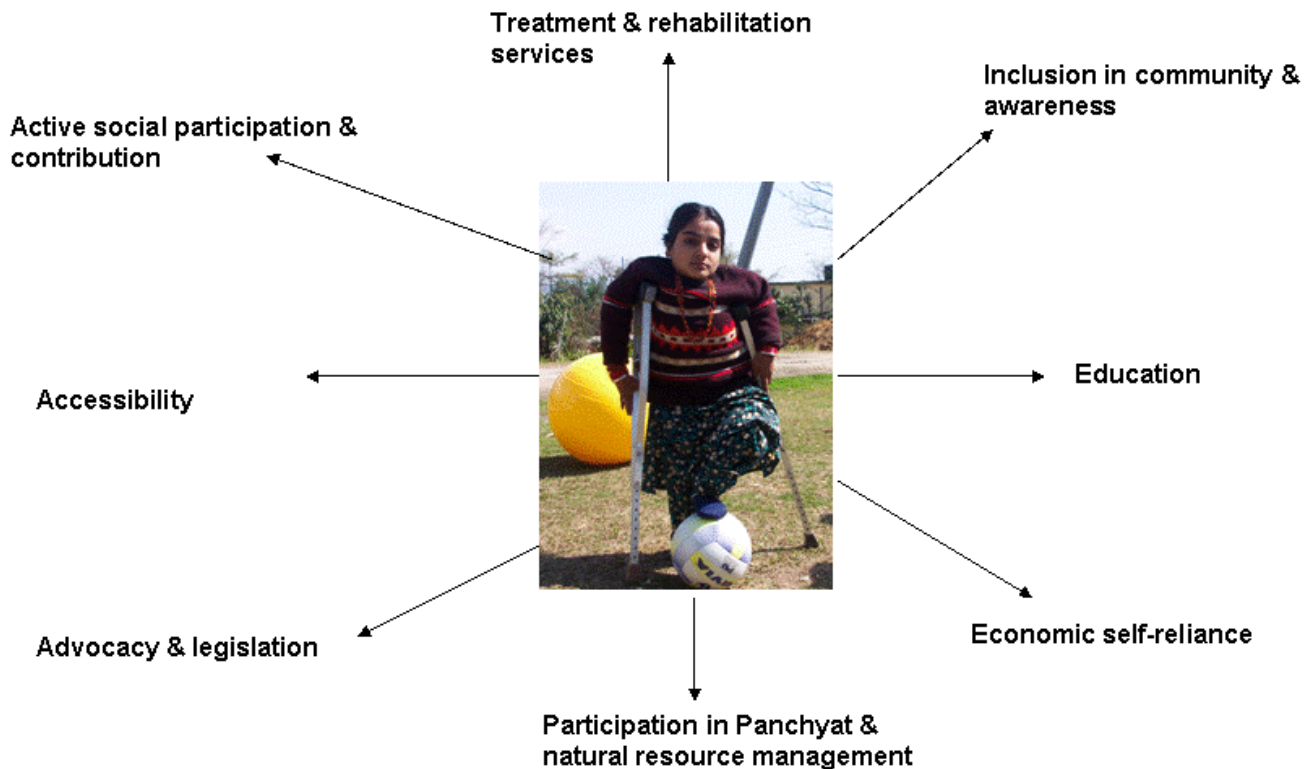


## Community Based Rehabilitation programme for the differently-abled

Introduction:

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) for the differently-abled people is an integrated programme component of CORD which works toward the holistic rehabilitation of its disabled beneficiaries in rural areas. CORD is working with 416 different types of disabled people in 80 of the 550 villages in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh through its CBR programme. CORD's CBR programme has been taking account all aspects of a differently abled person's social, health, economic, educational, accessibility, vocational and advocacy issues since 1994. CORD's efforts in disability have just begun in other sites in Tamilnadu & Orissa; i.e. at CORD Siruvani, Tamilnadu, one doctor has initiated the work with disabled people. CORD Sidhbari addresses all of these issues as holistically as possible as shown below:



CORD is aware of an immense need to highlight the abilities of the differently abled & transform their attitude towards their disability. We understand that needs of the disabled people is beyond just treatment. It is about inclusion in the community for all issues. CBR focuses on medical, social, and economic rehabilitation. The CBR program also tries to resolve the education and accessibility concerns of the disabled and encourages its beneficiaries to participate in the decision-making process of their communities. Through our sustained programme for rural

development, we serve our friends as they become contributing members of society and responsible citizens of India.

