

## COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION AND THE CONVENTION ON RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FOR INCLUSION

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**Abstract:** Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is defined as “a strategy within general community development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities, poverty reduction and social inclusion of all people with disabilities.

The Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006, is the most significant legal development for persons with disabilities world-wide.

The Convention is a disability-specific human rights treaty, clarifying how established civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights apply equally to persons with disabilities. It clearly states that all human rights have to be made inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities it identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to access and exercise their rights on an equal basis with others, and areas where their rights have to be protected.

The CBR Guidelines of WHO, ILO, UNESCO and IDDC (2010), developed with active participation of Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), UN agencies, governments and civil society organisations, provide a unified understanding of the concept and principles of CBR as a comprehensive rights-based approach they focus on creation of inclusive societies where accessibility for persons with disabilities to all development benefits are based on the principles of the CRPD

This article identifies linkages between Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) - based on the CBR Guidelines as the major reference - and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

This analysis aims to support development stakeholders in understanding CBR as a strategy for disability inclusive development in line with the Convention and to strengthen CBR programmes.

**Introduction:** Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is defined in 2004 by the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Health Organization (WHO) as “a strategy within general community development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities, poverty reduction and social inclusion of all people with disabilities. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of people with disabilities themselves, their families, organisations and communities, and the relevant governmental and non-governmental health, education, vocational, social and other services.”

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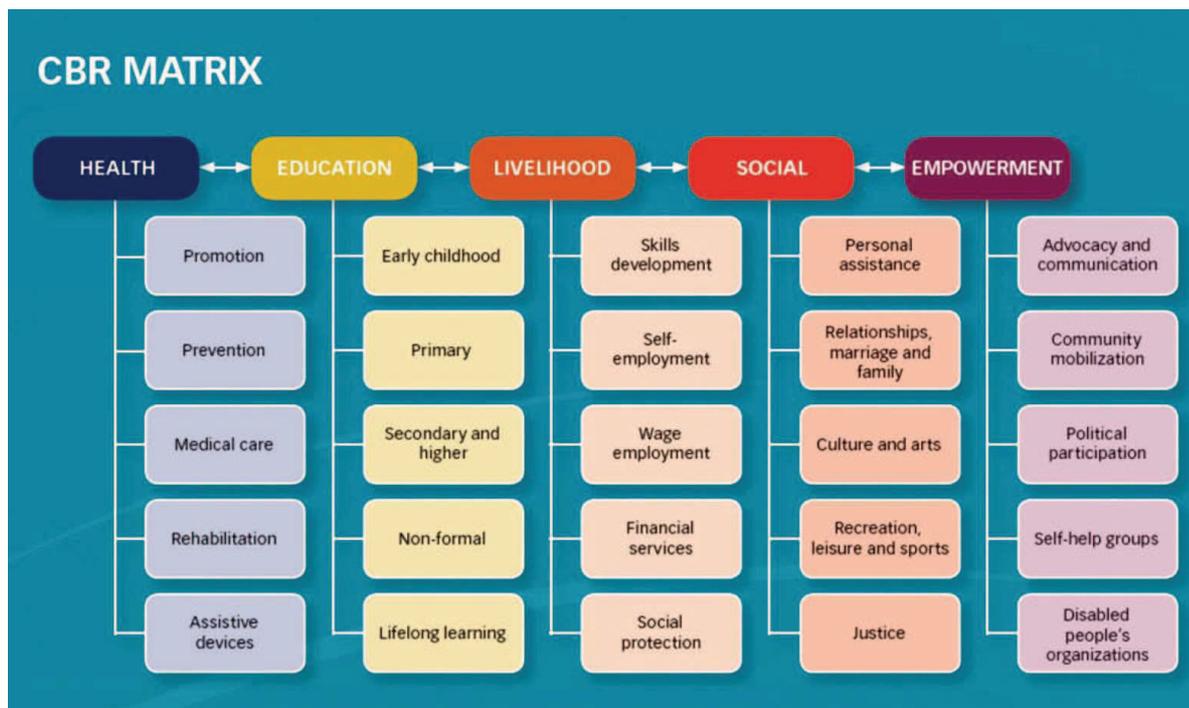
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The aim is to identifies linkages between Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) - based on the CBR Guidelines as the major reference - and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The CBR Matrix from the Guidelines summarises the five main components of CBR and their subsidiary elements



