

**Global CBR Congress  
Agra ,India**



**Pre-congress workshop on  
“CBR and Intellectual  
Disabilities”**

**24-25<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

**Supported by AIFO**

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**Session 4:  
Social Participation and  
Empowerment of People with  
Learning Disabilities**

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**25<sup>th</sup> November, 2012**

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## An Outline of Discussion:



1. Starting with rights, not charity: the CRPD
2. The practice: the CBR Guidelines
3. Addressing some of the key challenges
4. Finding ways to empower & support
5. Some food for thought... questions to address.

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## Starting with Rights:



People with learning disabilities- women and men, girls and boys have the same rights as everybody else: **full entitlement to freedom, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy.**



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## The CRPD... The purpose



... to promote, protect and ensure the full employment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

## The CRPD... calls for...



*... 'respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity... and full and effective participation of persons...*

CRPD: Article 1

## Rights are indivisible... The right to:



- **Equality and non-discrimination** (article 5)
- **The right to life...** (article 10)
- **The right to live independently and being included in the community** (article 19)
- **Respect for privacy** (article 22).
- **Respect for the home and the family** (article 23)

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## However...



Whilst the reality is that many of these most basic fundamental rights are not respected... **the world over...** today we are not addressing these more serious abuses.

The reason... these serious violations of abuse are being addressed in the post congress workshop on **29-30<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

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## What we are covering....



- The more mundane but equally insidious daily challenges facing people with learning disabilities, their families and carers.
- Reflecting on some strategies to address the invisibility, silence and isolation of so many people with learning disabilities and their families

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## The realities: frequent comments from people with learning disabilities



- *Often I don't understand, I don't know what is going on ... no-one takes the time to explain*
- *People don't listen to me, they don't understand what I say.*
- *There's no point in speaking up... people don't listen to what I think.*

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**Cont...**



- *People laugh at me, it makes me sad inside*
- *I am always last, often I get forgotten*
- *I hate people talking to me like I am a child. I am an adult now.*
- *I am lonely, I want to marry, to touch... to have a family*

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**The realities: frequent comments from parents ...**



- *Now that she is older I don't go to weddings anymore... people don't want us around.*
- *People can be so hurtful. They don't think we have any feelings for our children.*
- *I am so tired, I have no time, I have not sat and talked with my neighbours for years.*

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Cont...



- *I cant go to work in the fields, I can't earn money – I have to stay home we are getting very poor*
- *Now he is getting very heavy to lift, we are scared that we cant look after him at home*
- ***What will happen when we die?***

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Starting with participation



- **The right to participate in decision-making**, the right to complain, to express an opinion, to have a say...
  - Perhaps as simple as listening to a gesture or an expression that shows *I don't like it...*
- **The right to participate in the community, in every day life:**
  - Perhaps as simple as attending weddings, religious services, going to market...

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## Challenging the deficits...



- *We don't have time to let him dress himself...* What's wrong with taking two hours to get dressed? Or letting him get up earlier?
- *We don't have the money...* How much does it cost to walk someone to the fields, to market- or to go to the temple, mosque, church together? Or to sit together and share a sunset?

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## 3. The reality: addressing the challenges?



- **What happens when we die?..** The main concern of parents the world over who have dependent adult children with learning disabilities?
- **We want to marry, to touch, to laugh!...** Adults with learning disabilities want fulfilling relationships, friendships, including sexual and other personal relationships

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## Breaking down barriers...



- Building pride in our self- **the importance of self confidence**
- Building pride in all our families members – **standing up to stigma...**
- Building support networks- **for today and for tomorrow...**

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## Supporting People with Learning Disabilities to Speak Up



- Building **self confidence – and pride**
- Building **trust**
- Supporting communication and **voice**
- Developing recognition of preferences: **giving choices**
- Developing **awareness of self, dignity & autonomy.**



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## Supporting Families: Key Challenges:



- Stop being **over protective**: allow space for children and adults with learning disabilities to grow, to explore, to develop
- Recognise the importance of **respite, rest and support** – being a listening ear – not a font of all knowledge.
- Supporting **peer friendships**



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## Supporting Families... cont...



- How to face the future, **making plans and building a trusted network of carers** and supporters.
- Support families **to stand up to stigma**



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## Supporting communities: Key Challenges:



- Create links, and positive exposure to **challenge negative attitudes, assumptions and stereotypes**
- **Awareness training** and **self advocacy** : break the cycle of fear and lack of confidence–
- **Build trust** – keep it simple & human

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## Supporting Institutions: Key challenge of isolation



- Building mechanisms to **link institutions to communities**- planned shared activities, open days, community visits.
- Develop **mechanisms to support accountability**: advocating the role of key public service institutions: police, local authorities, social services, schools in their support role to private institutions.
- **Provide training, capacity development** for staff of institutions – do not allow them to remain isolated

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**Remember:  
Appreciate our diversity...**



We have our own unique characters...



... our own talents...

**We like to challenge ourselves...**



**We like to challenge you...**



## Six questions...



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## Question 1: Community



Reflect on the **key barriers to social participation** for people with learning disabilities. What recommendations would you make to:

1. Government authorities
2. NGOs
3. DPOs

**On how to be more inclusive of people with learning disabilities and their families within community life.**

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## Question 2: Families



Families with a person who has a learning disability are often marginalised, isolated and at times ostracised from the community.

**What recommendations would you make to:**

- **Local authorities**
  - **NGOs**
  - **DPOs**
  - **Community members**
- ... to support and include families in community life.**

## Question 3: CBR



CBR Programmes are often focussed on people with physical and sensory impairments, or on early years and areas that are easier to make change. Sometimes CBR teams feel out of their comfort zone when supporting adults with learning disabilities, in particular adults who have high dependency needs.

**What recommendations would you make to CBR Programme managers to take key steps to change and include adults with complex impairments and more severe learning disabilities in their programmes?**

## Question 4: People with Learning Disabilities



People with learning disabilities and their families are often isolated, lack confidence and feel less worthy to demand their rights. They are often unheard and unseen.

**What key activities would you recommend that CBR programmes do to support develop confidence, self believe and effective self advocacy for people with learning disabilities and their families?**

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## Question 5: Police, courts, judiciary



People with learning disabilities often do not have a fair chance to have their concerns and complaints registered. They find it hard to advocate for their own rights and to seek protection against discrimination and the violations of their rights.

**What recommendations would you make to Police Authorities, local courts, lawyers and the judiciary to support fair and equal access to justice for people with learning disabilities?**

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## Question 6: Institutions



Sometimes people with learning disabilities are abandoned or left to live in isolated institutional settings, often not of their choice. Think about such longer term institutions in your country...

**What are the ways that CBR programmes can build back linkages to the people in these institutions and to link them also with the community? Give some practical suggestions and activities that could be undertaken with local authorities, DPOs and communities with these institutions.**

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Together we can do more...



# THANK YOU

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