

**EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY-BASED  
REHABILITATION (CBR) PROGRAMMES**

A Guide for CBR Programme Managers

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This Guide is based on the experience of implementing an emancipatory research in India under S-PARK/CBR initiative (2009-2012), part of joint plan of action between Disability and Rehabilitation team of World Health Organisation (WHO/DAR) and AIFO.

Translations of this Guide into other languages are welcome. Information about translations should be send by email to [sunil.deepak\(at\)aifo.it](mailto:sunil.deepak(at)aifo.it)

Comments, feedback and examples from other CBR practitioners will help us improve this Guide. Send your comments & feedback to [sunil.deepak\(at\)aifo.it](mailto:sunil.deepak(at)aifo.it)

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Acknowledgements	04
Acronyms	06
Background	07
Introduction to emancipatory research	09
Preparing the ground	10
Identifying research implementers	11
Role of CBR staff	12
Expert support for emancipatory research	13
Training of research implementers	14
Identifying research issues	15
Identifying research methodologies	16
Community participation	18
Documenting the research	19
Analysing research results	20
Sharing research results	21
Promoting empowerment in emancipatory research	22
Final notes	24

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#### **S-PARK/CBR RESEARCH TEAM**

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## ACRONYMS

CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation
DPO	Disabled Peoples' Organisation
ER	Emancipatory Research
MOB	Maria Olivia Bonaldo Rural health organisation
RCG	Research core group
SAG	Scientific Advisory Group
S-PARK/CBR	Samagama Participatory Action Research and Knowledge in community-based rehabilitation
SRMAB	Sri Raman Maharishi Academy for Blind
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHO/DAR	Disability and Rehabilitation team of WHO

## BACKGROUND

### RESEARCH

"Research" is a systematic search for information and new knowledge.

Research carried out in programmes in the field such as community-based rehabilitation (CBR) programme is called "Applied research". Applied research can be useful for:

- identifying priority problems
- designing and evaluating policies and programmes
- applying the knowledge to improve the programme activities

Normally research is carried out by persons who have training in conducting research.

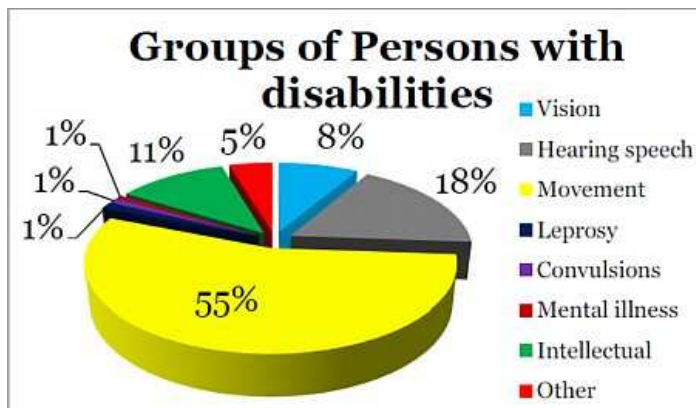
### EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH

Emancipatory research in a CBR programme is a research carried out by persons with disabilities in ways that promote their empowerment. It uses a human rights approach to understand how different barriers prevent the participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and to identify strategies for overcoming those barriers.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is based on the experience of implementing an emancipatory research (ER) initiative (S-PARK/CBR initiative) in Mandya CBR programme in Karnataka state in India. This research was carried out between 2010-2012.

The Mandya CBR programme was managed by two voluntary organisations (MOB and SRMAB) and they together covered 9 sub-districts and about 2 million persons. The programme directly involved around 23,000 persons with different disabilities.



Thus, this emancipatory research involved persons with the following kinds of impairments - visual, hearing and speech, mobility, convulsions, leprosy related, psychosocial and intellectual. In addition, it involved some other groups such as persons with albinism, short persons and persons with multiple disabilities. Persons with all these disabilities were the researchers. (Graph 1 on the left shows percentage of different groups of

persons with disabilities in Mandya CBR programme)

This emancipatory research worked mainly through sharing of life-stories and identification of barriers. It collected information in three kinds of areas:

- Issues, needs, problems and barriers linked to different kinds of disabilities
- Five areas of CBR matrix - health, education, work, social and empowerment
- Some cross-cutting areas that involve different groups of persons with disabilities such as poverty, gender, violence and sports.

