

THE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL ARTISANS IN COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION

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Executive Summary

This document proposes the involvement of local artisans in vocational skills training for persons with disabilities (PWDs) whilst in their communities. Though the government provides training, it has not been able to cope with the growing population. In order to increase capacity, professionals have opted for a community-based training. The disabled youth will be attached to a local artisan within the community. The trainees would be operating from their homes thereby reducing the costs of sending them to schools. Parents, disabled persons themselves and stakeholders like Church organizations and non-governmental would be lobbied to assist in providing materials. By using local artisans, people would also appreciate the skills that are within them through the CBR training programme.

The government of Malawi runs vocational skills training for PWDs in three centres, namely: Lilongwe Vocational Centre, Kamuzu Vocational and Rehabilitation Centre, and Mulanje Vocational Training Centre for the Blind. However, the centres have not been able to accommodate the growing population of people with disabilities. Therefore, there is need to involve local artisans so that people with disabilities are trained within their communities. This article intends to justify why local artisans should be involved in training people with disabilities for their socio-economic development.

Since there has been limited places in vocational schools, the involvement of local artisans would be beneficial because those on training would be operating from their homes. The parents and relatives would be responsible for the accommodation and all related things pertaining to the students' accommodation thereby reducing the burden of congestion in schools.

In addition, if students are trained with the local artisans, the families of disabled people in need of training would take up their role seriously in contributing materials as they appreciate the free services being offered by the local artisans. For a long time people have not appreciated the skills within them. By involving these artisans, their skills would be acknowledged by the community. Apart from the families, the community would also have a responsibility of contributing towards the training needs of persons with disabilities. Lobbying stakeholders working in that community such as non-governmental organizations and churches if families are unable to provide could do this.

The other problem existing in schools is inadequate or lack of trainers. By involving these local artisans people would be relieved since they would not be worried on issues of salary as the government does. This would increase the impact of number of people trained each year as compared to government schools. Just by the involvement of local artisans the government would save a lot of money.

It is against this background that professionals in the disability sector propose local artisan involvement in order to increase the number of disabled persons trained in vocational skills so that they live a more independent life.