

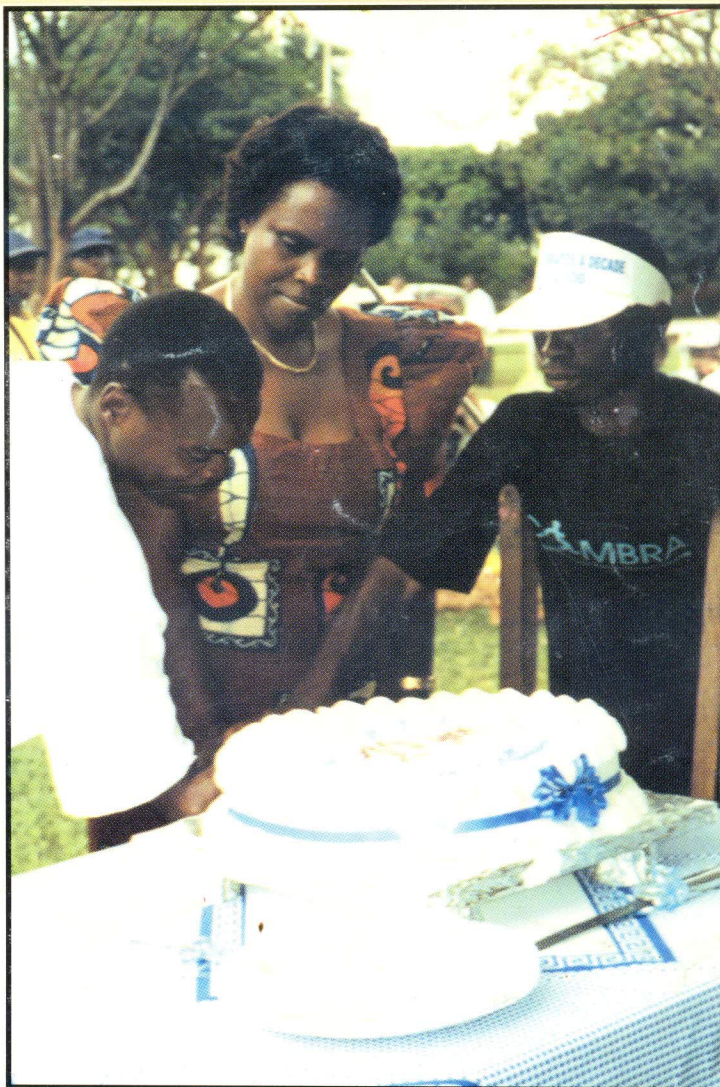
P/S - M O N  
Disability

May 2001



COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION ALLIANCE

# 10 YEARS OF COMBRA



The Guest of Honour cutting the COMBRA decade cake with two old students of COMBRA

9/11/07 m

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# REFLECTIONS OF FOUNDER MEMBERS



Mrs. Maria Kangere  
-Executive Director

**W**hen a mother conceives, immediately she becomes aware of the force of life inside her. The expectations start, will my child grow to maturity? Will the child be a good boy or good girl? With the fears of an expectant mother, COMBRA founders started formulating a dream, ten years ago. At the time, we had a lot of hope and lived with a step of faith every day that came. We derived our inspiration from the Chinese saying, *"a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step"*.

We hardly had any resources but were loaded with great ideas and aspirations. We had to share office space, stationery and even food with The Aids Support Organisation (TASO) training wing staff at Kabbaka Anjagala, Mengo. COMBRA acknowledges their gesture of generosity at our time of need. Soon we realised that we could not continue being on the receiving end. We started dreaming of having our own home.

We moved to Bwaise Slum with hardly any resources but with great ideas and a lot of confidence. We were ready to learn from the wisdom of the 'wanainchi', the people who cope with disability. The challenges in Bwaise were great, poverty was beyond our knowledge as health workers. Despite our limitations in knowledge on social economic issues, Bwaise people embraced us with love. The first lesson we took was to always learn on our feet and consult frequently. Soon a number of old people and persons with disabilities were mobilised to action and development. The rest is history.

Building a permanent home in Seeta that was opened by His Excellency the President of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in 1994 was an exciting moment for us all. It opened eyes of many Ugandans on disability issues. The training of community based rehabilitation workers commenced at the new home. By this time we were getting more friends from near and far. The years have blown like a 'candle in the wind' and many waters have passed through the bridge. The training is still moving from strength to strength. Not with all our gallant old students spread out in more than nine countries in Africa and working with varied communities.

"We derived our inspiration from the Chinese saying, *"a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step"*

What can I say, that we have done it ourselves? It would not be true. COMBRA development has been a concerted zeal of our clientele, students, partners, donors, friends, old and new staff. The good will of Uganda Government, which has spiced our work with peace, has stimulated development among Ugandans.

I salute you all.



I wish to pay special tribute to our fallen heroes and founders: Late Eliphaz Mazima, Late Kagimu Kalungi, Late John Kaijja and our clients who passed away. May their souls rest in eternal peace, assured that those who have kept on are determined to keep the fire burning.

When we reflect back, we note the little resources we had at that time, the motivation and the spirit of volunteerism. We look at the property acquired in the last ten years worth *225 million Uganda Shillings*. The feeling is overwhelming.

What about the lives of many Ugandan men, women, girls and boys with disabilities and older persons whom we have touched? The wind of change has not left them behind. What about us the staff, who have learnt the art of giving and learning from everybody which, has made us better people.

I thank you all who have contributed in many ways to make COMBRA an Organisation to feel proud of.

May God bless you abundantly.

**Maria Kangere**  
**Executive Director**



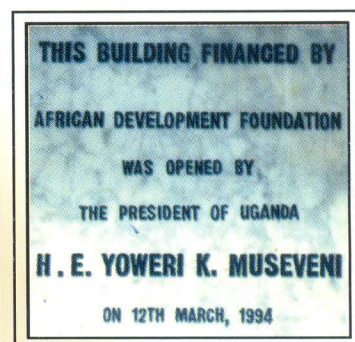
*COMBRA Administration Block*



# CONGRATULATIONS:

## 10 years of rapid growth and bearing fruit

**7** It is with great pride and sense of achievement that I write this congratulatory message. The painful yet joyous birth of COMBRA, the juggling of roles as a Board member between training the community at Bwaise, running outreach clinics, participating in peace-talks with other NGOs, and making tea in the office while persuading donors. The times of walking bushes searching for land, brick-making, construction, and the proud moment His Excellency the President of Uganda opened the COMBRA home. Pride and anxiety over our first students, and the simple but happy graduation ceremony.



*The Pride of COMBRA-Foundation stone on the COMBRA Centre*

For some reason, these early and humble achievements have left a deep mark on my memory than the later, more grand mile stones.

As I walk down memory lane, the most meaningful achievements we have as COMBRA, are the lives that have been changed. COMBRA has a wand blessed by God that seems to turn the lives of people it touches to gold. I have seen and also heard reports of COMBRA students making important contributions to the history of development and decentralization in Uganda. Many of the 203 Alumni are political and administrative leaders. Others are at grassroots levels in 40 districts in Uganda and more than 6 countries in Africa, making a difference for marginalized people.

In addition, COMBRA has turned around the lives of over 1000 children, adults, and older persons in the Bwaise community. To quote an adolescent from Bwaise with severe disabilities, who is now in school, "Singa teyali COMBRA, nandibadde wa?" (meaning "If it was not for COMBRA, where would I be?")


Congratulations COMBRA and a resounding applaud to you and your partners.

**Dr. Alice Baingana Nganwa**  
**Board member**  
**COMBRA**



# WHAT

## IS COMBRA?

 COMBRA, the Community Based Rehabilitation Alliance, is an indigenous Non-Government Organisation committed to facilitating sustainable development of persons with disabilities at all levels. It was founded in December 1990 by a group of Ugandans. They were motivated by the need to increase accessibility to rehabilitation services, reduce attitudinal and physical barriers, and increase community participation through Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR). The founders were convinced that every human being has a right to a decent life and equal opportunity in accessing social services. COMBRA advances that each person can contribute towards Nation building and hence, should not be segregated against on the basis of sex, age, race, disability or any other factor.

COMBRA's head office is located in Kiwanga-Seeta, Mukono District, 18 kilometres from Kampala City Centre, off Jinja highway.

# OUR

## Vision and Mission

### **COMBRA Vision is:**

*A world where all people with disabilities have access to equal opportunities in society.*

### **COMBRA Mission is:**

*To empower and advocate for and with persons with disabilities for their sustainable development through community based rehabilitation.*

The strength, growth and development of COMBRA is founded on guiding principles, beliefs and shared values.

### **COMBRA'S SHARED VALUES**

- Team spirit
- Innovativeness
- Sharing knowledge
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Striving for Excellence

These values are integrated in all training and development programmes as a foundation to sustainable development.



# COMBRA

## Broad Objectives

- To develop, through community awareness, positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities and promote self-reliance and integration into the mainstream.
- To liaise and network with Government and Non-Governmental Organisations of and for persons with disabilities and older persons, both locally and internationally, for information, support and cooperation.
- To develop and sustain an international centre for capacity building of community based rehabilitation workers.
- To facilitate development of technical skills that can be utilised in designing and production of assistive aids that are economically realistic and culturally acceptable, using appropriate technology.
- To put in place income generating activities and capacity building strategies for further development and sustainability of the Organisation.



*COMBRA staff and other partners who attended a workshop organised by OXFAM.*



## *Strategic objectives for 2000 - 2004*

- **To develop and sustain community based rehabilitation programmes.**
- **To train rehabilitation workers at various levels.**
- **To build strong institutional linkages and organizational capacity.**
- **To advocate and lobby for equal opportunities for people with disabilities.**

COMBRA's strategy provides for a multi-pronged approach that operates through the following complimentary components;

- *Centre for Training Community Based Rehabilitation workers*
- *Community Based Rehabilitation projects.*
- *Resource and documentation centre*
- *Income generation activities*
- *Networking*

*"COMBRA has spearheaded rehabilitation of people with disabilities in a Kampala urban poor area..."*

All in all in its ten years of operation, COMBRA has spearheaded rehabilitation of people with disabilities in a Kampala urban poor area, built an operational centre for training community rehabilitation workers in Uganda and other countries in Africa; established an active Appropriate Technology Workshop, published materials addressing issues of rehabilitation and participated in lobbying and advocacy.

## COMBRA Milestones

- 1990:** Founder members formalise the Dream.
- 1991:** First Board was formed.
- 1992:** Acquires her first vehicle.
- 1993:** Procured land with the help of Action Aid UK and partnership was built with African Development Foundation (ADF) that resulted in building a permanent home for COMBRA.
- 1994:** His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda officially opened the COMBRA training Centre and launched the first six-teen week course.
- 1994:** Co-hosted an international workshop on "Sustainable Development and by PWDs" with ADF and the International Labour Organisation.
- 1995:** Developed the first three-year strategic plan.
- 1996:** Supported by NAD and OXFAM, COMBRA begun support supervision of old students resulting in the curriculum review.
- 1997:** Appropriate Technology manual published
- 1997:** Supported by ADF, COMBRA implemented the Bwaise CBR extension project that has resulted into construction of a community hall, improved rehabilitation services and built the capacity of the credit scheme.
- 1998:** Constitution amended.
- 1999:** Five year strategic plan designed to meet the challenges of the new Millennium.
- 2000:** COMBRA commemorated the new millennium and ten years of positive development. COMBRA's property was valued to a tune of 225 million Uganda Shillings.



## Achievements

**S**ome of COMBRA's achievements over the past 10 years include:

- Making positive development that has changed the lives of PWDs.
- Successfully consolidating Bwaise activities and ensuring the sustainability of the project after phasing out of COMBRA presence.
- Gaining recognition and goodwill from Government and stakeholders in the disability fraternity.
- Strengthening existing relations with old partners and acquiring new collaborators and partners.
- Placing issues of gender, governance and human rights on COMBRA agenda.
- Capacity-building of COMBRA staff
- Training over 200 Community Based Rehabilitation workers at local, national and regional levels.
- Building assets to the value of 225 million Ugandan Shillings.

This development would not have been possible without the commitment of the staff and Board of Directors, and the strong support of our friends and donors whom we acknowledge with gratitude. Most of all, God's favour and guidance has always shown COMBRA the way.



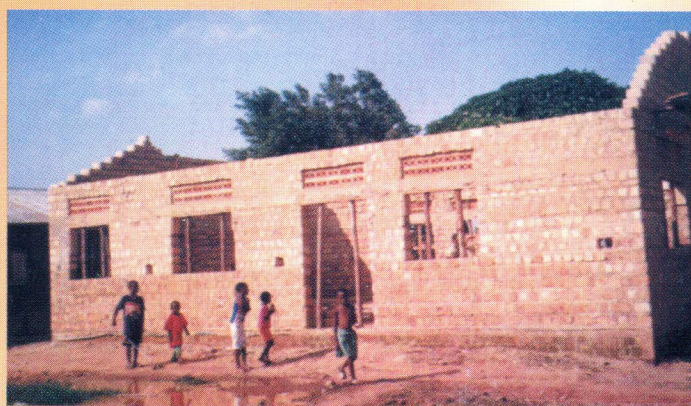
## BWAISE COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION SLUM PROJECT

**e**OMBRA embarked on a community based rehabilitation project in Bwaise, an urban poor area where the Organisation works with over 650 people with disabilities, older people and their families.

Bwaise is densely populated, situated in a swampy area with a high water table that is characterised by flooding and poor sanitation. This causes severe health hazards to the inhabitants. Community members in Bwaise are committed to improving their socio-economic status by working closely with COMBRA. Their struggle has been hindered by difficult living conditions in makeshift houses, living from hand to mouth, which makes their daily survival highly precarious.

COMBRA activities in Bwaise include identification of clients, assessment, planning appropriate interventions, provision of assistive aids, counseling and referral to specialised services. Continuous on job training of community volunteers and leaders in the management of the project and a credit scheme has been firmly put in place. The strength of this project is that through time Bwaise community members organised themselves into a community association called Bwaise Disabled and Elderly Association (BDEA).

COMBRA developed a partnership agreement with BDEA where roles and responsibilities are shared equitably between the two organisations. In the last three years, COMBRA has focused on building community capacity to sustain project activities when COMBRA finally hands over to BDEA leadership.



