The Local Traditional Model of Disability:
Is the Social Model of Disability for Inclusive Development Adequate in the African Context?

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IRIS — Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society
Institut de recherche et de développement sur l'intégration et la société

Advancing Social and Economic Inclusion for People with Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities in Zambia

Zambian Federation of the Disabled (ZAFOD)

Mental Health Users Network of Zambia (MHUNZA)

Objective of this initiative

A community development initiative implemented in 3 communities in Zambia; Kazungula, Mansa and Shang'ombo - to strengthen the capacity of people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, their families and the communities they live in, to develop effective community based supports that result in social and economic inclusion.

Need

Isolated in - families and in their communities

Denied status in their community to exercise rights

Lacking others in their lives to support and advocate in decision making

Lack of access to inclusive education

Without community-based mental health support options

Penalized for being in mental health crisis

Not respected or listened to in health care decision making

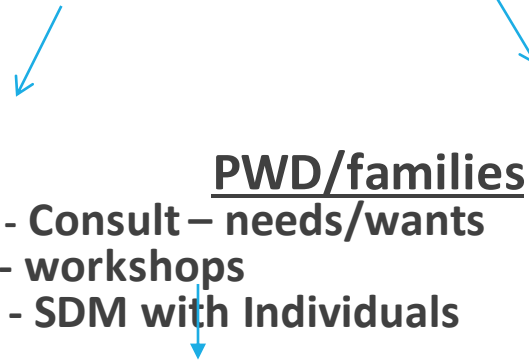Restrained and secluded against their will in psychiatric facilities.

The Strategy:
goes direction to key actors for
systemic change

Community Awareness Forums
Alert community to issues and the project

Right to key stakeholders

Services in the community
- Consult – focus groups
- Review services – where
    are the gaps?

PWD/families
- Consult – needs/wants
- workshops
- SDM with Individuals

Influencing national government programming
Legal Reforms

How did people and service providers understand the concept of 'disability'?

Where is the …

- ✓ Medical Model – illness, disease
- ✓ Rehabilitation Model – fix it, make 'normal'
- ✓ Social Model – way we are, human diversity

operating?

The local teams examined how did people and local service providers understand the concept of 'disability'?

Medical model ⇨ the individual has a biological, physiological 'abnormality': treated with medication

Rehabilitation model ⇨ the individual has the disability, work towards fixing it and making 'normal'

Social model ⇨ society has the disability
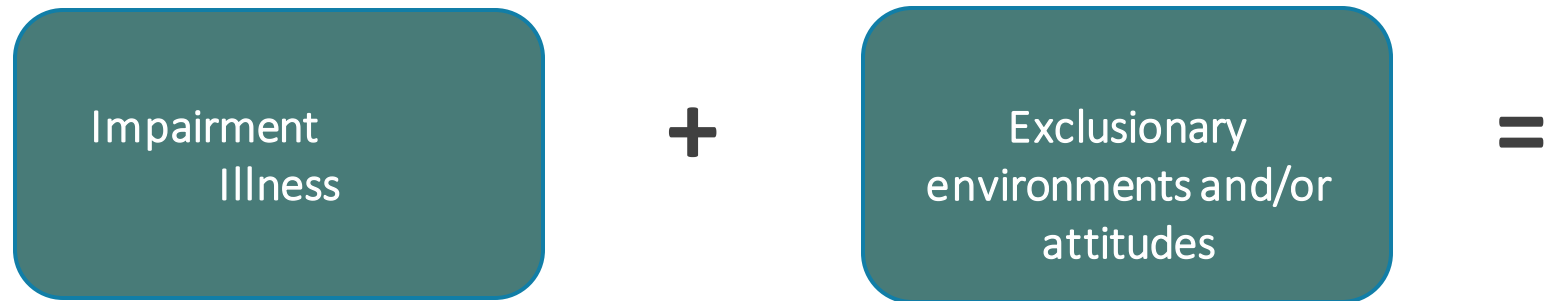
The Social Model Definition of Disability

"Disability" results from the interaction between persons with impairments, conditions or illnesses and the environmental and attitudinal barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Definition of Disability (continued)

Impairment Illness **+** Exclusionary environments and/or attitudes **=**

DISABILITY !

Who people with disabilities are

- People are not defined by their marginality – they are people first and foremost.

- The disability movement does not adhere to the "medical model" for understanding the experience of disability which focuses on the individual's impairment.

- The medical model focuses on the individual's deviation from "normal".

Who people with disabilities are (continued)

- Rather than acknowledging that it is society's lack of inclusion that limits advantage and access.

- The problem is not the impairment, but rather "disability" arises from the barriers to equal participation.

Local Traditional Model of Disability

BUT – The dominant perception of disability was clearly based on traditional belief systems...

- Medical, rehab and beginnings of social model are in operation

- But, most of the times people will seek the advise of Traditional Practitioner healers and people have stated " they can provide very good service to the community"

- We heard it is not 'destiny' or related to 'god' but rather that 'witchcraft is real'

research questions

1. What are the key components of the Local Traditional Model of Disability (LTMD)?

   - What is witchcraft? What role does it play?

2. How is this understanding detrimental to people with disabilities?

3. How could the LTMD contribute to strategies aimed at building safe and inclusive communities for people living with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities?