

DISABLED PEOPLE LACK COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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MESSAGE: Community members can find ways of supporting people with disabilities

INTRODUCTION

Disability is inevitable in the community because of various reasons. The family members and community look at people with disability as a burden and develop negative attitude towards them. Hence People with disabilities lack community support. Although community themselves have a role to play to support disabled people by providing them equal opportunity of getting basic needs.

If community members find basic ways of supporting people with disabilities by using available local resources existing in the community we can reach more disabled people in the community and improve their well being. For example establishment of CBR project in 2002 in Njombe district is not well recognized by the community.

You can reach more disable people if the community is well mobilized and explore the existing resources which are suitable for supporting people with disabilities. People with disabilities call upon the community effort to initiate community plan to support them by conducting consultative meetings with different stakeholders. For example Sight Savers International now is working with community based rehabilitation in Iringa region as a pilot project of supporting blind people in their community through CBR training programme.

People with disabilities can only be supported if awareness rising is done in the community, taking into consideration that disabled people are part of our society. Of course, community members require knowledge about disabilities and guidance on how to assist disabled people. Community needs more information about people with disabilities. For example, leaflets, radio, television and newspapers. The information must be simple and practical. It should include relevant facts about issues concerning living with a disability, such as activities of daily living, schooling, vocational training and work as well as guidance on how to identify and use resources within and outside the community.

Meanwhile you can support disabled people by involving community leaders, district leaders and other stakeholders to plan ways of supporting disabled persons by looking at existing opportunities in the community. For example, family members, religious leaders and disabled people organizations.

In addition to that strategies mentioned above it is also necessary for community members to conduct Training Of Trainers on community based Rehabilitation so that you can reach more disabled people in the community. To meet the CBR objective community members must strengthen their abilities to assist people with disabilities and their family-WHO, UNESCO and ILO 1994. The training on community Based Rehabilitation can be more useful to empower community based rehabilitation workers to train more disabled people on daily living skills and vocational training

After obtaining skills disabled people can establish income generating activities if there is a good plan, participation, involvement and opportunities existing in the community. For example establishment of CBR project for blind people 2002 in Njombe district 68 blind people out of 180 they are able to do daily

living activities including cooking, washing their clothes and making mats after using local resources available in the community.

Conclusion

In actual fact people with disabilities they are not given priorities in community plans regarding services and opportunities. Therefore, community support for disabled people is sustainable intervention strategy by strengthening CBR program contrary to that people with disabilities lack community support.

In this paper I mentioned several things which community members can take into consideration to support disabled people; information all about disabled people, use local resources existing in the community and CBR training program.