*BDEA Centre at roofing stage*



*BDEA Centre complete*



# Achievements of the Bwaise Project

- Parents of children with disabilities have been trained.
- Bwaise community members sensitized on issues of disability to demystify traditional beliefs.
- Six hundred and fifty (650) clients were identified, assessed and appropriate intervention carried out. (1997-2001)
- Twenty community volunteers were identified, trained and equipped with skills in working with persons with disabilities. More volunteers are undergoing training to increase coverage and reduce the client/volunteer ratio.
- Over 150 assistive devices have been provided to clients since the beginning of the project.
- A revolving loan scheme for the clients has been established where clients access loans for income generating activities to increase their income levels. Over seventy (70) women, men with disabilities and older persons have benefited from the revolving loan scheme.
- For sustainability of the project activities, the Bwaise Disabled, Elderly Association (BDEA) has been established and members trained to spearhead all the project activities. The Association's Executive Committee has been trained in management of income generation activities, project planning and management, in order to assist members in identifying and running projects profitably.
- A permanent community rehabilitation centre has been constructed which is generating funds for BDEA, while at the same time housing project activities.

## BWAISE Tells it's story

*The case of Simon Peter Lutaya: A child with Severe Cerebral Palsy*

**S**imon Peter Lutaya was identified by COMBRA during the identification survey of PWDs for the Bwaise CBR Project. He lives with his mother and siblings. The mother was stigmatized due to the family and community's negative attitudes towards having a child with disability. It was considered a curse to the family to have such a child.

When COMBRA came to Bwaise 10 years ago, Simon Peter was permanently hidden in the house and not exposed to the public. With COMBRA's continued sensitization, his family and the community slowly began to change their attitude towards I



*Simon Peter gives a speech at the COMBRA 10 year celebrations*



him. Simon Peter is now accepted and has been gradually integrated in the community. Today Simon Peter is 18 years old and goes to a school for children with physical disabilities. He is able to feed himself, write and do other activities of daily living using his feet. As an elder child of the family, he instructs his younger siblings on what chores to do at home. He is developing into a leader.

## TRAINING

**7** In June 1993, COMBRA received financial support from ADF that enabled the Organisation to construct a training centre for community workers in community-based rehabilitation skills. The construction of the training centre and office was a significant landmark for the Organisation in ensuring sustainability of the training programme. COMBRA has since introduced water supply, electricity, and telephone services.

In fulfillment of the UN demands for awareness raising for the full participation of the community in the rehabilitation process of persons with disabilities, COMBRA developed a training program geared to meeting self-reliance aspirations of persons with disabilities. The training program targets development workers involved in the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and older persons.

Training started in 1994 with 12 students and has grown over the years. To date, COMBRA centre has successfully completed fourteen courses and graduated 203 field workers from Uganda, Botswana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Tanzania and Zambia. The trained rehabilitation workers play a key role in identification, assessment and rehabilitation of people with disabilities at the community level.

Initially, COMBRA run two 16-week courses a year but has since diversified the training to meet other needs of partners as well as allowing room for other training programmes. Through this process, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development with support of the Norwegian Association of the Disabled (NAD), contracted COMBRA to train extension workers who operate at the sub-county level. COMBRA looks at this as

### Support Supervision

Overtime, COMBRA noted that training numbers without ascertaining the impact on the ground was inadequate. The Organisation thus, started a support supervision programme to provide technical support to the ex-students to ensure continuity of quality services in the field. Knowledge gaps identified during support supervision visits culminated in the designing and implementation of refresher courses aimed at strengthening the ex-students' capacity in the field.



Support supervision in Mbarara District



## Appropriate Technology Workshop

**7**he Organisation runs an appropriate technology workshop that gives opportunity to COMBRA trainees to develop skills in making low cost assistive aids for clients using locally available materials and technology. These aids are used for improving mobility, enhancing performance of activities of daily living (ADL), early stimulation of children with delayed development and reducing secondary disabilities.



A session in the Workshop

## Resource and Documentation Centre

**e**OMBRA initiated a resource information centre to keep abreast with the changing information needs on disability, older person's care and general community development. The centre has a library that is open to members of the public. The documentation centre has so far produced a book entitled, "Sustainable development and persons with disability: the process of self empowerment"; a manual on appropriate technology called, "Make it in the community"; and documentary films that contribute to the learning process of rehabilitation workers.

## VOICES OF COMBRA OLD STUDENTS

**MY CBR EXPERIENCE:** By Peter Baluku, Kasese District Union of PWDs

**M**any times, I had not believed that it was easy for a person with disability to be accepted by the community. Neither did I know that they could learn to manage daily living activities on their own. My lack of awareness was answered when I trained at COMBRA. By the end of four months, I was already thinking positively towards persons with disabilities. It is now five years after training that I am working with PWDs at the grassroots and have noted a number of problems which affect PWDs.



Getting the feel of a corner seat-A CBR worker helps a young client

Unfortunately, the community still believes that children with disabilities are not worthy going to school and are used as door locks especially those with visual, hearing and physical impairments. Women with disabilities are looked at as useless, ugly or ghosts during the day. At night, these women are beautiful. This results into them getting helpless children because men do not want to be identified with children produced by disabled women.

"The CBR programme has given clear examples to District leaders and the community..."

With the information of Community Based Rehabilitation programmes in Kasese, mobilisation has been made and the community has started changing their attitude. In the period of five years, CBR workers in Kasese have registered success in a number of areas though with challenges. The CBR programme has given clear



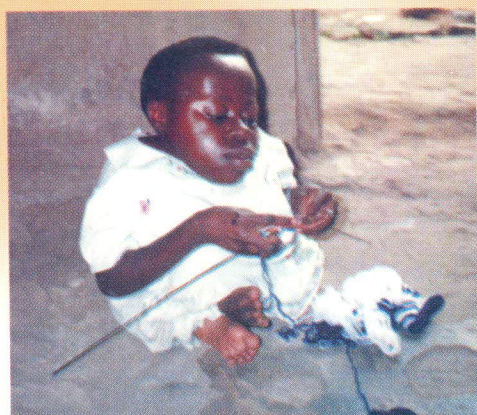
examples to District leaders and the community through making appropriate appliances at Rukoki Model School. We are grateful to Saidi Tibyatamutwe and Mukirane Emmanuel, who are also COMBRA old students, for the work they are doing in Kasese Town Council. Keep it up!

Community visits have been made to sensitise parents and our brothers and sisters affected by leprosy (PAL). They have benefited from the drugs supplied by Kagando Hospital. People affected by epilepsy are lacking drugs here in Kasese. We appeal to the Ministry of Health to increase the kit of epileptic drugs to Kasese District to cater for our people, as we have been affected by the civil strife.

We, the CBR workers in Kasese, recognize the COMBRA training that has empowered us to do rehabilitation work.

## GROUP FORMATION: A TASK OF CBR AGENTS

By Bonny Mumbere, Bundibugyo.



A client from Bundibugyo knitting

I am delighted to have been included in the ten years COMBRA experience magazine. From my personal experience, the community lacks awareness on the possible means of supporting the marginalised PWDs and the older people. This was made easier when I joined COMBRA training centre in 1994. After acquiring skills in community mobilisation strategies, I facilitated the formation of a group known as Tukolendeke Disabled and Elderly Saving and Credit Group, (TDESCG), whose main purpose is to bring together PWDs and elderly to share talents and improve on their living conditions. It is the first project in Bundibugyo and is particularly unique in that the target group manages it.

The project started in October 1994 and is currently working with fifty members. It has noted that regardless of individual impairments, members have faced a lot of difficulties in having their voices heard and their needs met.

The group offers skills in tailoring, shoe making, handicrafts, saving schemes, daily living skills, and any other needs that may arise. Individual concerns, group pressure and parents of disabled children are the major motivation in running the group activities.

"The group offers skills in tailoring, shoemaking, handicrafts, savings schemes, daily living skills..."

A project manager and supervisor who are all volunteers, are in place to ensure that the group meets its purpose. The group enables disabled peers and parents of disabled children, to meet one another, share experience and gain support from one another. The group has now built up an informal network.

## CBR PROGRAMMES IN KITGUM DISTRICT

By Wilson Nyeko, Rehabilitation Officer- Kitgum.

I heard about CBR in 1993 and picked interest about the concept. In 1994, I joined CBR course at COMBRA and on return to my community, I introduced CBR programme in Kitgum, Pajule Sub-county.

I identified three people whom I recommended for CBR training at COMBRA Training Centre. They included Joseph Oloya, Christine Kilama and Hellen Kalibala. With this



strong team of trained CBR workers we formed the Gulu Foundation - Community Based Rehabilitation in 1996.

I have been involved in sensitisation of PWDs, parents of PWDs, and the community on disability issues. To date, we have registered around 700 persons with disabilities in Kitgum District.

Through our work, we have developed good relationship with parents of children with disabilities, disabled persons and the community. We still have a lot to do in the field. We have challenges of sustaining CBR volunteers in the field, accessing mobility aids such as wheel chairs, and artificial limbs for people with disabilities.

## **RAISING HOPE IN KUMI HOSPITAL**

*By Hellen Tita, Kumi Hospital*

**A**fter training in COMBRA in mid 2000, I started practicing CBR. Creating awareness on the role of CBR, and trying to rehabilitate and integrate Persons affected with Leprosy (PALS) who had lived in the centre for over 20 years back to their communities, which is a tough task. Noting that PALS in the community are facing social economic problems due to their disabilities, the challenge is great. With skills acquired at COMBRA, I believe it will be possible to overcome the challenge.

I have been raising awareness among PWDs in institutions, schools, families, communities, churches, local leaders and individuals. I have managed to integrate four clients who had no hope of leaving the Hospital and have resettled within their own communities. Seven clients are ready to be integrated within their own communities. The process continues.

These clients lived in the hospital for many years due to the stigma associated with leprosy. Some of them still have fear to resettle with their own family members because they have lost their immediate relatives. After carefully approaching their families and communities, they are beginning to understand their responsibility towards caring for PALS.

Through this experience, we have found that, PALS who have lived away from their families and communities for a long period have negative attitude towards resettlement. With CBR, we hope to make a change slowly but surely.

## **CHANGING LIVES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

*By Sr. Restetuta Nalubaga, Daughters of Mary Holy Family*

**7** I am very privileged to contribute to the COMBRA ten-year experience magazine. In 1997, the congregation of the Daughters of Mary Holy Family Convent, Bwanda selected me to co-ordinate activities of the Liliane foundation in Masaka District. The responsibility laid upon my shoulders was no small task, given that I had no prior training in handling PWDs. Despite my interest, I felt inadequate in serving them appropriately without professional training in rehabilitation work. I requested the Liliane Foundation in Netherlands for sponsorship that enabled me attend a course at COMBRA. This course equipped me with skills, and knowledge that helped me to improve on the delivery of services to PWDs in Masaka.



also gained counseling skills, which have helped me, change the negative attitudes held by most parents of PWDs and the community at large. I have been able to refer many of these children to various vocational training centers. There are 16 children with hearing impairment being sponsored at St. Mark Bwanda Unit for the deaf by Liliane Foundation.



Sister Restetuta and her clients after receiving appliances

Ten children in Masaka District have undergone corrective surgery, and 29 youths have so far received tricycles and wheel chairs. Most of these achievements would not have been registered had it not been for the very vital skills gained from COMBRA.

## A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES IS GOD'S GIFT

By Bakama Alfred, Community Development Assistant, Mbarara District

**A** child with disabilities is a special gift from God to parents, so it is the responsibility of parents to protect and care for children with disabilities. A child with disabilities in Uganda has the right to do things without any discrimination on grounds of the disability she/he has.

Physically and mentally disabled children should be given special care and education as required to enable them lead normal lives. Children with disabilities should be protected from social and economic exploitation.

They should participate in household chores just like other children keeping in mind their capabilities. They should not be overprotected, which may interfere with their education or affect their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

"A child with disabilities in Uganda has the right to do things without any discrimination on grounds of disability"

## CBR A HOPE FOR PERSONS AFFECTED BY LEPROSY (PAL)

By Moses Kawikizi, DTLS/CBRW  
Iganga District

**P**eople living with disabilities resulting from leprosy have for many years suffered discrimination, social stigma, and have consequently lost their sense of dignity as human beings. The medical and physical rehabilitation needs of PALs were priorities in the leprosy control programme in Uganda. This however, was not enough to lift these people from their social and Economic marginalisation. Those that seemed to cope were under care in institutionalised homes.



Moses taking a PAL through a Home-based Selfcare training session

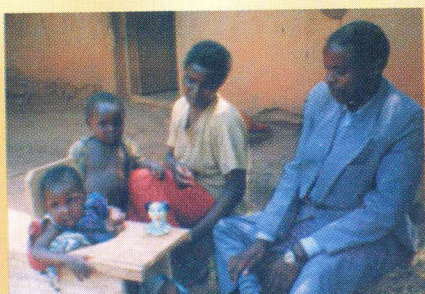


Having participated in CBR training, I am now able to encourage PALs to take part in cultural and income generating projects together with other PWDs. We are also promoting inter-sectoral linkages that are being built through CBR training.

Through sustained CBR concept, true socio-economic empowerment of PALs will soon be a reality and leprosy institutional homes a phenomenon of the past. We acknowledge the COMBRA training that has enable us enrich lives of PALs.

## CHANGING LIVES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

By Stevens Twesigye, Mbarara University Hospital



A CBR worker during a home visit

**7** In CBR, communication is part and parcel of everyone's life. In addition to interpersonal communication, traditional and modern media shape our knowledge, attitude and behaviours.

Public education through the media can, and does, change old attitudes and behaviors as well as influence new ones. Concerning PWDs, these efforts are becoming part of the work of government, organisations of PWDs, and many other non-governmental organisations.

To intensify awareness of persons with disabilities as a positive image, a range of them should be presented in the community as well as media. This includes people from various walks of life, rich and poor, urban and rural, and various degrees of disability. The purpose of role models is to show people that disabled people can be achievers, not just observers.

COMBRA is now raising awareness in disability development studies as one of the first institutions in Uganda as well as in Africa. I comment on my part as an ex-student of COMBRA, CBR has helped me in many ways by providing me with practical information that is useful in improving everyday life of PWDs.

## THE CASE OF TISSA

By Evans Mwebaze, Mbarara

**7** ukore Invalid's Salvation Stream Association (TISSA) based in Mbarara District, has commended COMBRA for conducting community based rehabilitation training in Uganda, which has benefited many NGOs/CBO development staff/officers working in disability sector.

