

EVALUATION OF CBR PROGRAMMES

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The field of rehabilitation, particularly, CBR is in an evolving stage in many developing countries. The only way to know if CBR works, if it is of benefit to disabled persons, their families and communities, is to continuously study all aspects of CBR programmes, at different levels. It is for this purpose that monitoring and evaluation are of crucial importance. Through these, one can find answers to many of the questions that are being raised about CBR approach. At the same time, monitoring and evaluation will also help to improve programme effectiveness and to improve the planning for the future. It is therefore important to view monitoring and evaluation as an essential part of a CBR programme.

However, for the purpose of CBR programme implementing agencies, it is essential to demystify the concepts and processes of monitoring and evaluation, in order to overcome their resistance and to bring about an attitude change. Often, resistance to evaluation stems from a fear of exposing one's failures. If implementing agencies can see that monitoring and evaluation can be of direct benefit to them, in terms of better planning and results, the process of attitude change would be easier.

It is also necessary to keep the procedures of monitoring and evaluation, as simple as possible, for easy acceptance on the part of implementers. Even with the simplest methodology, a great amount of information can be produced which can help in programme improvement and planning.

Another aspect to be kept in mind, is the need to train the implementers in the skills of monitoring and evaluation. If the goal of evaluation is to improve programmes and plan better, it is important that the implementers carry it out on their own, rather than have external agencies to do so.

2. DISCUSSION METHODOLOGY:

The discussions were carried out in three groups, each group being asked to discuss the issues related to monitoring and evaluation at one of the three levels: national, provincial/regional and community. For these levels, the groups were asked to examine:

- The minimum information to be collected and records to be maintained.
- A plan for evaluation, addressing the questions of goals of evaluation; what aspects to evaluate; who evaluates; how to evaluate (including indicators and costs); and the outcome of evaluation in terms of reports, plans, etc.
- Some areas in CBR for further research and evaluation in the future.

3. EVALUATION AND MONITORING AT COMMUNITY LEVEL:

- It is important to have baseline data regarding disabled persons, their families and the community at large.

- It is important to have periodic plans (ex. annual, bi-annual, quaterly, etc.) against which monitoring/reviews/evaluations can be carried out.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be seen as an integral part of services at the community level and should be a continuous on-going exercise.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems need to be simple at the community level.
- Efforts should be made to utilise qualitative information as well as, quantitative data.
- It is necessary to train workers at the community level as well as the members of CBR committees, on monitoring and evaluation, with particular emphasis on the necessity of being
- sensitive, non-intrusive and listening carefully to disabled persons and their families, while collecting information.
- It is important to have feed-back mechanisms, so that information flows not only upwards, but also downwards towards the community level workers. This is to encourage the application of results obtained at the field level and to give the community workers a feeling of being, part of a team, a sense of belonging and a sense of pride in the outcome of their recording systems.

3.1. Information to be Collected:

A. Assessment and progress of disabled persons: This can be regarding the disabled persons, with particular reference to their daily living skills. It is necessary to pay particular attention to children and to develop ways of recording information for those below 6 years of age.

Regarding the disabled persons, information is also needed related to education, vocational training, income generation, social integration and referral services.

B. Community/group activities: For this, information is to be collected regarding: sensitisation activities; resources mobilised; meetings (numbers attending, topics, etc.); mutual support groups; parent groups; groups of disabled persons; and CBR committee meetings.

C. Management and staff issues: Information is to be collected about the following: number of staff and committee members; their tasks and responsibilities; their training needs; training programmes. For this information:

- The level of detail of information will vary from programme to programme.
- Meetings of staff and committee (another way of monitoring/review) could be held at weekly or fortnightly intervals, depending upon the needs.
- Reports could be generated on a monthly basis.

The information is to be collected by community level workers, the local CBR supervisor/coordinator and the CBR committee.

3.2 Evaluation at Community Level:

The evaluation at community level is to be carried out as a part of comprehensive evaluation of the CBR programme.

- A. Why should the evaluation be carried out?: It is needed since the programme is community based and thus, the community level activities are the most crucial part of the programme. It is also required to get the feedback from the disabled persons, their families and from the community. Finally, it is useful for comparison with other projects.
- B. What should be evaluated?: Has the project made any difference to the disabled persons and their families? What is the level of awareness of communities and families? How are the attitudes of communities and families? How is the transfer of skills? How is the role and the involvement of CBR committee? What is the sustainability of the programme (for ex., resources mobilised, community participation, development and strengthening of local structures, costs, etc.)?
- C. Who evaluates?: It will depend upon the objectives of the evaluation. It can be internal or external or a combination of both. Ideally it should be a joint evaluation since the goal is to improve programmes and internal persons must be a part of the evaluation team. However their efforts may need to be supported by technical expertise from outside.
- D. When to evaluate?: It will depend upon the objectives and the needs of the programme.
- E. How to evaluate?: According to the objectives, a plan has to be drawn up, to finalise the team, the tools, the sample, the data collection, analysis and report writing. There is need for preparation of personnel involved in the CBR programme for evaluation in terms of attitude change, demystification and training.

