

### Community Based Rehabilitation within Development Programs of Community Development Associations

By Dr. Abdel Hamid Kabesh

#### Problem Statement

Disability is a major issue in community development by virtue of its health, psychological social and economic consequences.

Disability constitutes a major problem in Egypt. It affects the quality of life of persons with disabilities (PWD) themselves, the welfare of their families and the development of the whole community.

A very wide gap exists between the needs of persons with disabilities and the services available for them. Most of the rehabilitation services in Egypt are provided within an institution-based rehabilitation (IBR) approach stemming from charity and not related to development.

Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) is a strategy within community development, which aims at rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and integration of persons with disabilities within their communities and the society as a whole. It is implemented within a comprehensive social framework, through the efforts of persons with disabilities themselves, their families and their local communities with the use of the appropriate health, educational, vocational and social services.

Expansion & replication of the CBR projects need to have local bodies that can organize the different phases of work, can facilitate satisfactory participation & representation of local community members, can activate mobilization of local resource and coordination of relevant services at different levels and can support project's sustainability. Community development associations (CDAs) have good potentials to play this role, being widely distributed, possessing relatively more freedom and flexibility, closer to the members of community and having official support of the MOSA that considers them as its implementing facilities. To date however most (CDAs) do not put working with persons with disabilities on their agendas. The few (CDAs) that work with persons with disabilities consider their involvement as a charity and do not relate it to the development of their local communities.

Recruitment of (CDAs) in Egypt to initiate, develop and sustain CBR projects or programs will be a very important step to spread the approach of CBR, to provide a real and practicable solution to the problem of disability and to improve the quality, justice and outcome of community development as a whole. CDAs however, have several barriers hindering their involvement in CBR.

An important prerequisite for involvement of (CDAs) in CBR programs is a deep and comprehensive bottom-up understanding and knowledge of how these (CDAs) consider disability in the context of development as a whole and within their own developmental work in particular. Broadly speaking, this entails gaining a direct understanding of how (CDAs) conceive development, disability and the relation between them, what do they know about CBR, the extent to which they can be actively involved in CBR programs, their particular needs for initiating, developing and sustaining their own CBR programs and how and when and in what context can such work be started.



**Objectives:**

The aim of the research is to promote the implementation of CBR by CDAs as a means of influencing comprehensive, integrative and fair development for the whole community and a better quality to life for all community members with and without disabilities.

**General Objectives:**

The general objectives of the research are:

- To identify the ways in which the concept of disability within the context of development is perceived by CDAs.
- To identify the obstacles hindering the involvement of CDAs in CBR programs.
- To identify the ways in which CBR can be included in the core of work of CDAs.

**Methodology:**

The research is essentially a descriptive study. It covers 17 CDAs and 360 persons in 3 governorates; Cairo, El Gharbiah and El Menia. The research fits in a context of on going development & rehabilitation projects. It tries to give answers to questions and solutions to problems that are probably crucial to both development & persons with disabilities.

The research work included:

- Choosing a suitable representative sample.
- Preparation and testing the questionnaires.
- Training of field researchers.
- Preparation of a suitable data base.
- Conducting meetings, focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews.
- Data collection, entry and analysis.
- Drawing conclusions, recommendations and practical realistic plans of action.

**Main results:**

- The CDAs perform a variety of activities that cover different areas of community development. They are generally appreciated by the beneficiaries. They generally do not sufficiently appreciate the importance of community empowerment and involvement as essential components of community development. They do not sufficiently value the role of community support in securing the sustainability of their activities.
- Only 3 CDAs (17.6%) provide services to PWD. Services provided include subsidizing, training, awareness, treatment, rehabilitation, projects and cultural & religious activities. The number of PWD served was (30) in one CDA, (6) in the second and not specified in the third.
- In CDAs working with PWD, the roles of the latter are limited. They are mostly only recipients of services provided to them (58.3%). They share infrequently in implementation (29.1%) and in planning and follow up (25%).
- The representation of PWD in the CDAs was very poor. They were not represented in the boards in any of the CDAs. One general assembly has (10) members of PWD, another has only (2) PWD. The rest of CDAs has no PWD members.
- The main causes given by the CDAs for not providing services for (PWD) are financial difficulties (71.3%) and lack of sufficient experiences (42.7%). Causes were not attributed to factors related to (PWD) themselves or to their families in (78.6%) of the CDAs or to community related causes in (92.9%) of them.
- Employees of CDAs possess relatively positive attitudes towards (PWD) that are unfortunately not based on or supported by actual sufficient knowledge and experience. They scored on the positive scale higher than on the negative scale. Yet, (23.7%) of them could not express how they define disability, (31.2%) of them could not recognize types of disability, (80.8%) built their assumptions only on personal impressions and (54.8%) of them however, had not previously dealt with persons with disabilities (PWD). (21.5%) of them do not know what is meant by rehabilitation and (22.6%) could not recognize services that can be provided for the disabled.

- o The majority of CDAs administration (76.5%) agreed that there is a relation between disability and development. They expressed that disability is included in development (61.5%), that it actually hinders development (53.9%) and that success in facing disability can help development (38.5%).
- o The majority of CDAs administrations (82.4%) are aware of CBR. Among the employees on the other hand only (50.5%) reported that they are aware about CBR. Both the CDAs administrations and employees seem to have a general idea on community based activities and projects. They seem to appreciate the concept and the components and activities included in it.
- o Factors recognized to hinder the involvement of CDAs in CBR include insufficient funding (41.7%), insufficient experience (33.3%) and insufficient human resources and coordination (25%) were the most recognized obstacles. They also include complete lack of representation of (PWD) on the boards of all CDAs and their very limited presence in the general assemblies (not present in (88.2%) of the CDAs). These factors also include lack of local community leaders' support (58.8%), lack of coordination with governmental authorities (52.9%) and other NGOs (47.1%).
- o Possible roles of CDAs in CBR recognized include education and rehabilitation (85.5%), clubs for PWD (62.3%) and small projects (43.5%) were the most commonly mentioned possibilities.
- o The recognized CDAs ' the needs to be involved in CBR included training of staff (64.7%), funding (58.8%), community support (41.2%), coordination with other CDAs (29.4%) and more staff (23.5%).
- o The recognized steps to be taken by CDAs to start implementing CBR programs included securing necessary funds (48.7%), training manpower (16.7%), increasing their human resources (14.1%), needs identification (12.8%) and planning (10.3%), (52.6%) recognized that all these procedures are needed.

### **Recommendations**

- o Encouraging service providing rehabilitation centers and institutions that possess sufficient expertise to adopt CBR strategies through influential campaigns and active support by MOSA.
- o Coordinating joint work on a national strategic and governorate level CBR plans.
- o Choosing suitable geographical areas for implementation of more CBR projects according to preset criteria and plans.
- o Conducting national and local awareness raising program to improve knowledge of and attitudes towards the disabled and the CBR among CDAs.
- o Involving local CDAs in participatory planning of their own CBR projects.
- o Securing sufficient financial support, providing technical support and training for the CDAs both in the area of disability and development.
- o Implementing CBR projects through cooperation of MOSA, support Providing experienced NGOs, local CDAs and local authorities.

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