"The success of TISSA-CBR programme has only been made possible by OXFAM funds and COMBRA training"

Let me use this opportunity through your esteemed publication to call all COMBRA ex-students to make good use of all the skills learnt for the development and betterment of the marginalised people in particular, and the entire country in general. It was indeed extremely instructive to be trained in such emerging key development tools utilised in CBR approach, in relation to capacity building of persons and children with disabilities (PWDs/CWDs)

The success of TISSA - CBR programme has only been made possible by OXFAM funds and COMBRA Training. This has helped us to understand the need for special exercises, positioning, provision of appliances, use of low cost aids in preventing the disability conditions from deteriorating, and help in the continued development of PWDs.

Most of our clients who had benefited from plastic surgery were those with complications of cleft lips, cleft palates and burn deformities limiting them from proper functioning of the body. With the skills attained from COMBRA, we managed to train CBR volunteers to carry out home visits



and follow-ups to facilitate sustainable programme.  
Here are major changes achieved: -

- OXFAM and COMBRA support to TISSA has helped us to raise awareness to parents of children with disabilities which has led to increased intake of Tukore Invalids Primary School number from 60 to 164. Consequently, the Government has increased the staff ceiling from 15 teachers to 54 teachers by implementing a policy of three pupils with disabilities per teacher.
- After training, I was promoted to a higher post of Deputy Director and Education Secretary, which is a good opportunity for my future. I was also elected as Male Councilor representing PWDs at LC 111 at Kagongi sub-county, and Secretary for Finance.

## THE CASE OF SHIA/FSDB IN KENYA

By Joseph Shiroko, SHIA/FSDB, Nairobi

**S**HIA is an acronym for Solidarity, Humanity International Aid. FSDB stands for Federation of the Swedish Deaf Blind. These two organisations have been funding deaf blind education and services in Kenya since the mid-1980s.

CBR is taking serious root in the community. The CBR training from institutions such as COMBRA has gone a long way in widening the scopes of most providers of services to communities. You cannot separate CBR from community and national development.



Girls with mental disabilities participate in income generating activities

## GREETINGS FROM THE ISLANDS OF PEMBA AND ZANZIBAR

By Njuma Ali, Haji Zulekha Yunus, Salim Attiye Sulaiman, Ali Raya Khamis, Amiri Mwema Ali and Abeida Rashid Abdallah.

**W**e were all happy to receive Maria Kangere in Zanzibar.

**W**e want to take this opportunity to thank COMBRA for giving us CBR skills and confidence. When we came to COMBRA we had our limitation in speaking English, as our country is a Swahili speaking country. But by the end on the course our English had improved. While at COMBRA we learnt a lot of skills including appropriate technology, which we are now transferring to others. Zulekha has fond memories of groundnut sauce and matooke!

When we returned from Uganda we were promoted because of the improved skills we had acquired from COMBRA. We are now CBR supervisors.

We would like to greet all COMBRA old students and to assure you that we are working hard in our country. You should also do the same in your respective countries.

When there are refresher courses at COMBRA please invite us as we are also interested in updating our knowledge.

Shukrani.



Abeida receiving certificates



## CHANGING LIVES OF PWDs

By Albina Mutunzi, St. Francis Family Helper Project, Mbarara

**7** In my CBR programme, I have been doing home visits, creating relationships with families, assessing family needs and sensitising them on the potential of PWDs and training. I have also been sensitising the community on the causes and prevention of further disabilities as well as better management of these disabilities in the home and community. I have been trying to sensitise the families and communities so that some negative attitudes and beliefs might change.

I have carried out family guidance, supervision and follow up of the activities of these children, especially with new exercises. Support is given to parents in form of counseling to encourage them give parental love and care to these children.

At community level, I gather information, and create awareness about the rights of PWDs. Traditionally, PWDs were looked at as dependants with no rights. They were segregated and ~~were not taken to school for education or hospitals for treatment. They were taken to~~ churches to be prayed for or to traditional healers for cure, and were regarded as home keepers and not cared for.



A CBR worker training a mother of a child with disability

There is still much work to be done in this area where beliefs are very strong, leading to negative attitudes of condemnation and shame around disabilities. This is true especially in those areas where CBR has not taken root.

I have facilitated the formation of support groups, designed to improve sanitation and nutrition for PWDs. I have formed parent groups that share views and problems common to families with PWDs. I have done networking with other NGO's and Mbarara University Community Health Department to ensure better communication and sharing of ideas. We have shared management of certain clients.

I thank COMBRA for giving me an opportunity to learn CBR.



