

**Community Engagement and Rehabilitation Alliance**



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**UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY-BASED  
REHABILITATION PROGRAMME**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Community Engagement and Rehabilitation Alliance (CERA) is non- government, charitable Organization that aims to work with Community and faith based initiatives in the Kingdom of Eswatini in promoting humanity. The alliance is registered by the Swaziland Government under the Swaziland companies Act-No. 8 of 2009, Certificate No 2499 of 2019

CERA is dedicated to working with local faith based and community initiative (**FCI**) leaders in Kingdom Eswatini and committed to provide sustainable solutions out of poverty targeting prior the people with disability. CERA members strive to support the health and social welfare related programs through partnership with those FCI leaders. CERA is willing to support faith based and community initiatives programs as they work through challenging health and social development conditions.

Our programs focus on initiatives generated by Community Residents and work most towards interest of people with disabilities, vulnerable groups and those affected by HIV/AIDS and implementing co-operatives, education and training to provide a pathway towards opportunity and self-reliance.

CERA activities are categorized in **3 programme areas** namely:

- **Community Engagement** with focus on training on the subject of Community engagement for social welfare and development and demand creation for health services.
- **Community Based Rehabilitation** with aim to provide a range of social and rehabilitative services for older people and people with disabilities as well as promoting and expanding access to health services at community level as a basis for improved health outcomes.
- **Capacity Building** in order to facilitate skills transfer and operational involvement by Community Bases Organisations and community groups thereby promoting community study tours.

This publication focuses on understanding community-based rehabilitation (CBR) program for CERA. The aim of this program is to deliver the primary rehabilitation therapy to people with disabilities in their communities. This program recognizes the need for close collaboration and cooperation between CERA, government and other community based organizations.

Another factor for the success of this program is the empowerment of the community to assume responsibility for ensuring that all its members, including those with disabilities, achieve equal access to all of the resources that are available to that community, and that they are enabled to participate fully in the social and economic life of the community. This approach ensures that what is done in the name of CBR actually fits into the reality of the community and is owned by the community.

**Jean Pierre NDAGIJIMANA**  
**Executive Director**  
**CERA**

## **CERA COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION APPROACH**

Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) is a strategy within community development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social integration of all people with disabilities. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of disabled people themselves, their families and communities, and the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services.

According to CERA context, community means: (a) a group of people with common interests who interact with each other on a regular basis; and/or (b) a geographical, social or government administrative unit.

## **CBR PROGRAMME CRITERIA OF CERA**

The development and implementation of CBR programmes is be based on the following criteria:

- 1) People with disabilities must be included in CBR programme activities at all stages and levels, including initial programme design and implementation. In order to give significance to their involvement, they must have distinct decision-making roles.
- 2) The primary objective of CBR programme activities is the improvement of the quality of life of people with disabilities.
- 3) One focus of CBR programme activities is working with the community to create positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and to motivate community members to support and participate in CBR activities.
- 4) The other focus of CBR programmes is providing assistance for people with all types of disabilities (physical, sensory, psychological and mental); for people of all ages, including older people; for people affected by leprosy; for people affected by epilepsy; and for other people who may be identified by the community as needing special assistance.
- 5) All activities in CBR programmes must be sensitive to the situation of girls and women. This is because in many communities throughout the kingdom of Eswatini women are not treated equally. When they are disabled, the problems that they face in life are doubled. Furthermore, women are usually the primary family care-givers for all people with disabilities.
- 6) CBR programme is designed to be flexible so that they can operate at the local level and within the context of local conditions. There should not be only one model of CBR because different social and economic contexts and different needs of individual communities will require different solutions. Flexible, local programme activities will ensure community involvement and result in a variety of programme models which are appropriate for different places in the kingdom of Eswatini.

- 7) Community members seldom understand the different roles and specializations that are part of providing assistance to people with disabilities. They tend only to see the problem of disability and only to want access to "one window" for help. They may focus only on where to go and who to see about a specific "problem", rather than understanding the totality of what constitutes a fulfilling life for a community member who has a disability.

## THE COMPONENTS OF CERA COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

The components of CBR programme includes:

- 1) **Creating a positive attitude towards people with disabilities:** this component of CBR programme is essential to ensure equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities within their own community. Positive attitudes among community members will be created by involving them in the process of programme design and implementation, and by transferring knowledge about disability issues to community members.
- 2) **Provision of functional rehabilitation services:** often people with disabilities require assistance to overcome or minimize the effects of their functional limitations (disabilities). In communities where professional services are not accessible or available, CBR workers would be trained to provide primary rehabilitation therapy in the following areas of rehabilitation: Eye care service, Hearing services, Physiotherapy, Occupational therapy, Orientation and mobility training, Speech therapy, Psychological counselling, Orthotics and prosthetics, Other devices
- 3) **Provision of education and training opportunities:** people with disabilities must have equal access to educational opportunities and to training that will enable them to make the best use of the opportunities that occur in their lives. In communities where professional services are not accessible or available, CBR workers should be trained to provide basic levels of service in the following areas:
  - Early childhood intervention and referral, especially to medical rehabilitation services
  - Education in regular schools
  - Non-formal education where regular schooling is not available
  - Special education in regular or special schools
  - Sign language training
  - Braille training
  - Training in daily living skills
- 4) **Creation of micro and macro income-generation opportunities:** people with disabilities need access to micro and macro income-generation activities, including obtaining financial credit through existing systems, wherever possible. In rural areas, income-generation activities would focus on locally appropriate vocational skills.