Chinmaya Umang, facilitated under the CBR programme of CORD, is a forum for the disabled and their parents, relatives and friends. The Executive Committee of Chinmaya Umang consists of people with disabilities. The Chinmaya Umang Committee's agenda and program are completely driven by the differently-abled. Members of Chinmaya Umang have become a support group for one another because they can learn from each others' experiences. One of the core objectives of Chinmaya Umang is to establish a community sensitization towards disability.



*Chinmaya Umang's General Body meeting*

Chinmaya Umang strives to create an awareness of the abilities of the disabled and of the ways in which they can contribute to the community. Chinmaya Umang also teaches that the community should share the responsibility of caring for the disabled with their families. Chinmaya Umang also provides valuable feedback to CORD's CBR program about the wants and needs of the differently-abled. This feedback shapes the design and implementation of the CBR program.

#### *Vision*

CORD aim to empower disabled persons with their active participation and to ultimately aid them in becoming self-reliant.

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of the CBR department is to increase the capacity of the differently-abled (DA) and to sensitize the community to their special needs and abilities. Ultimately, CBR aims to holistically integrate the disabled into the mainstream in an increasingly inclusive society and to break the attitudinal mental barrier towards the disabled.

#### *Objectives*

- To develop an innovative, integrated, community-based programme which will assimilate the disabled into their communities and into society as a whole. The programme will go beyond basic medical management and rehabilitation.
- To promote the self-reliance of the disabled and their parents by encouraging them to explore and expand their talents.
- To help the disabled and their family members be able to earn according to their capacities.
- To create awareness amongst beneficiaries regarding their rights and to facilitate them in exercising those rights.
- To educate and sensitize the public to the issues of the differently-abled.
- To campaign for a barrier-free environment for the differently-abled.
- To integrate the differently-abled into mainstream education.

- To create awareness of and sensitization towards the Person's with Disability (PWD) Act 1995, Rehabilitation Council Of India (RCI) Act 1992 and National Trust Act 1999 and to facilitate the effective implementation of these acts.

The Services CORD provide:



*Physical therapy unit*

*Audiometry & speech therapy*



*Special Education*

*Play therapy & early intervention centre*

- Physiotherapy (TENS, Short wave diathermy, ultrasonic, traction, IFT, IRR, wax bath and exercise modalities).
- Guidance and counseling which focuses on the acceptance of the disabled by their families and which aims to build the confidence of the disabled person.
- Special education and ADL skills training unit for the mentally challenged
- Regular health check-ups Play therapy and early intervention sections
- Occupational Therapy (independence in daily activities and occupational and economic rehabilitation)

In the field,



*Promoting community care &*



*Integration in women*



*Inclusion in education*



*Indigenous technology use to  
desian aids & appliances*



*Locally designed Parallel bar for a village  
disabled child to practice walking*



Home visits in which workers work with the disabled to develop their daily living skills and provide counseling and guidance for the disabled, their families, neighborhoods, and communities.

- Training and support of beneficiaries in community based livelihood as per their abilities & skills
- Integration of the disabled with community
- Promotion of the use of indigenous technologies in the rehabilitation of disabled persons
- Integration of the disabled with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) such as mahila Mandals, self help groups, Yuva Mandals, adolescent girls groups, Balvihar, etc.
- Networking with government offices and non-government offices at the district, state and national levels.
- Integration of any disabled child into normal schools as per their ability.
- Regular interaction with teachers.
- Facilitate & sensitize people on effective implementation of PWD Act 1995/National Trust Act 1999/RCI (Rehabilitation Council of India) Act 1992. This act includes provisions to:
  - Ensure equal opportunity for the disabled
  - Protection of the rights of the disabled
  - Incite total participation from the differently abled
- Create a conducive environment in the community
- Audiometry and speech therapy for the speech and hearing impaired
- We provide designed and modified chairs and equipment to specially-challenged children who need them, including CP and parallel bars

CBR is working for the betterment of disabled persons in all aspects of his/ her life at individual, family & community level:

### *Health*

The CBR department strives to:

- To prevent disabilities & advocates early detection & treatment of the disabled.
- Provide medical facilities for disabled people living in rural areas and ensure that they can access these facilities.
- Provides rehabilitation & treatment through its facilities at the centre of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiometry & speech therapy, special education & play therapy
- Create awareness of health services.
- Teach the disabled and their families about basic care and hygiene.
- Provide referral services at the state and national levels.
- Prepare children with cleft lip and palate and others in need for annual plastic and orthopedic surgery camp.