More information about this research is available at the following web page:

<http://www.aifo.it/english/proj/research/sparkcbr/index.htm>

One of the conclusion of this research was that ER is feasible in CBR programmes in rural areas of the developing world. It can be done by involve all the different groups of persons with disabilities. Another conclusion was that ER can strengthen the CBR programmes by facilitating the participation of persons with disabilities in different CBR activities and by promoting their empowerment.

## **TARGET GROUPS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDE**

This Guide is targeted at organisations and persons involved in CBR projects. It is also targeted at organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs), especially those working at community and peripheral levels.

This Guide is written in simple language so that persons working in CBR programmes, without any previous experience of research, can understand it and if possible, explore and conduct simple emancipatory research (ER).

The Guide focuses on practical aspects rather than on theoretical issues and gives different practical examples.

Persons and organisations without any previous experience of conducting research, would need some basic understanding about research issues, such as how to identify research questions and methodologies, understanding how to select a sample and how to minimize bias, before embarking on any field research.

If you have no previous experience in conducting research, you can find some basic information on doing research in CBR at the Aifo website at the link given below:

[http://www.aifo.it/english/proj/research/sparkcbr/attachments/basics\\_of\\_research\\_manual\\_draft01.pdf](http://www.aifo.it/english/proj/research/sparkcbr/attachments/basics_of_research_manual_draft01.pdf)

## INTRODUCTION TO EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH IN CBR

Emancipatory research should satisfy the following conditions:

- It should have persons with disabilities from the CBR project area **participating as researchers** in partnership with other researchers such as CBR staff, in ways that respect their human dignity.
- It adopts a research methodology that promotes building of critical consciousness among all the different persons and organisations involved in the research about the different barriers faced by persons with disabilities and the causes of those barriers.
- It builds reciprocal understanding and solidarity among persons with different disabilities, especially among the more marginalized and oppressed persons among them.
- It promotes a critical understanding of human rights, CRPD and national laws and schemes related to disability.
- It promotes strengthening of organisations of persons with disabilities including self-help groups, DPOs and federations of DPOs.
- It results in concrete and practical changes in daily lives of persons with disabilities directly and indirectly.

### **Steps for planning and implementing an emancipatory research:**

- Identifying possible issues for emancipatory research and making a research plan
- Identifying group of persons with disabilities who are going to implement the research
- Clarifying role of CBR staff in the research
- Identifying external scientific and logistic support to the persons with disabilities implementing the research
- Organising capacity building of the involved persons for conducting research
- Identifying the supporting mechanisms for the emancipatory research implementers
- Deciding the research questions
- Defining the research methodology and process
- Conducting the research
- Documenting the research process
- Analysing the research results
- Distributing, sharing and using the research results to promote change and empowerment

All these steps will be discussed briefly in this Guide.

## PREPARING THE GROUND

Emancipatory research can be a **transformative process** for the CBR staff and for persons with disabilities, their families and communities. To be a transformative process, it has to involve and work with all the stake-holders from the beginning, especially disabled persons and their communities, so that they can contribute to the process and assume ownership of the research understandings, knowledge and results.

Not all the groups of stakeholders will be involved in the research process in the same way. Usually a smaller group of persons will have more intense and regular involvement in the research. It may be easier to focus on persons with disabilities who already have some kind of formal or informal leadership role in the communities. These can include representatives of self-help groups, representatives of local DPOs, and representatives of DPO federations.

Some other research activities will require much wider involvement of persons with disabilities in the communities. Thus, Community meetings with larger numbers of persons with disabilities and other community members can be organised to share the idea of research, to ask for their opinions about key issues for research and to ask for their suggestions about persons with disabilities who can be involved in specific research activities.

It is also important to ensure that **all** the different groups of persons with disabilities, both men and women, are involved in these discussions from the beginning. Usually some groups of persons such as persons with hearing and speech disabilities, persons with mental illness and persons with disabilities due to leprosy may face more difficulties in participation. Even when they participate in meetings, they may not speak during discussions. You need to keep this in mind and adopt suitable strategies so that **all** different persons can participate and express their opinions.

### INITIAL COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The research team had organised 2 preliminary meetings with representatives of persons with disabilities to create awareness about the emancipatory research. About a 100 persons took part in these two meetings.

Finally after the draft research protocol was prepared, a third community meeting was organised. Participants included representatives of the district DPOs and many active members of SHGs. Some individuals who have been active in the disability issues in the district were also invited to this meeting. About 60 persons with disabilities took part in it.

Efforts were made to ensure to get persons from all the different areas covered under CBR project. Persons from different socio-economic backgrounds and different age groups were invited. Though efforts were made to invite both men and women with disabilities, few women came for this meeting.

Many persons asked, "What will I get from the meeting"? CBR staff was not sure how to answer this question. Even staff itself was not clear about the purpose of the research so it was not easy for them to explain the purpose of the meeting to the people.

In the meeting, some persons were disappointed that they did not get anything. They had come hoping to receive something like loans or technical appliances. The research team realized that they had not prepared the CBR staff properly for organising this meeting.

## IDENTIFYING EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH IMPLEMENTERS

ER is implemented by persons with disabilities in collaboration with other groups of persons such as CBR staff. As CBR programmes can involve hundreds of persons with disabilities, you need to identify a small group of persons who will be the main implementers of the research.

Creating a core research group of persons with disabilities who will play a leadership role in the research is fundamental to process of emancipatory research. The group has to be big enough to include the different stakeholders among persons with disabilities. At the same time, it has to be small enough so that it can be managed and persons in the group can work together.

### IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH IMPLEMENTERS

The initial idea was to create 3 groups of researchers among persons with disabilities from the Mandya CBR programme area -

- A group of 16 persons, representing different groups of persons with disabilities, for finalizing the research protocol and for supervising the whole process. They were called Research Core Group (RCG) or Empowerment Support Group (ESG).
- A group of 10 persons with disabilities for facilitating the research meetings (Research Facilitators).
- A group of persons with disabilities who will prepare the meeting reports in local language (Kannada) and in English called rapporteurs (2 persons, one male and one female)..



About 50% of these persons were women. They included persons with different education and socio-economic backgrounds. CBR workers and district DPO played a key role in identifying them.

Overall this process worked in the research, though there were some problems. Some of the persons selected for the roles were not very active or had other engagements and were unable to participate in meetings. Thus, they were replaced after some months. Similarly, initially it was not easy to identify any representatives of deaf persons, persons with mental illness, with convulsions and with

intellectual disability. However with time, all the different groups of persons were represented.

They included some disabled CBR workers. However, it was not possible to identify a persons for preparing English reports from the CBR programme. Therefore a disability activist with experience of CBR from outside the CBR programme area was identified for this role.

The experience showed that persons with different disabilities and very different backgrounds including persons without any formal education can be researchers in Emancipatory process.

## **ROLE OF CBR STAFF IN ER**

CBR programmes are supposed to work in active collaboration with persons with disabilities, their families and communities. Thus, CBR workers and persons with disabilities in the communities should see themselves as partners. However, often CBR workers see themselves as "service providers" while persons with disabilities are seen as "service receivers".

In ER, where our goal is to involve persons with disabilities as the "research implementers" is it possible to involve CBR workers? Isn't there a risk that CBR workers will try to dominate and show that they have more knowledge and skills?

It is a complex issue and requires careful reflection and planning.

Many CBR workers are themselves persons with disabilities. Involving CBR workers in the ER, to work together with persons with disabilities, can create partnerships between the workers, persons with disabilities and the communities.

It can also be argued that purpose of the research is to strengthen and improve the CBR programmes and thus involving CBR staff in the process of building critical consciousness and understanding of barriers is central to the goals of emancipatory research.

At the same time, research may bring out areas and issues where CBR programme is not working well and thus can be seen as a criticism of the work of CBR workers. It is also possible that some of the persons with disabilities may be afraid of speaking frankly in front of CBR staff for the fear of hurting them or for the fear of losing the services from CBR programme.