## CBR EXPERIENCE IN MY COMMUNITY

By Valeriano Okwonga, Pakwach Association of Disabled Person



*OMBRA is my father, because it has given me the knowledge and skills, which is my wealth, which will never end, until I die. The main skills I have gained are leadership, management, communication, capacity building, and IGAs.*



*Valeriano conducting a Functional Adult Literacy training*

*Due to these skills, my work of CBR in the field is very interesting. The hard work of CBR in the field is making the people of Pakwach to reduce negative attitudes towards PWDs and older persons. COMBRA is the master key of development towards disability movement.*

*Currently, our association is undertaking the following activities: Sisal plantation, retail trade, bee keeping, cows/goats keeping, a small-scale workshop, and fishing.*

## Celebrating 10-years of COMBRA work



*On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2000, COMBRA marked ten years of her work. The Board and the Secretariat decided to make this occasion memorable with a purpose of intensifying awareness and positive image of PWDs and older persons in Uganda. The Organisation also wanted to raise awareness on the role COMBRA is playing in development. The theme of the celebrations was, "Changing lives of persons with disabilities."*

*In the course of the week, several advertisements were aired on different radio and television networks. The Executive Director and the Vice-Chairperson were televised on Uganda's National television on a popular live show, 'Uganda Today.'*

*The celebrations climaxed on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2000 with a colourful ceremony, which started with a march from Bwaise. The march was flagged off by the Kawempe Division LC III Chairman, and ended at the Constitutional Square. The function attracted members of the public and important dignitaries.*

*The Guest of Honor, the Country Liaison Officer African Development Foundation (ADF) had this to say, "Taking stock of the great strides COMBRA has made and the achievements it has registered during the last 10 years, has been a worthwhile investment for all donor agencies that have supported this Organisation in the past, and particularly for us in the Foundation who have seen COMBRA as a baby grow and reach maturity"*



# COMBRA CELEBRATIONS IN PICTURES



COMBRA Celebration gala



COMBRA Celebration gala



Dancers spice up the event



The Band entertains guests



The Guest of Honour at the celebrations, Mrs. Joan Rutaroh, African Development Foundation [ADF] Country Liaison Officer



Mr. Jackson Karyarugokwe, COMBRA Chairman



## Friends of COMBRA through the Ten Years

**COMBRA is indebted to the following partners, who through their tremendous support, have enabled the organisation to flourish.**

Action Aid Uganda

African Development Fund (ADF)

Book Aid

German Leprosy Relief Association (GLRA)

Global Ministries of the Uniting Churches in the Netherlands.

Help Age International

Norwegian Association of the Disabled (NAD)

OXFAM

Redd Barna (Norway)

Salvation Army

Sight Savers

Stichting Vronestein

Stichting Wilde – Ganzen

Stichting Wyckerheem

The Netherlands Embassy

Tools for Self Reliance

The Norwegian Association of the Disabled (NAD)

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)

World Bank

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

**COMBRA would also like to thank the following for making our 10-year celebrations a success: Coca Cola, WBS Television, Radio Simba, National Union for Disabled Persons in Uganda (NUDIPU), OXFAM, the Ministry of Health, and the various individuals in all their capacities.**



COMBRA hosting visitors from Salvation Army, Kenya and Norway



COMBRA hosting an international workshop



## Future Plans

- Focus on Human rights and wider governance issues to add quality to COMBRA's work.
- Strengthening the infrastructure and establishing income generating activities for sustainability.
- Diversify training to meet various needs.
- Consolidating consultancy services.
- Strengthening research and publishing.

## YOU AND YOUR BABY

*By Charna Cohn, Angella Rubarema, & Moses Kiwanuka*

Talk to your baby all the time...

- It soothes and calms the child.
- It helps the future development of language.
- It helps the brain to grow.
- It brings comfort to the child.
- It helps prepare your baby for the future.

Crying is baby talk...

It could mean...

- ☞ I am hungry
- ☞ I am tired
- ☞ I am sick
- ☞ I am hurting
- ☞ I want to sleep
- ☞ My nappy is wet
- ☞ My nappy is dirty
- ☞ I am cold
- ☞ I am hot
- ☞ I am afraid
- ☞ I am bored

Talk with simple words

Your child will learn faster

ALWAYS listen to your child

Hugging your baby feels good...

- It shows your child you care.
- It gives your child comfort.
- It helps bring you and your child closer together.
- It shows respect for your child.
- It makes you feel good.
- It makes your child feel happy.
- It helps prepare your child for the future.
- It is a time to notice your baby's body.

Always respond to the needs of your child...

- Your child's needs are very important.
- ALL children have the same needs but at different times.

All children need to play...

- ☞ To make sense of the world.
- ☞ To understand the world.
- ☞ To learn about their world.
- ☞ To learn about your world.
- ☞ To explore the world.
- ☞ To make them strong.
- ☞ To learn to make friends.
- ☞ To learn language.
- ☞ To practice skills.

What your child likes to play?

- Your child will not like everything you give them.
- It's normal, try another toy or game.
- Play with your child.
- Help your child to learn to play with others.
- Babies are too young to understand the sharing of toys.

**YOUR CHILD IS  
SPECIAL  
AND SO ARE YOU**







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*"Changing lives of persons with disabilities"  
- Celebrating 10 years of COMBRA*



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