful places in society. CBR programmes should use every opportunity to promote empowerment through capacity building, self-organisation, opportunities to participate in the programme, creating (access to) opportunities for economic advancement or specific empowerment training to develop a positive self-image. In addition to these principles, some other features are common to many CBR programmes; these include an emphasis on partnerships and networking and the use of a holistic model of disability.



In a CBR project in Ghana, the fieldworkers are mostly local to the area that they work in. Therefore they speak the local language and are aware of local values and beliefs. They have been trained specifically in counseling families and in promoting the active involvement of the families in problem solving. Depending on the problem, people with a disability are seen at home or are referred to a rehabilitation centre for a review by the rehabilitation consultant. An important aim of this project is to enable participation in society, school and vocational training by providing mobility aids. For example, John, a 36 year old man with post-polio syndrome, was too old for surgery. The CBR project provided him with a tricycle and gave him the opportunity of learning how to mend shoes. Now he successfully runs his own shoe repair shop in town and takes on other boys with disabilities as apprentices.

Partnerships and networking

CBR programmes should use existing services as much as possible. They should network with all the services and facilities that might be useful to a programme of rehabilitation. Partnerships should be forged with complementary services too, such as specialised institutional rehabilitation facilities, community development and poverty alleviation programmes. Partnerships with any existing organisations of people with disabilities (DPOs) should, of course, be established as a matter of priority.

A holistic approach to disability

CBR sees disability not as an undesirable individual characteristic, but as a social construct in which environmental factors play a major role. These environmental factors include social support from family and community, government support for rehabilitation and disability-friendly facilities, positive community attitudes towards people with disabilities, available inclusive services, etc. Thus, at the same time as offering personal assistance to the disabled person, CBR programmes try to influence these environmental factors too.

This model also emphasises the importance of the rights of people with disabilities. CBR programmes, therefore, should argue that disability is a human rights issue.

In Jamtoli village, India, a CBR and resource centre for children with disabilities was developed with the active participation of the parents committee whose Chairperson is a person with a physical disability. The parents were able to voice their ideas about what they felt was needed for their children at the planning stage. Community members and parents are also represented in the implementation and monitoring committees of the centre, which is based in the community. Local people have been trained as volunteers. Existing service providers such as teachers, health workers, development workers, and traditional mid-wives have been trained on disability and rehabilitation. A rural network has been established to optimize the use of the existing facilities and infrastructure. The core values of the programme are cooperation, equality, equity and mutual participation. Community education and community mobilization are important elements too.



A volunteer assists a blind girl in learning daily activities.

How to adopt a CBR strategy

The CBR principles described in this brochure should, to a greater or lesser degree, be easy to recognise in any CBR programme regardless of its target group, location or size. From these principles, a checklist of CBR characteristics can be derived. The following checklist offers guidance on how to make any existing or new programmes, projects and plans disability-inclusive by including CBR as a key strategy.

1. Incorporate a social or human rights model of disability in development programmes and plans.

This model emphasises the importance of environmental factors and human rights in a person's disablement process. This process describes the pathway from the cause of disability to becoming disabled and incorporates individual and environmental factors that either speed up or slow down the process of disablement. Any plans and programmes should include specific work focussed on advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, so that negative community attitudes are reduced and positive images of persons with disabilities are promoted.

The CBR project in Peru, working with her mother, made Nancy a chair. Later a wheelchair was provided for her. Now she is able to attend school. Her school friends wheel her to and from school as is shown on the picture on the front page. Like all the children she has a job in school, and hers is to distribute fruit at lunchtime. Usually children are not accepted if they have a disability, even though the law says that schools have to accept children with disabilities. A girl with Downs Syndrome was accepted by the local school after intervention of the CBR project. The CBR project provides education for the teacher and, using the CBR project network, the teacher is now included in the mailing list about workshops for the education of children with special needs which are run by the Ministry of Education.



Nancy, the girl in the picture, used to stay on the patio of her house, sitting in a washing-tub, with the dog, cats and chickens. Her family members went to work during the day.

2. Encourage community participation.

Include persons with disabilities and their families in the decision making process at every level and increase the participation of persons with disabilities and their families in existing projects which aim to promote local ownership. Plan, monitor and evaluate (new) programmes or projects together with community stakeholders, including persons with disabilities.

3. Promote the inclusion of, and the equal opportunities and equity for, persons with disabilities in the mainstream of society's roles, services and activities.