Thus it is important for the research process to be organised in such a way that underlines the values of mutual respect and dignity of all the persons involved in it, both the CBR workers and persons with disabilities. At the same time, issues of specific roles of each groups in the research and in decision-making process must be clarified. Depending upon the issues of research, the two groups may need some separate spaces for their discussions without the presence of other persons.

It is important for CBR managers to bring out both these issues in a neutral way to ensure that both the groups understand it. They have to reassure persons with disabilities that they need to share their real feelings, opinions and ideas. They also have to reassure CBR staff that research is for strengthening CBR activities and not for punishing persons.

### **CBR WORKERS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Mamatha, a member of Empowerment Support Group (ESG) said, "In the meeting, CBR staff was conducting the meeting and my role was that of observer. I felt that they were not taking into consideration my opinions and suggestions. So after the meeting, during the review process, I shared my feelings with the whole group. It was agreed that our opinion will be equally important. Person conducting the meeting has to listen to our opinions and suggestions."

Putlingamma, another member of ESG said, "I like the meeting with CBR staff because it helps me to understand what kind of work they do, how they take decisions, what kind of challenges they face."

## **EXPERT SUPPORT FOR EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH**

Conducting research on disability issues requires specific skills from different disciplines such as statistics, sociology, anthropology, rehabilitation and education. While there can be some persons with disabilities from the CBR project area who have some of these competencies, it is unrealistic to expect all of these expertise locally. This is also because often CBR projects are in rural areas and in resource-poor situations.

Thus an appropriate group of persons with expert knowledge may be needed to support the work of persons with disabilities implementing emancipatory research process. Keeping in line with the philosophy of emancipatory research, as far as possible, this external group of persons with specific skills, should also be persons with disabilities.

A key source for identifying persons for the external support group can be local or national federations of organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs). Another key source for identifying persons for the external support group can be local or national NGOs that are active in the field of disability. Finally appropriate persons can also be identified from academic and research institutions.

### **SETTING UP A SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY GROUP**

A Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) was created. It included 2 persons from universities, 2 persons representing federations of DPOs and 4 persons representing NGOs working in the area of disability and rehabilitation. Most of the SAG members were also persons with disabilities.



SAG members advised about the research methodology and reviewed all the research protocols prepared by core group of persons with disabilities from the CBR projects areas.

They also participated in three review meetings, where they listened to the research work done by core group of persons with disabilities, shared their own ideas and promoted critical consciousness about the significance of issues emerging from the research.

At all the times, it was clarified that SAG members' role was advisory and core group of persons with disabilities from the CBR projects area had to take the final decision about the research.

## TRAINING OF RESEARCH IMPLEMENTERS

Persons with disabilities identified to conduct the research process are likely to be a heterogeneous group. They need some general skills such as how to become a group, how to resolve conflicts and how to work together with other persons for conducting emancipatory research.

Depending upon the kind of issues selected for the research, they also need some specific skills about research methodology such as avoiding bias, preparing reports, facilitating meetings, participatory methodologies, CRPD, social and human rights models of disabilities.

Training for each skill requires definition of competencies, a training plan and identification of trainers. Make sure that training is accessible to all the different groups of persons with disabilities.

Even with the best of planning, it is possible that some of the persons asked to play some role in the emancipatory research, will not be able to continue and will have to be replaced. Thus, planning needs to think of possible replacements and how these will be trained.

### TRAINING OF RESEARCH FACILITATORS

Ten persons with disabilities (5 male and 5 female), all above 18 years age, and with a 11 to 12 years of school education, good communication skills (both oral and written) were identified from the project area as facilitators. They participated in a one week long full-time residential training course.



Some of them were individuals recognised in their communities, some were leaders of self-help groups or DPOs/federations and some were persons with disabilities working as CBR workers.

The training mainly focused on - introduction about CBR projects, understanding about different disabilities, social model of disability, principles of CBR approach, research background, general research protocol, emancipatory approach and methodology, roles and responsibilities of facilitators in the research, participatory methodologies, communication skills, observation methods, video recording, conducting group discussions.