Training in these skills is best conducted by community members who, with minimal assistance, can easily transfer their skills and knowledge to people with disabilities.

- 5) **Provision of care facilities:** often, people with extensive disabilities are in need of assistance. When they have no families or their families are incapable of caring for them, in order for them to survive, long-term care facilities must be provided in the community where they can get the assistance that they need. Moreover, day-care facilities may be needed to provide respite for families who either work or need time off for other activities.
- 6) **Prevention of the causes of disabilities:** many types of disability can be prevented by relatively simple measures. Proper nutrition is one of the more significant ways of preventing disabilities. Another important area of disability prevention is the detection of disability in young children and intervention early in their development, to minimize the effect of impairment. There are many other areas of disability prevention that are also important. These include activities to decrease the number of accidents in the home, on the road and at work, as well as other initiatives to encourage people to pursue healthy lifestyles over the course of their lives.
- 7) **Management, monitoring and evaluation:** the effectiveness and efficiency of all CBR programme components, both in the community and in the area of service delivery outside the community, depend on effective management practices. The impact of programme activities must be measured on a regular basis. People must be trained in effective management practices. Data must be collected, reviewed and evaluated to ensure that programme objectives are met. In this way, the success or failure of a CBR programme can be honestly measured.

## **SECTORS AND ROLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CERA COMMUNITY-BASED REHABILITATION**

The initiative to start CBR programme and to facilitate their development came from the following groups. However, the effectiveness of CBR and the long-term development and sustainability of any CBR initiative will require the involvement and collaboration of all seven groups.

The seven groups and their suggested roles are as follows:

1. **People with disabilities:** People with disabilities should contribute to all levels of CBR programme in every position within a CERA programme. They know what the effects of local conditions are on themselves. They are likely to have a good understanding of those effects on their peers with disabilities. They also know what impairment really means in the context of their family, community and nation. This knowledge enables them to be very effective members of a CBR team. They should be more effective than non-disabled people as role models for and counsellors of other people with disabilities. People with disabilities have an important role in community education. As community educators, they will serve as living

examples of people with disabilities who makes a significant contribution, provided that they are given the opportunity and the right type of assistance. CBR programme of CERA also facilitate the development of self-help organizations of people with disabilities at the community level.

**2. Families of people with disabilities:** families have the primary responsibility for caring for all of their members. They are the first line of support and assistance for people with disabilities at the local level. As such, families must be included in CBR programme activities. Where the individual with a disability is not able, for whatever reason, to speak for himself or herself, a family member should represent him or her and should be considered a legitimate member of disabled people's organizations. Members of families with experience in caring for people with disabilities are the people who most often initiate CBR programme activities and are, or prove to be, the most effective contributors at all levels.

**3. Communities:** community members should be involved in CBR programme of CERA at all levels because they already know the local environmental conditions, the local economy, the local political situation and how to work with them. They also know about the accessibility, availability and effectiveness of locally available rehabilitation services; who in the community cares enough about other people to become a programme leader or worker; and, which community members have the knowledge and skills for training others in micro-economic activities. They are the people most likely to want to live, work and stay in the community. Community involvement will usually require the agreement and approval, both formal and informal, of the community leaders.

**4. Governments of the kingdom of Eswatini:** The Central Government has the most important role in the development and sustainability of CBR programme. Their cooperation, support and involvement are essential if CBR of CERA is to cover the total population and be sustainable. The Government will be involved in implementation and coordination of the entire programme structure, including the development of the referral system, as well as the activities within the community. The government will be approached to provide resources to support CERA in community activities.

**5. Community Based Organizations:** CBOs, including organizations of people with disabilities, are often able to provide resources and skills to facilitate the development of new programme activities, especially in the communities where none exist. They will be assisted to develop new approaches to CBR and provide training programme activities CBR workers, people with disabilities, families, and community members. CBOs will be are effective in facilitating the development of community members as CBR programme leaders. They will be often best able to provide long-term care facilities for those people with extensive disabilities whose families cannot or will not look after them.

**6. Medical professionals, allied health science professionals, educators, social scientists and other professionals:** CERA recognizes the involvement of professionals. The professionals are often in a position where they can, as trainers and educators, facilitate the development of new programme activities by making their knowledge and skills accessible to community members and CBR programme workers. These professional would also ensure that they support community efforts by making themselves available and accessible on a referral

basis. CERA will collaborate with those professionals who are in government service, so that they can advocate and promote the development of CBR programme activities as an effective way to provide community level services quickly.

**7. The private sector (business and industry):** the private sector has a social obligation to return some of the benefits of its operations to the communities that support it. In the past, this support has largely taken the form of charity. Charity occurs when donors "give" whatever they feel is needed or appropriate to people with disabilities. This approach to assisting people with disabilities is no longer appropriate and needs to be changed. Supporting CBR programme activities eliminates the need for charity. CBR support is a much more appropriate way of directing resources to communities and people with disabilities. CERA will encourage those private Sectors. By supporting CBR programme, the private sector receives credit for its social involvement while being guaranteed that its support is put to effective and efficient use. Who but trained, knowledgeable community members would know what is most needed by the people of their own community?