

Community Involvement / Ownership

Group 4 and 5

- 1. Creating community awareness about CBR:** Such activities need to be compatible with the culture; there is need to project successful role models of disabled persons; there are different levels of community – political, local, etc. and each needs different strategies for each level; at national level, planners are not always aware about disability issues; it is important to explain that CBR is not just about disabled persons and that the activities will help the whole communities; ministries of information, social welfare, NGOs, education, etc. all must be involved in awareness; awareness linked with lobbying so that policies are put in to action; people need to be aware of the benefits of CBR; finding resources for these activities may be a difficulty; it is important to involve service providers, so as to improve the access of disabled people to services; before raising awareness at community level, it is important to raise awareness of decision-makers; awareness can not be general but must be clearly targeted at the target group; best awareness is success stories of other communities in starting CBR and this inspires other communities to want to start it;
- 2. Diversity among disabled people:** Different persons have different needs, so CBR is a complex issue when we think of programmes; a person who works with visually impaired persons, may not be able to work with persons having other impairments; it is better to know something well and do it well, rather than trying to do every thing in a bad way;
- 3. Disability as a human rights issue:** important to promote it as a human rights issue and empower disabled persons so that they can articulate their own needs; however, the governmental structures of various ministries may not be able to deal with human rights issues, feeling that this does not come in their responsibility; NGOs working with women, children, etc. must be aware about disability issues;
- 4. Policies on paper and the reality:** Good policies may be there on paper but they may not exist in reality; governments are unaware about disability issues and life-conditions of disabled people; disabled people do not exist in the budgets and plans of governments; national policies and strategies are needed; Vietnam shows that active involvement of government is important to ensure success of CBR; projects may start as pilot but after 5 years, they need to mainstream even if it is not easy to a successful model and make it regular;
- 5. Community participation in planning, implementing and evaluation:** This is a huge role and there are many barriers, which must be recognised by CBR workers, so that realistic targets are planned; capacity building of communities is needed so that they take more active role; implementing agencies from outside should be seen only as catalysts; committees involving disabled persons are needed but these may require important resources; no CBR programme has complete participation of community in all activities of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, so it is a gradual process to be started and needs to be kept in mind at the time of strategic planning; in Mumbai, India, in slum areas, they tired gradual involvement of communities because they need to learn skills first and must gain confidence before they can take an active role; national and other committees with 50% of members being disabled people are needed; communities need training and can do simple monitoring; it is not practical devolve all decision making to village level; bottom-up process at community level needs to be matched with top-down design process; communities may not be uniform but divided by socio-economic status, other factors like language, etc., so participation may not be equal; community leaders must be involved;
- 6. Disability data (statistics):** Such data is needed for convincing governments about the importance of disability issues; statistics can be very different so we should be careful with these; WHO estimates can be done to calculate the need; if percentage of disabled persons is

very low, this may have negative effect since they may feel that this is not an important group; data collection methodology influences the data collected; data collection requires resources; census data may be a good way of collecting basic information;

- 7. Participation of disabled persons in CBR:** All committees must include disabled persons; all new laws related to disabled persons must be formulated in collaboration with disabled people; DPOs can tell governments that they want CBR; important to know from countries, how disabled people are involved in monitoring outputs and services; DPOs are not equal to CBR, but they can play a very important role in making a success of CBR; DPOs must work together with CBR programmes;
- 8. Decentralisation of services:** In Mexico, the governmental services are being decentralised and privatised in state and municipal levels; role of governments is fundamental but NGOs and other partners also play an important role; decentralisation can also create chaos; in Costa Rica the approach to CBR has been centralised from the top, while the people are not used to take responsibility; communities don't know how to lobby governments and how to create awareness;
- 9. Linking with existing programmes:** If PHC is there, CBR should be linked to it; existing successful programmes can be linked to CBR; CBR is linked with health and education programmes, so it must work with them and at the same time involve disabled people; general development programmes like poverty alleviation programmes, water and sanitation programmes, etc. also must be involved about disability issues; CBR should be seen as a cross-cutting issue for promoting disability awareness in all the programmes; in Jamaica, the networks of disabled persons make sure that in all development programmes the disability issues are represented; some specific aspects may require specific programme or activities, but wherever possible, we must try integration; international agencies like UN bodies, World Bank, etc. also must look at disability as a cross-cutting issue; PHC system if it exists at all levels, it can be very important for promoting and supporting CBR; important to think of disabled persons in poverty-reduction programmes; make broad alliances and involve others, and not feel that CBR belongs only to us;
- 10. Empowerment:** It means deciding for yourself, may need economic independence, capacity for independent living is important; empowerment is a very broad concept and includes social, political and cultural aspects, etc.; dialogue between service providers and clients is needed for empowerment;
- 11. Community volunteers:** Volunteers may be seen as part of "idealised" communities; volunteers have fast turn over; with all the limitations, the volunteers are very important for community involvement and ownership and should be encouraged, however programmes can not run only with volunteers; communities should be seen as grouping of interest groups and for disability issues the interest groups should include disabled persons, their families, friends, neighbours, teachers, etc.; volunteers may some times need reimbursement for their travel, or they may be given a small stipend but it is less than the usual salaries; volunteers are important for sustainability of the CBR programme;