Training included role plays and simulations of research meetings. All the training sessions were in Kannada language. All research documents were translated into Kannada and distributed to the participants. By rotation, different participants prepared daily reports of training course.

## **IDENTIFYING RESEARCH ISSUES**

ER can look into wide variety of issues, to gain new understandings and to find solutions.

Often many persons with disabilities are among the poorest persons in a community and thus face issues of survival, shelter and sufficient food. In rural areas, access to services such as health services, technical appliances and education, is often limited and difficult. Some of these services may not be available for all the persons in the communities and not just for persons with disabilities such as absence of public transport.

While all persons with disabilities may face some common barriers, some specific disabilities may also be linked with specific barriers. For example, persons with leprosy disabilities, persons with convulsions, persons with mental illness and persons with albinism, may face serious issues of stigma and social discrimination.

Persons may face negative attitudes in their own families. Issues of isolation, lack of social life, abuse and violence are common problems across countries and societies.

Oppression and marginalization of persons on the basis of gender, religion, ethnic or linguistic origin, castes, sexuality, etc. can be issues for all the persons in communities. To these, disability may be an added factor for marginalization, exposing persons to multiple oppressions. For example a girl child with disability from a minority group can face marginalization in many different ways.

All these can be subjects of an emancipatory research in a CBR programme. Since issues are so many, some way of identification of priority issues for the research may be needed.

### **IDENTIFYING ISSUES FOR RESEARCH**

Through group discussions, persons with disabilities discussed and identified all the different issues that they faced. There were 33 cross-cutting issues that the participants thought were important. These included motherhood for disabled women, physical accessibility, transport, minority communities, political participation, etc.

It was not possible for ER to look into all of these issues. So they were asked to look into all the issues that were identified in terms of :

- Importance of the issue
- Feasibility of doing research on that issue
- Possibility of making a change in the situation

Thus, all the issues were prioritized and then grouped together for similarities. The issues that were very similar were combined. For example, social stigma, inferiority complex, attitudes and social discrimination were all combined into one area called "Attitudes, stigma and discrimination".

In this way, finally the nine priority cross-cutting issues were identified for the ER: Attitudes, stigma & discrimination; poverty and disability; accessibility, physical accessibility and, access to services; children with disability, orphans with disability; violence and physical abuse; sports, culture, entertainment; aids and technical appliances; gender & disability; and, elderly persons and disability

## DECIDING THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Emancipatory research is seen mainly as a qualitative research. However, some times, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies may be combined for a better understanding of issues. A key part of the research is the critical reflection on process and results of the research. It is needed for promoting critical consciousness and empowerment of persons participating in the research.

Some examples of **quantitative researches** that can be carried out under the emancipatory approach can be:

- Number of men and women with disabilities having access to mobility appliances
- Number of persons with disabilities who report episodes of psychological and physical abuse and violence
- Number of persons with disabilities who receive disability pension

While the quantitative research provides information about the extent of a problem, **qualitative research** can go deeper to understand the issues.

For example, if during quantitative research, the research can show that only a limited percentage of persons with disabilities receive mobility appliances. Then qualitative research can help to understand barriers to receiving mobility appliances. In this way, research can help in identifying strategies for overcoming those barriers.

A key step in the research process is to try to understand the situation through the lens of CRPD and the social model of disabilities, with reflections on how individuals, families, communities and society build stereotypes and barriers, and how persons with disabilities and their organisations (DPOs) can fight those stereotypes and barriers.

Thus advocacy for promoting a positive change individually and collectively, in the families, in communities and in the legal frameworks of the county, is part of the emancipatory research process.

### UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS THROUGH LIFE STORIES

A total of 369 persons with disabilities took part in research meetings. It was decided to collect some basic quantitative data about all the participants of research meetings such as age, gender, education level, and membership of SHG and DPO. It was thought that this quantitative data will provide additional information about the lives of persons with disabilities.

The main focus of the research was on qualitative methodologies based on sharing of life stories, identification of barriers and identification of possible strategies to overcome those barriers by different stakeholders. Meeting participants were helped to critically examine the barriers they faced in their daily lives. They were helped to reflect if they could change those barriers by themselves, together with their families and together with DPOs. They also discussed if local authorities, government and CBR programmes could be asked to do more or do differently.