*Health check-up*

### *Educational*

The CBR department strives to:

- Provide education for all under SSA (Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan) i.e. education for all.
- Promote inclusive education.
- Provide support services for assessments in schools.
- Conduct workshops on inclusive education with district and state level stakeholders.



*State level workshop on Inclusive*

### *Social*

The CBR department strives to:

- Change the negative and pitying attitude towards disabled people.
- Bring awareness of disability to the community.
- Integrate the disabled into CBO's (community based organizations).
- Train a resource person in every community

### *Economic*

The CBR department strives to:

- Enable disabled persons to become self-reliant.
- Enable disabled persons to contribute to family and society.
- Increase employment opportunity for the disabled.



*Gainfully employed disabled*

### *Political*

The CBR department strives to:

- Develop leadership qualities in disabled persons.
- Encourage participation of the disabled in family affairs and decision making
- Increase the active participation of the disabled in community based organizations so that they may become leaders.
- Establish a role for disabled persons in policy making.



*A disabled person participating in her Panchayat at (Local self-Governance)*

### *Accessibility*

The CBR department has a trained access auditor. Together, we strive to:



- Create a barrier free environment through access audit of public buildings.
- Enhance the indoor and outdoor mobility of the disabled.
- Aid the disabled in traveling from their homes to their schools, bus stands, Panchayats, workplaces, etc.

*Access Audit in progress*

### *Advocacy and legislation*

We uphold the:

- Persons with disability Act 1995.
- Rehabilitation council of India Act 1992.
- National Trust Act 1999.
- Mental Health Act 1987.

Awareness and advocacy via:

- Rallies
- Group discussion within the community
- Street plays and media promotion
- Awareness programs in villages
- Celebration of World Disability Day

Involvement in other such advocacy campaigns

*Access audit in progress*



*Advocacy rally*

### *Networking*

In order to provide maximum resources for our disabled beneficiaries, we network with:

- Government and non- government organizations at local village, Panchayat, block, district, state and national level.
- District partners in 12 out of 12 districts in Himachal Pradesh.
- National Disability Network.
- DNIS (Disability News Information Service).
- Human Rights Law Network (HRLN).
- CBR network.



*Networking at the state level*

### *Highlights of our Achievements:*

- All India Women's Education Fund Association honored CORD with the National "Nina Sibal Memorial Award" in 2006 for its work on the persons with disabilities.
- We are the state and zonal coordinator for NCPEDP (National Centre for Promotion of Employment for disabled Persons) for 9 northern states of India, i.e. Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal, and Uttar Pradesh. Our network with NCPEDP helps us to gather



more resources and establish a wider exchange of information. NCPEDP also acts as medium to share valuable insights and raise specific issues with our district partners (12 districts out of 12) in the state and in the northern region of India.

- We belong to the District Management Team on Viklang Pariyojna in the district of Kangra.
- Average of 25-50 patients annually with cleft lip and palate, burns, contracture and deformities etc. are assisted to get treatment and surgical interventions through local hospital, plastic surgeries camps, medical colleges and charitable trusts.
- Hundreds of patients are provided with aids and appliances as per their needs and available sources at local level as well as institutions located in nearby cities and towns.
- We are a member of the National Abilympics Association of India (NAAI), an organization which promotes the abilities and skills of specially challenged persons.
- We are a founding member of the State chapter of Special Olympics 'Bharat' (organizing sports events for mentally challenged people) in Himachal Pradesh.