The table below illustrates the strong linkages between the core articles of the Convention and the Community Based Rehabilitation Guidelines

CBR Guidelines	CRPD Core articles
Introduction of CBR	03 General Principles , 04 General Obligations
Main cross cutting themes: Women with Disabilities; Children with disabilities; principles of CRPD	03. General Principles , 04. General obligations 06. Women with disabilities , 07. Children with disabilities
Health	20. Personal mobility , 25. Health 26. Habilitation and rehabilitation
Education	24. Education
Livelihood	27. Work and employment 28. Adequate standard of living and social protection
Social	12. Equal recognition before law ,13. Access to justice 14. Liberty and security of person , 15. Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment , 16. Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse , 17. Protecting the integrity of the person 19. Living independently and being included in the community , 23. Respect for home and family 30. Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport
Empowerment	04. General obligations , 05. Equality and non-discrimination, 08. Awareness raising, 09. Accessibility 15. Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment , 16. Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse , 17. Protecting the integrity of the person , 21. Freedom of expression and opinion, and access
Information	22. Respect for privacy 29. Participation in political and public life
Mental Health	25. Health
Emergencies and Disaster	11. Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

**Implementing the Convention through CBR:** In India the project “Inclusive Community Development through Mainstreaming People with Disability in Social Mobilization in various places focused on promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the Convention.

Disabled Persons Organisation and the relevant government departments of health, education and social Justice /Welfare, to support CBR implementation.

The project was able to provide access to health, education, livelihoods and recreation opportunities for people with disabilities in their communities

**Experience gained in the field of Education at India and advice given for others:** PIED and SSA are the key projects to bring out the process of mainstreaming the persons with disabilities. The advice received from the experts after reviewing the projects are 1. To involve the school administrators , 2. To equip the teacher on habilitation and rehabilitation skills ,3. Check the knowledge and provide the materials for the teachers. 4. To bring changes in teacher education curriculum.

**Capacity Building and Training on the rights of persons with disabilities in a CBR program:** In its CBR projects the world supports for training and capacity building of CBR agents - persons with disabilities, and DPOs - to advocate for inclusion. The CRPD training focuses on access to and knowledge of legal instruments and how to use them in practice. The training also raises awareness on rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities through various media. Local radio stations carry broadcasts on the CRPD and the national disability law to make the public aware of rights of persons with disabilities.

**Candidates with disabilities won local elections in India:** In India, Panchayats are the local government decision making bodies for development for a cluster of villages. Panchayat institutions are a meaningful entry point for persons with disabilities to be involved with decisions made at local level for development programmes and to exercise their

political rights. In 2006, in Tamil Nadu State in Southern India, 52 leaders of Disabled Peoples Organisations were given orientation on Panchayat Raj Act on the procedures to contest the election to the Panchayat, and the responsibilities entailed on being elected.

The orientation included case studies, focus group discussions and questionnaires. Subsequently, 18 out of the 52 candidates who contested won the election. The grass-roots movement of DPOs promoted through CBR contributed largely to the success of the candidates who won, ensuring that persons with disability had the opportunity to participate equally with others.

**Principles to align CBR programmes with the convention:** The CBR Guidelines provide a comprehensive overview of CBR and its different components. CBR programmes are not expected to implement all the components outlined in the CBR Matrix, but rather to select context relevant interventions. The CBR Guidelines focus on persons with disabilities’ individual access to a range of services. This should not divert from the need for systemic changes and reforms to build inclusive communities and societies in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Conclusion:** The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Community Based Rehabilitation has the common goal of promoting the full and effective realisation of human rights for persons with disabilities, through inclusive development practices, accessible to all.

The positive experiences of applying the Convention through CBR in different countries provide a very good basis. CBR programmers and practitioners can use them to advocate for effective implementation of CRPD-compliant CBR programmes with key stakeholders such as Disabled Peoples Organisations, governments, mainstream development organisations and agencies to reach the goal of community based inclusive development.

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