The approach of "Sharing of life stories and identification of barriers" was selected for the research as it was felt that it will build their critical consciousness. It helped the participants to see that in spite of their different disabilities, their coming from different parts of the districts and from very different family and educational backgrounds, all of

them faced same or similar barriers. The discussion on how could different barriers be overcome was important for persons to decide collective action through advocacy. It was also important for CBR programme to improve its own way of working.

The participants were also asked to mark their villages on the area map, to stimulate the understanding that it was not an issue of only one area or one community, but rather men and women of different villages and communities faced same barriers. It was also meant to help them understand their numerical strength that can be used collectively to promote a change.

At the end of the meetings, to help them to reflect on their discussions and to promote critical consciousness, they were asked to plan and record of a one hour long video-message that contained the main issues emerged in their meeting. All of them were asked to participate in the preparation of the video-message, each one of them contributing with 2-3 minutes of a message.

Finally, for each meeting, a report was prepared in Kannada, using simple and easy to understand language, that was shared with and approved by all participants before the end of the meeting. This was another way to ask meeting participants to reflect on their experience.

During the meetings, key persons from national and state level DPO federations and local authorities were also invited, so that they could provide their input about the barriers faced persons living in rural areas.

As you can see, the ER project used a variety of approaches and methods during the meetings to help and stimulate persons with disabilities to understand and to take collective actions in overcoming different barriers.

## **PARTICIPATION OF THE COMMUNITIES**

A key issue for emancipatory research in CBR is expanding the research process to a larger group of persons.

Thus CBR projects wishing to adopt emancipatory research need to look at different ways in which the research process can involve larger number of persons with disabilities and their communities.

### **INVOLVING COMMUNITIES IN ER**

Persons with disabilities had prepared one hour videos during the research meetings, in which all meeting participants had participated. Meeting participants were asked if they wanted to show their video to their communities. Some participants agreed. Thus, it was decided to test the impact of these videos in those communities.

Meeting report of one such community video show explained:

"The room where we wanted to show the video was full of people. Everybody knew that a blind girl from their village had participated in the video and they all wanted to see her. Village president, school teacher, priest, everyone came. There were so many persons that had to go away because no place left in the room.

The video was from the research meeting on livelihoods. So before showing the video we had discussion on what kind of livelihood opportunities are there for persons with disabilities.

Then Savitha, shared her experience of going to the research meeting. She said that she was afraid to go the meeting as it was outside the village and how CBR worker had convinced her. The meeting was useful because she met many other disabled persons and learned about different schemes of professional training and work for persons with disabilities.

Savitha also talked about her experience of making the video and how she was nervous. People in the meeting laughed when Savitha talked about this experience.

In the video when Savitha sang a song, everyone clapped.

People watched different persons with disabilities tell about their lives and their difficulties in finding work. After the vide there was some discussion on what could be done to help persons with disabilities to become independent."

## DOCUMENTING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Emancipatory research is an "action research". This means that the process of building understandings about causes, barriers and processes often lead to practical actions.

For example in S-PARK/CBR research, the discussions about the laws related to the per cent of village budget that should be used for persons with disabilities led to immediate advocacy actions to access those funds in many villages.

Thus emancipatory research has the potential to generate many local actions and changes. However, in such a situation it is easy to focus all the attention on "action" and not enough attention towards preparation of systematic and complete reports about the research process - how research was carried out, what information was collected, what understandings were gained from the process and which actions resulted from that process.

Documenting all the different phases and activities of the research through reports, images and/or videos is an important part of ER. Some of the ways in which this documentation is useful include:

- Draw lessons from different experiences to understand what worked and in which ways.
- To create baseline information for future comparisons to see how the situations changed over a period of time.
- To help persons with disabilities involved in the research process to strengthen their own critical consciousness.
- To share information and knowledge with others engaged in similar works.

At the same time, it is important to ensure that documentation is accessible to all the different groups of persons involved in the research.

### ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTATION OF RESEARCH PROCESS

In S-PARK/CBR research different approaches were used to document the process.



For all meeting participants, a form was filled and information put in Excel sheets so that it could be counted and analysed. During the meeting, an English report was prepared for the scientific advisory members and a Kannada report was prepared for all meeting participants. Some information was shared through mapping exercises and pictures during the meetings. In some meetings, a separate report about women's opinions and discussions were prepared. Finally, all meetings prepared a video-report in which all meeting participants collaborated.

Special care was taken during research to ensure that research reports were accessible to all participants. For example, in the meeting on barriers faced by persons with intellectual disabilities, different designs and pictures were used to facilitate understanding of the issues.

## **ANALYSING THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

Emancipatory research requires different levels of analysis of results. Information collected during the research must be analysed in such ways so that persons with disabilities can gain better understanding of their own experiences. This aspect of research is key to promotion of empowerment in ER.

For example, in S-PARK/CBR research, persons with disabilities shared their life stories. They were helped by research core group members and facilitators who shared their own life stories. Facilitators promoted empathetic listening and probed gently with questions to identify different events in people's lives. At the end of the process of sharing life stories, facilitators helped the participants to think of different physical, attitudinal, cultural, social, communication, and economic barriers so that they could understand how barriers shaped their lives. Finally discussions on barriers was linked to strategies for overcoming them by discussing how could those barriers be overcome and which stake-holders could play a role in over-coming them.

### **Global Research Analysis**

Research data and information collected during the research can be analysed by persons trained in research methodologies. Usually this analysis needs support from persons with specific training in research such as epidemiologists, clinicians, sociologists, anthropologists, statisticians, etc.

This kind of analysis requires specific skills, time and resources. Sometimes, persons from relevant departments of local universities or NGOs may be interested in providing this kind of support.

More detailed information about specific research analysis are outside the scope of this Guide.

However, it is important to emphasize that if such a global research analysis is done, it is equally important to bring back its key findings back to the persons with disabilities and CBR staff involved in the emancipatory research. All of it may not be easy to understand, so effort will be needed to work with research experts to communicate this information in simple and easy to understand language.

## **ANALYSING RESEARCH DOCUMENTS & REPORTS**

All meeting participants participated in preparing their own video-report for all research meetings. For each research meeting a report was also prepared by a reporter in local language (Kannada) that was discussed and approved by all meeting participants.

Another person prepared an English report for all meetings. At the end of the research, all the life-stories in the meeting reports were analysed according to certain key words linked to basic principles of CBR and to different barriers. All the demographic and general information about the participants was also analysed with the help of a statistical analysis programme.

The preliminary results of the analysis done by external persons was shared with all the members of Research Core Group and facilitators, for their comments and feedback.

## **DISTRIBUTING AND SHARING THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

As the emancipatory research is carried out, is documented and analysed, it is also important to plan the distribution of the research results and new understandings gained from it, to all the relevant stakeholders.

The relevant stakeholders for sharing the results of emancipatory research include local communities, CBR workers, local and national DPOs, local and national authorities, national and international NGOs, specialized institutions and services dealing with disability and rehabilitation issues, and other CBR programmes.

A communication plan is needed to identify the best ways to reach and inform all these different stakeholders. The research information may need to be adapted for each group of stakeholders so that it is accessible to them.

Development of new information technologies and communication systems, means that sharing of information about the research can also be done through the social networking tools such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and email mailing lists.

Equally important is to share information about the research to the scientific community through articles and reports in scientific journals. Usually these articles are prepared by persons who carry out specific global analysis of data since writing these articles requires specialized skills.

## **PROMOTING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH**

Promoting empowerment of persons with disabilities, their families and their communities is a key objective of all CBR programmes. Emancipatory research approach can help CBR projects to strengthen the empowerment promotion activities of CBR.

