

"Let me change your idea about people with special need"

People with disability are a part of our community. They are marginalized in the community due the negative attitude.

We can change this attitude towards the people with disability by showing that these people are equal to any able person if they are directed correctly through the Community Based Rehabilitation (C.B.R).

*Person with special needs have rights same as any able person*, they shouldn't be discriminated in employment, public transportation, services provided by state and local governments, services and accommodations offered by private businesses etc...

Because each girl and boy is born free and equal in dignity and rights; therefore, all forms of discrimination affecting children must end.... Community has to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms. This includes equal access to health, education and recreational services, by children with disabilities and children with special needs, to ensure the recognition of their dignity, to increase their confidence.

In recognition of this UNICEF has produced a list of the rights of children with disabilities, which includes points like protection from abuse and violence etc...

*These people are like any normal person, they shouldn't be marginalized just because they are different.*

Let me show you examples of people with disability in my society which proves that these people are like any normal person if they have directed correctly:

Like Helen Keller, **Taha Hussain** overcame the challenges of his blindness to be an inspiration to everyone who knew him. Born in 1889 in a small village in Egypt, the 7th of 13 children, and blinded in his early childhood, one would expect Taha Hussein to become just another statistic. Instead, his brilliant mind led him to receive the **highest levels of education** in Egypt, followed by a PhD from the Sorbonne University in France. Later he achieved wide recognition and honors as a writer, faculty member, dean, **minister of education**, and a **Nobel Prize** nominee in literature. Taha Hussein's autobiography is unique and sometimes controversial, but certainly an inspiration to anyone who reads it.

**Rami al Jundi** : A **young musician** in a local musical band.

Rami is a young man about 20 years. He is blind. He had been having a terrible time with his family in Damascus. Once he made a visit to a special center for blindness, things began to change differently. He had some training courses and computer.

Rami has shown amazing readiness to be interactive. He could use the computer. He could remarkably write and use the keys. The spirit of musician comes back to him

He was able to use his fingers fast on the key board. He was aware that there were few basic points that he could depend on when changing from a key to another. He didn't have to remove his hand off the key board. He is leading a good life; he is a musician as well.

Dr. Alma has had along story with blindness. She was affected by measles at the age of three. However, the symptoms of blindness appeared on her when she was seven.

She gets her baccalaureate. Then she joined the post graduate studies. After that she had a course in French language to enable her for the M.A degree.

She is currently studying theology and sharia'a. She is working as a teacher in the field of children rehabilitation for the Blind institution. She is now able to use computer in preparing her doctorate

So if the person with disability have his sense of belonging on his community for self- esteem he we will be able to a minister of education – a musician – a doctor etc...

***Person with special needs is a human being with a particular disability. These people didn't choose – they are not responsible.***

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), between 5 and 20% of children have special needs.

The disability may range from a physical disability through a specific medical condition or illness, to developmental delay or a mental disorder. The disability may be visible or invisible. It may be apparent at birth or emerge as the child grows older. Or it may come later as a result of an injury or illness. Its cause may be known or as is the case with many children with developmental problems, its cause may be speculative or unknown.

### ***So, how can the Community Based Rehabilitation really help?***

The goal of Community Based Rehabilitation is to remove the barriers that deny individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to share in and contribute.

CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of disabled people themselves, their families and communities, and the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services.

Community-based rehabilitation can benefit everyone in the community. For example, when the community makes changes to facilitate access for persons with disabilities, it makes life easier for others who were not recognized as having disabilities.

If the community clears walkways and makes them smooth for wheelchairs to move easily, or for people with visual impairments to walk, then these walkways are also made easier for older persons or those pushing carriages or carts. Additionally, CBR can serve as a stimulus for community leaders and social groups to work together.

Let me show you an experience of C.B.R which had done in Vietnam by "International Institute for Rehabilitation Management" - Chatillon-Coligny, France  
**World Vision Vietnam's (WVV) work in community-based rehabilitation of disability.**

- ✘ Vietnam is among the poorest nations in the world. They do not have enough water; also they have all kind of diseases. Therefore, they have all kind of disability.
- ✘ In such a situation it is easy to imagine that the needs of persons with disability (PWD) can easily be disdained.

The trainer began using training and motivating local volunteers. They have the skills and knowledge to provide advice – awareness to support children, adults and their families with disabilities, and by involving the capacity of local government officials and networks to take responsibility for the community volunteers. Also, the training helps families of children with disabilities to get jobs employment. Even, the Government education staff receives training on how to best meet the needs of children with difficulty moving in schools.

In addition, the Mobility aids and devices such as wheelchairs, walking frames and bicycles are provided, giving children with difficulty moving the chance to move more freely and interact with other children.

**Success story: "Surgery gives hope to those in need in Vietnam":**

Diem was born with cerebral palsy - so he is a human being, have rights; equal opportunities and didn't choose to have disability or responsible of his disability . He does not know his father and his single mother are forced to leave him with his grandparents in a far away district, while she works in the fields. While his grandparents take good care of him, he was only capable of walking at the age of seven. When Diem started school, his grandparents had to bring him to class because he could not walk himself. However in 2002, Diem's life was transformed by the support of WV Vietnam's Assistance to Children with Difficulty Moving (CWDM) project which apply the Community Based Rehabilitation modules. Diem received surgery, a wheelchair – because of the link that was making by the C.B.R with doctors, donors - and access to rehabilitation services. And now, Diem can now walk a lot better and no longer needs his wheelchair, which he has passed on to another community member – witch meaning have a social live in the community .

In September 2004, Diem had the opportunity to show off his remarkable progress, when he was invited to participate in a WV Vietnam community based rehabilitation study tour. The tour allowed Diem to interact and share his experience with other people in similar situations.

Not only is Diem now able to walk; he also has the strength and ability to ride the bicycle that WV Vietnam provided. He rides it 10km from home to school everyday.

So by involving all part of community the families and the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services and believe in C.B.R a young child like Diem who was born with cerebral palsy and by receiving surgery, a wheelchair and access to rehabilitation services and after many hours of rehabilitation, he can now walk a lot better and no longer needs his wheelchair, which he has passed on to another community member; also he also has the strength and ability to ride the bicycle.

**Conclusion:**

Show people with special need prove more they are equal and could be a doctor – a musician or a Minister? Do we have to get this same attitude that people with disability have no rights? Do we really believe in the capacity of Community Based Rehabilitation? We still have a big challenge and the Importance of making the fullest possible use of the opportunities now available to end the neglect of persons with disabilities in all regions of the world. Are we going to success?

***Hanan Magdi  
Executive Secretary  
SETI Center – Caritas Egypt***