

CBR PROGRAMME IN IRINGA REGION: HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN OWN AND CONTRIBUTE TO PROGRAMMES

By: Bilali B. Said Regional Social welfare Officer, Iringa

MESSAGE: COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN OWN AND CONTRIBUTE TO CBR PROGRAMME DEVELOPEMNT

INTRODUCTION

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programme started in Iringa region in 1998 where people saw it as a government project. Communities can address the need of the disabled person in their areas. Community members can be empowered through CBR and contribute towards the programme development.

COMMUNITY ROLE TO CBR DEVELOPMENT

Leaders need to be sensitized about CBR and community ownership in order to ensure that the community responds to the disability needs. CBR activities should be planned and discussed with the community leaders and disabled people who will eventually decide on activities to be undertaken. People in the community can change their attitude about CBR and start helping disabled people in their village. In Iringa we are starting to sensitize the families of people with disabilities.

We can form support groups to train community groups and disabled people in the area on Training of Trainers (TOTs). The aim is to help disabled people and this group through CBR. TOT trains disabled people on counselling skills orientation and mobility on daily living skills for disabled people. In Iringa we have started training blind people moving from one place to another and carrying out activities of daily living.

We can educate the community by supporting CBR. With out education there will be no support at the community level for sustainability. The leader from this project will be the key person to train the community about CBR. In Iringa region after being sensitized, people with disabilities are seen as an asset rather than recipients of charity. They are also assisted in going to the church and participating in government meetings.

It is important for the leader to mobilize the people in the community about CBR programme. Mobilization is as important as training because people need more information about CBR and disability. After that the government can give support to CBR initiatives in collaboration with the community.

Capacity building in the community is important because CBR is implemented through combined effort of disabled people themselves, their families and communities. CBR activities must be discussed with community leaders, who will eventually decide on the activities to be undertaken. From that the community can participate in the project with minimal government support and people in the community will see they own the project that supports their disabled people. In Iringa the community has found ways of supporting children to go to school without government intervention.

CONCLUSION

The CBR programme currently serving three districts in Iringa region. These are Iringa rural, Mufindi and Njombe. The community members in the village level own and contribute to CBR programme without government support. Most of the disabled people are very happy for the training they have received and are participating in many activities in their areas. This activity in Iringa has proved that community members can play an active role in CBR programmes for people with disabilities.