4. EVALUATION AT DISTRICT/PROVINCIAL LEVEL:

This level is defined as that between the community and the national levels. In this instance the evaluation is seen as a comprehensive process to see how a CBR programme is progressing over a given period of time.

4.1 Why is evaluation needed?:

The reasons vary, depending upon who wants the evaluation - a donor agency, the government, the implementing agency, etc.

The main reason for the evaluation is to facilitate further development of the programme. The emphasis is on meeting various needs and not only the external needs.

4.2 Who is involved and what are the tasks for evaluation?:

The people involved are the steering committee or the coordinating team and the CBR workers/cadres.

The tasks at this level are: developing plans and strategies for the district/province; training of district and community level personnel; creating awareness; mobilising resources; liaising with other agencies; technical supervision; management of referrals from community and national levels.

4.3 What to evaluate?:

- a. Progress made by disabled persons: This is to be determined through: information on functional improvement; schooling; social integration/relationships; skills and income. The means for collecting this information is through questionnaires, reports, interviews, observations, field visits, etc. The type of questionnaires/reports would include: check-lists (as in Vietnam) or master forms (as in Ghana) to collect information during regular field visits; quarterly reports to deal with turn-over of local supervisors, number of disabled persons identified or already in the programme, main activities undertaken, activities of disabled persons' organisations, training activities, community activities, planned activities, etc.; half yearly reports regarding the different kinds of disabilities, improvements and other activities.
- b. Quality of training programmes: pre and post training assessment needs to be carried out to determine: perceptions of people, attitude change, transfer of skills, use of relevant materials/manuals/reports etc. and community involvement.

4.3 What do we do with the evaluation outcome?:

The outcome of the evaluation can be used to identify ways and means to build in key issues in to the programme; to use these for further motivation to sustain programmes; to use these for further plan

4.4 What are the main problems related to evaluation?:

The main problems are related to the inability to complete reporting forms/records and the poor reliability of information from the community level.

This needs to be overcome by the use of check-lists, regular field visits, problem oriented support to the community level, to increase the reporting and recording competence at that level so that the information from that level is reliable and there is no need for the district level to duplicate the collection of information.

5. EVALUATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL:

At the national level the following mechanisms are to be considered:

- Monitoring: to assess progress, through statistics, reports and records from the intermediate level to be collected on a quarterly basis.
- Self-assessment: to assess effectiveness and efficiency. This is to be done by national governments, through the generation of reports, twice a year and through field visits and meetings.
- Comprehensive evaluation: to collect additional information to assess impact, sustainability and relevance and to study in greater details, some specific activities of the programme (for ex.,

education, community participation, etc.). This can be done every 3-5 years, could be internal or external and could be done through surveys and interviews with key persons.

An example of monitoring information from Indonesia:

- Input (annual): number of disabled persons, kinds of disability, gender and age; number of persons in the CBR programme; number of regular meetings of CBR team.
- Process (quarterly reports): Kind of training given; number of participants; awareness campaigns and activities (number and types); media interventions.
- Output (twice a year): number of volunteers or CBR cadres; coverage of target areas; number of disabled persons integrated in to schools; number of disabled persons employed; number of disabled persons with improvement in daily living and autonomy, etc.
- Outcome: This refers to the impact of the programme and can only be evaluated during comprehensive evaluation.

An example of self-evaluation from Mauritania

This is done every two months at the beginning of a CBR programme in an area and gradually can be reduced to twice a year. This is carried out by local authorities through visits to the organisations of disabled persons and through discussions with volunteers/CBR workers, local supervisors, intermediate supervisors and local CBR committee. Depending upon the problems identified during this, visits may also be undertaken for discussions with relevant specific professional groups.

5.1 Comprehensive evaluation at national level - steps to be followed:

- Study or review the existing data such as statistics, monitoring/progress reports, self-assessment reports, etc.
- Define the evaluation questions in relation to the objectives of the programme.
- Decide on the methodology of evaluation such as surveys, interviews, sample selections, etc.
- The additional information to collect will focus on the main conditions needed to "succeed in developing a CBR programme" such as: referral systems, community participation, skilled manpower, available resources, social attitudes, involvement of governments in terms of national policies, legislation, etc. All the information is to be collected from different sources and cross-checked or verified.
- Analysis of information and the plans for reporting: (a) use the criteria of evaluation to analyse all the main objectives of the programme to see if the programme is successful such as progress, effectiveness, efficiency and impact. (b) to verify if the CBR is an appropriate strategy, looking at aspects like sustainability and relevance. (c) Organise meetings with partners and decision makers to discuss the results and to define what decisions will be taken on their basis.

Conclusions:

Monitoring, self-assessments and evaluations are complimentary processes. It is important to train people at different levels in defining specific objectives, collection of information and use of information to take decisions to improve on programmes.

Taking decisions based on the lessons learned and planning for further action is the most important aspect of evaluation.

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