Check new regulations, projects, activities and buildings for their potential effects on persons with disabilities. Questions which should be asked include: Will any special efforts be made to enable persons with disabilities to have the same opportunities to take part in the activities, the income generation schemes, basic education, vocational training, literacy training, to gain access to water and sanitation, for example, in the same way as everyone else? Do persons with disabilities have the same opportunity to be recruited if the project plans to take on new staff? Will the resulting projects, activities or buildings be accessible? Are the necessary equipment and aids (wheelchair, crutches, braille machine, sign language interpreter etc.) available?

4. Work towards sustainability.

The programme or project needs to work towards the sustainability of its services, both in terms of capacity building (particularly regarding skills transfer) and resourcing. Include an on-going teaching and learning program which can improve the quality of the services offered. Training subjects could include: basic rehabilitation techniques for different disabilities, leadership, networking, advocacy, planning etc.

Use appropriate technologies and locally available materials for disability aids and protective devices (e.g. crutches, chairs and protective footwear for persons whose feet have no feeling).

5. Promote empowerment as the key to self-development.

The aim is for all persons who have a disability to achieve autonomy to the extent that this is culturally relevant. Encourage people to find solutions to their own problems and to access available resources themselves. Support or facilitate



Ongoing education of CBR workers, as here in Vietnam, is needed to develop and ensure quality.

persons with disabilities or parents of disabled children to set up a Disabled People Organisation (DPO) or parent organisation and make an extra effort to include persons with disabilities in (general) capacity building activities

6. Establish networks and partnerships.

Find out what government and community services and facilities exist and make use of them. Collaborate or establish partnerships with (other) rehabilitation services to ensure that medical treatment, medical rehabilitation and disability aids and equipment are easily accessible. Establish partnerships with other relevant organisations, such as Disabled People's Organisations and Parent Organisations. Include these organisations as stakeholders and partners in the planning and implementation of CBR activities.

CBR as an essential strategy in development and the alleviation of poverty.

In many countries, the majority of persons with disabilities come from the poorer sections of society. In addition, they are often excluded from community development activities, such as literacy programmes and other non-formal education and income generation schemes. In many cultures, people with disabilities – in particular, children – are discriminated against and thus have a much lower chance of obtaining an adequate education and of finding employment. Fewer opportunities to access education and employment lead to further poverty, which in turn increases the risk of disability. This vicious cycle is called 'the poverty-disability trap'. To break this cycle, specific action is needed which is geared towards including persons with disabilities in every area of society and in every development activity.

A large proportion of the current global development effort goes towards reaching the eight so-called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These eight goals, which relate to major development issues, such as poverty reduction,

universal primary education, major public health problems, gender equity and environmental sustainability, are to be achieved by 2015. Although the MDGs do not specifically address the needs of the hundreds of millions of persons with disabilities, several of these goals cannot be achieved without specific measures being adopted to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in development programmes. For example, currently 90-98% of children with disabilities do not go to school in developing countries. Therefore, universal basic education can only be attained if special efforts are made to include these children in education.

A group, travelling in three-wheeler motor-bikes, visited many towns and cities and met local persons with disabilities and young people to increase awareness about disability issues and the ways in which to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Vietnam.

"People with disabilities do not need charity, but they want to be involved in the community and should have the opportunity to participate in social activities," said Huynh Cong Son, who led the group.

"I hoped the trip would strengthen the resolve of people with disabilities, prompting them to establish more self-help groups and play an active role in helping the nation to achieve the MDGs," he added.

Son said his group promoted awareness of the eight MDGs, including those about fighting poverty, HIV/AIDS and other diseases as well as the efforts for gender equality and the reduction of the mortality rate.

Vietnam news, 11-05-2006

Millenium Development Goals, applied to persons with disabilities (adapted from Inclusion International)

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| 1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty | According to UN statistics, 82% of people with disabilities in developing countries live below the poverty line. Without a job or an education people with disabilities cannot break the cycle of poverty. |
| 2. Achieve Inclusive Education | United Nations studies show that only 2-10% of children with disabilities in developing countries receive an education. Teachers have not been properly trained, and inadequate resources are in place to develop inclusive education for all children. |
| 3. Promote Gender Equality for Women with Disabilities | Women with disabilities are often doubly disadvantaged because of their status as women and as people with disabilities, and thus they represent one of the most marginalised groups in society. |
| 4. Reduce the Mortality of Children with Disabilities | Mortality for children with disabilities may be as high as 80% in countries where under-five mortality as a whole has decreased to below 20%. |
| 5. Achieve the Rights of Children and Families | It is estimated that only 2% of people with disabilities in developing countries have access to rehabilitation and appropriate basic services. As many as 20 million women a year suffer disability and long term complications as a result of pregnancy and childbirth. |
| 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. | International studies show that people with disabilities have a greater risk of HIV infection. People with disabilities have less access to HIV prevention information and they run a higher risk of being sexually abused. |
| 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability | UN statistics state that about 20% of all disabilities are caused by malnutrition and over 10% are caused by infectious diseases, like diarrhoea. |
| 8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development | The inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream services is important, along with specialised interventions, where necessary, in all development activities. |