#### Distribution of differently abled people (type wise disabilities)

S. No.	Type of disability	Total
1	Locomotor disability	154
2	Mental Retardation	102
3	Hearing and Speech Impaired	40
4	Mixed Disability	86
5	Visually Impaired	17
6	Others	17
	Total	416

CORD is also facilitating communities to identify & create a pool of 4-10 trained volunteers in each Panchayat (a unit of Local Self Governance covering 5-14 villages/ wards) on the issues of marginalised people (includes single women, disabled, orphanage & people with old age). Major objective of this initiative is to build communities ownership & responsibility towards effective inclusion of marginalised people in the mainstream.

Many of the problems faced by the disabled are caused simply because disabled people and their parents are often unaware of their rights and because their communities have not been properly sensitized to the concerns, issues and abilities of the disabled. Disabled people also experience exclusion, both in their own homes and in the community. Our aim is to change this. More importantly, having a local resource person ensures maximum participation from the community and this, in



turn, ensures that the programme will become sustainable. The programme will therefore be able to fulfil its goal of long-term integration of the disabled into community life. Because of their proximity to the disabled, village volunteer resource people are better able to consistently follow-up on the implementation of programmes and to check on the progress and needs of the differently-abled and their families more comprehensively.

### *Success Story*

Mahinder Singh is a 50 year old paraplegic who has not only turned his life around but is now inspiring many others with his story. He currently lives with his parents, elder brother, sister-in-law and nephew in a village known as Noshera. Mahinder can expertly move around in his wheelchair, cook and do all his personal work. He earns his living by knitting sweaters and providing children with school tuition.



When he was young, Mahinder Singh was an average active teenager who enjoyed going to school. When he was in the ninth standard, he felt an acute pain in his left knee. The 16 year old took treatment in his district, Kangra, but when his condition did not improve he was referred to hospitals in Chandigarh and Delhi. No treatment provided was effective. Soon the pain spread to the other leg and Mahinder Singh had no choice but to become wheelchair bound. This sudden change in his physical mobility dealt a huge blow to the lively young boy and he soon left school. Fortunately his family strongly supported him and helped him to start a knitting business. He started earning his living by knitting sweaters, but he was still confined to his home.

In 2001, Mahinder Singh was visited by CORD workers. The workers brought him to CORD's resource centre in Sidhbari where he was given a medical assessment. The assessment showed that it was too late to help him medically, but CORD workers knew that there was still huge opportunity for integration. Mr. Singh was prescribed exercises to strengthen his upper body and was also encouraged to attend the Yuva Mandal follow-up at CORD which was to be held the same week. That first meeting saw a shy Mahinder Singh quietly observe the discussion. He continued to attend Yuva Mandal meetings and slowly but surely learned to voice his opinions and express his views on stage.

At the same time, Mahinder was introduced to the Community Based Livelihood (CBL) department where he improved his knitting skills. He was also provided required raw materials and was soon able to increase his income. As his confidence grew, so did his participation in various community based organizations facilitated by CORD. Mr. Singh was acutely aware of his needs and the means by which he could go about getting help. Upon his request, CORD facilitated the formation of a Self Help Group (SHG) in his village. Not only Mahinder's but other members' financial needs were met by the SHG. Mr. Singh's growing leadership skills have been recognized and he now not only holds the position of secretary of Noshera's

SHG, but in 2004 he was appointed the Vice-President of Chinmaya Umang. Through Chinmaya Umang, he was able to raise the issue of the uneven road to his house during a village Panchayat. As a result, youth involved in CORD and Mahinder's own village community has ensured his safe travel to and from his home.

In 2006, as a member of Abilympics, he joined in the Regional Knitting Skill Competition in Delhi. Accompanied by a CORD staff, he traveled by bus for the first time after 20 years of his illness which was a unique experience. Having won the gold medal in the North Zone Division, he went on to win the National Abilympics, a competition for acknowledging the different vocational skills in the differently abled and was selected to represent India in the International Abilympics in Japan, 2007. He represented India well although he did not win a medal his visit to Japan has made him a hero in his village & District and has boosted his confidence in himself.

At the International World Disability Day 2007, Mr. Mahinder Singh was the chief guest at the function at CORD, Sidhbari. The person who first started as a reserved young man had by then transformed into an eloquent speaker who inspired the crowd with his speech. He has left the old Mahinder Singh behind and has learned to live. He now advises others not to be despondent but to aim to be independent. He also requests parents of differently-abled children to change their thinking of helplessness and encourage their children to forge ahead with small steady steps.