Here we would like to summarize the key aspects of emancipatory research that have been already explained in this Guide, that can be important for promoting empowerment:

- Ensure that all group of persons with disabilities can play an active and decision making role in the research. If you feel that certain groups of persons with disabilities, such as persons with mental illness or intellectual impairment, cannot play an active role, take it as challenge to involve and work with those groups of persons. Make sure to support more marginalized groups such as women, children and elderly, for their participation. Face your own biases to understand that inclusion and participation are possible.
- Use methodologies that help people to share their experiences and learn from each other's experiences, that respect their human dignity and right to privacy, and that also show the ways to overcome barriers and obstacles. Include moments of individual and collective reflection in the research process that allow persons to gain new understandings about the structural causes of barriers and how these can be overcome.
- Inform persons about CRPD, use it as an instrument for discussions and guidance, so that persons involved in the research can measure their own life experiences and compare them with what are their rights. CRPD should become something practical and concrete that can help persons to change and improve their local realities.
- Make networks with self-help groups, DPOs, federations, other organisations working in the different fields such as disability, rehabilitation, health, education, livelihood and development. Learn from others and share your own experiences to show how you have brought changes in your communities.

### **HOW DOES ER PROMOTE EMPOWERMENT**

S-PARK/CBR research coordinator Jayanth was asked to reflect on what had promoted empowerment of persons with disabilities participating in emancipatory research. He came up with the following points that helped in promoting empowerment:

- **Environment:** The general environment in emancipatory research meetings was open for persons to express their needs and problems, they were listening to solutions and real life examples. This helped in their empowerment.
- **Inclusion:** There was lot of attention towards inclusion in the emancipatory research like inclusion in discussions, giving equal opportunities to different persons, encouraging participation, taking into consideration the views of everyone.
- **Life stories:** Sharing real life experiences was very powerful way of discussions, persons talked of incidents they had personally faced and the solutions they had found, had very strong impact. These were stories of people who live in same conditions, in the same area, they have your same problem. So in the end you felt that if others like me have done it, even I can manage to do it.
- **Demonstration:** Emancipatory research meetings were an opportunity to see

and learn so many things. You could see assistive devices, hearing aids, mobility cane, wheel chairs, physiotherapy, etc. and also see other persons who were using them and talk to them to ask what it meant for them. It was not just theory, but actual people were already doing it, it had a strong message.

- Information about different issues such as differences between intellectual disability and mental illness, legislations, human rights, government benefits, schemes and programmes, self-care measures, were being discussed in a systematic way. So persons could go back from the meeting with lot of ideas and information.
- Many external guests were involved in emancipatory research, persons who can be seen as role models. They came and shared their life stories. They were persons who have disabilities, they come from humble background and they were successful, they had fought against the odds and overcome the barriers.
- There were many announcements during emancipatory research meetings – about memberships in DPO, about activities of SHGs, about contact information of different organisations. These also helped in promoting empowerment.
- At the start of meetings in emancipatory research, all participants together watched the video made during previous meetings. So they could see the kind of impact the research was having on persons with disabilities.
- Making new video at the end of a meeting was also a powerful tool to promote empowerment. People had to think, plan and decide what kind of things they wanted to tell to other persons, to their families and communities. It forced them to reflect about their own lives and how they could change themselves.
- In emancipatory research, we did not limit ourselves in discussing the problems and barriers. But it was equally important to discuss possible solutions. Discussing what we could do ourselves and how we could influence local authorities, were strong messages that helped in empowerment.
- We had some specific sseparate women-only sessions on gender, that allowed participants to bring out issues that were not possible to discuss in mixed groups.

## FINAL NOTES ...

This Guide is a collaborative effort. It is result of interactions with a large number of persons with disabilities.

We started this Guide with the idea of having something in simple language, that can help persons working at community level in CBR programmes to understand the concepts of emancipatory research and use them in their daily work. The document in your hands is only a beginning, and it needs to be simplified and improved.

We also wanted this Guide to be very practical with real examples from CBR projects. For the time being, it only has examples from S-PARK/CBR research. We hope that other CBR projects will experiment with emancipatory research and share their experiences with us. We shall be happy to add other significant examples to this Guide.

We welcome if any of its reader would like to translate this Guide or parts of it in other languages. Please inform us about it and if possible send us a copy of the translated Guide by email.

Send your comments and feedback to [sunil.deepak@aifo.it](mailto:sunil.deepak@aifo.it)