With CBR as a key strategy in development programmes, persons with disabilities will be able to benefit much more from them. By adopting CBR as a strategy, international development cooperation will become accessible and inclusive to persons with disabilities. Only when persons with disabilities are freed from the poverty trap, included in education programmes and gained access to health care, can the Millennium Development Goals be reached. The time has come, therefore, to mainstream CBR into development policy and into every new development programme which is planned and implemented.

The World Bank realised the need for mainstreaming and has launched a partnership initiative called the 'Global Partnership for Disability and Development' which aims to encourage the developing countries' governments and international cooperation agencies to integrate disabled people into their poverty alleviation efforts.

The CBR project in Peru showed the grandmother just what the child could do; eating on his own, washing his hands and face and playing with a ball.



If all development agencies and development programmes adopt CBR as one of their core strategies, it will have a tremendous and lasting impact on the lives of the hundreds of millions of persons with disabilities who are currently excluded from any development opportunities and activities. It will be a major move towards an inclusive society where all people have equal access to development. To implement Article 32 (see below) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, international development organisations need to include people with disabilities in their processes and programmes.

ARTICLE 32 – INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

1. States Parties recognize the importance of international cooperation and its promotion, in support of national efforts for the realization of the purpose and objectives of the present Convention, and will undertake appropriate and effective measures in this regard, between and among States and, as appropriate, in partnership with relevant international and regional organizations and civil society, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities. Such measures could include, inter alia:

- (a) Ensuring that international cooperation, including international development programmes, are inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities;*
- (b) Facilitating and supporting capacity-building, including through the exchange and sharing of information, experiences, training programmes and best practices;*
- (c) Facilitating cooperation in research and access to scientific and technical knowledge; and*
- (d) Providing, as appropriate, technical and economic assistance, including by facilitating access to and sharing of accessible and assistive technologies, and through the transfer of technologies.*

Resources about Disability and CBR

Disability Dialogue: www.healthlink.org.uk

Asia Pacific Disability Journal: www.aifo.it/english/index.htm

Disability World: www.disabilityworld.org

International Information Support Centre:

www.asksource.info/res_library/disability.htm

World Health Organisation: www.who.int

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/index.html

- Guidelines for Community-Based Rehabilitation Programmes. Joint ILO/UNESCO and WHO publication. Expected 2007
- Guidelines for Social and Economic Rehabilitation of People Affected by Leprosy – Published by ILEP
- CBR: A participatory strategy in Africa. Sally Hartley (Editor). Published by University College London; Centre for International Child Health, London, 2002, or download from www.afri-can.org/cbr_book.html
- CBR as part of Community Development, A poverty reduction strategy. Sally Hartley (Editor). Published by University College London; Centre for International Child Health, London, 2006, or download from www.afri-can.org/cbr_book.html

More resources and publications about CBR and disability are attached to the brochure on line at www.dccd.nl/?3168.

This boy with cerebral palsy, in Peru, learned to eat on his own and to use an alternative way of communicating.



Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a strategy for promoting the inclusion of all people with disabilities into mainstream society. This brochure explains the essence of CBR; it discusses how this strategy is essential in poverty alleviation for people with disabilities and in implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It also gives some basic guidelines about how to adopt a CBR strategy for mainstream development organisations.

DCDD

It is DCDD's mission to work for the inclusion and social participation of persons with disabilities who live in conditions of poverty and exclusion. DCDD does this from a perspective of human rights and solidarity. The recently adopted UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) offers the guidance for this work.

The CBR working group at DCDD promotes CBR as a key strategy for promoting inclusion and the participation of people with disabilities in mainstream society. The group focuses on encouraging Dutch development organisations and the Dutch government to integrate CBR in their programme planning for people with disabilities. The CBR group's activities include organising seminars and workshops on CBR related topics, offering Dutch Development Organisations a half-day workshop on CBR and distributing information brochures.

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Earlier publications in the DCDD publication series 'Towards an inclusive policy':

- *All Equal, All Different. Inclusive education: a DCDD publication about health for all.*
(www.dccd.nl/?2924)
- *Moving up the learning curve – inclusive development today. Good practices projects.*
(www.dccd.nl/?2649)
- *As strong as the weakest link. An incentive for development organisations and governments to make disability an integrated element of policy and action.* (www.dccd.nl/?2485)

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