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Training the Trainers in Community-Based Rehabilitation

Queen's University and the Pan-American Health Organization are collaborating on a project called Community-Based Rehabilitation, designed to aid survivors. The project assists victims with their physical, emotional and financial problems to help them reenter and remain active in their communities.

Central America Land Mine Survivors Project

Proyecto Para Sobrevivientes de Minas Terrestres en Centro América

by John Paterson and Will Boyce, Central America Landmine Survivors Project

Introduction

As reported in the Summer 2000 edition of the Journal of Mine Action, Queen's University is working with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Mexican government to assist survivors of conflict and those affected by landmines, particularly disabled persons, in the countries of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. The government of Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is funding this four-year (1999–2003) project (known as the Tripartite Project) through the humanitarian relief section of its Landmine Initiative.

People injured by landmines display the consequences at several levels: impairments, disabilities and handicaps. The obvious physical impairments include amputation, spinal cord injury, blindness and burns, but mental impairments such as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome are equally problematic and often as insidious. Landmine-caused disabilities, on the other hand, are the loss of abilities that are normal for a person of a particular age and developmental stage. These disabilities include problems with self-care, mobility or the performance of regular tasks at work. Landmine-caused handicaps are really the result of society's inability to accommodate people with disabilities. These handicaps include a lack of recognition for the existing potential of disabled persons, barriers that limit physical accessibility and attitudes that promote social stigma and isolation.

For over a decade, Queen's University has been actively promoting and researching Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in developing countries and post-conflict regions of the world. As the Canadian technical contributor to the Tripartite Project, the Central America Land Mine Survivors (CALMS) project at Queen's University addresses the physical, social and economic problems of landmine survivors and disabled persons through the following three components:

- Integrating Community-Based Rehabilitation into primary health care programs
- Improving access to the training of personnel who provide prosthetic and orthotic devices
- Promoting the economic re-integration of survivors into their communities

In order to respond to the individual needs of each country, all project activities are determined through an annual planning meeting held in each country, at which people from government ministries (health, education, labor and social security), the NGO community and people with disabilities are represented. This article focuses on the training aspect of the CBR component, the central theme of the project and the only component in which all three countries are actively involved.

Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR)

The United Nations has determined that one of the most effective means of improving the lives of people with disabilities is by creating and supporting CBR. CBR is a community-based initiative in which all facets of a person's life, such as health, physical and emotional needs, educational programs, employment needs, and recreational and social lives are considered. The term "CBR" is used widely throughout the world yet understood by very few. The concept of CBR includes a thorough knowledge of how communities operate, an understanding of the range of human needs, an acknowledgement of the impact of a disability on the family and the individual, a belief in an individual's right to determine his/her own future with-out society-induced barriers, a basic understanding of impairments and treatments and the skills to transfer this knowledge to others.

CBR Activities in the First Year of the Project

In the first year of the project (1999–2000), over 300 people in landmine-affected regions of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua attended 15 workshops. These workshops focused on three themes: Awareness of Disability, Planning of CBR and Clinical Skills for Under-serviced Communities. The participants included people from the communities at large, representatives of ex-combat-
The Training of Trainers (TOT) Model

Rationale

Upon completing the first year of the project, it became apparent that there were insufficient resources to continue presenting CBR workshops throughout the many landmine-affected communities in all three countries. A new model was required, one that was sustainable and feasible. The “Training of Trainers” (TOT) model was adopted in the second year of the project. The TOT model allows project resources to be better used in developing the skills and knowledge of appropriate people within each country. In this way, a cadre of personnel, with a thorough knowledge of CBR and the skills to teach it to others, will remain in the region upon completing the project in 2003. Also, each country, community and village will have the opportunity to adapt CBR to the needs of their communities, rather than simply adopting a Canadian, Asian or Mexican model of CBR. Therefore, CBR does not become another imposed strategy dictated from the North or from centralized government ministries in the capital. The results are beneficial to all: the workloads of the limited number of ministry people are diminished; the need for highly trained medical and rehabilitation professionals in remote regions is decreased; and the community gains recognition and a sense of accomplishment from taking responsibility for CBR.

Goal

The program’s goal is to increase the number of people who are trained to teach other people about CBR.

Objectives

The TOT objectives are:
1. To teach the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to train others about CBR.
2. To present the theory and teaching skills behind the training of adults in community environments.

Strategies and Resources

In keeping with the current best practices of adult education, all workshop participants are expected to take an active role in the learning process and ultimately assume responsibility for their own education. Trainers (from Canada, Mexico and the host country) act as facilitators, guiding the participants through a carefully planned curriculum of activities designed to build on their own skills and knowledge. The TOT training is completed in three separate workshops (levels 1, 2 and 3), each held a few months apart. An integral part of the training directs the participants to plan, design, present and evaluate CBR workshops in their home communities, involving the community and people with disabilities. These participant-led workshops are held in the periods between the TOT workshops, so that participants may plan and review their work with their fellow TOT colleagues.

The prime resource for the TOT workshops is each participant, who brings his/her own training, expertise, skills and attitudes to the workshops. Participants are expected to use the resources in their own communities, such as landmine survivors, people with disabilities, their organizations and other related community groups. The facilitators act as resource people to encourage each participant to maximize his/her own capabilities. Queen’s University has prepared detailed manuals for each level of the training.

Topics

There are two basic themes within the training: Education and CBR. Table 1 details the topics covered and the level at which each topic is discussed.

Discussion

At the time this article was written, the TOT process was still in progress, and a full evaluation of its impact remained to be completed. Early impressions and feedback from the participants have yielded some interesting findings. Participants have been consistently encouraged and motivated by the interactive approach of the workshops. It is a style of teaching to which most people in Central America are not accustomed, and yet they readily accommodate the approach with enthusiasm and typical cultural exuberance. Participants are less comfortable with the sense of openness and self-criticism that is encouraged during the workshops. Perhap this is to be expected in a society recently torn apart through internecine conflict and one in which conformity is expected. Nonetheless, as future trainers of trainers, they are encouraged to develop skills of self-evaluation and critical thinking.

Since the beginning of the CALMS project, dealing with the predominantly medical focus of the activities has been a challenge. The concept of CBR has always been to promote the rehabilitation of disabled people in an integrated and holistic manner, in which the individual is viewed as a person, not just a patient, mother, client, worker or student. Because the CALMS project is administered in the countries by the various ministries of health, it is difficult for the integrated approach to CBR to take hold. The participants and facilitators are predominantly from a health background, which promotes the image of disability as a purely medical problem, contrary to the predominant view of disabled activists who view disability as a social issue. On the other hand, the health/medical systems are the best-developed services within each country and are often linked to other ministries (education, labor, etc.), therefore allowing the project easy access to people in the remote regions most affected by landmines. Another early finding is that the participants are arriving at the workshops stressed and tired, as they tend to belong to an already very busy and active segment of their communities. Participating in the TOT workshops places an additional demand on their already limited time and resources. This raises the question of the long-term sustainability of the TOT approach: how can a country with limited capacity find the resources to support and promote CBR activities and CBR trainers? With the exception of...
Simulation
Trainees performing a disability simulation in the community.

How are they supported?

In the community.

Trainees performing a disability simulation in the community.

The Falkland Islands contain approximately 117 mine fields. Many of the mines were remotely delivered. About 80 percent of these landmines are hidden beneath sandy beaches and peat, which can shift a mine's position and make detection and removal very difficult.

Landmines in the Sand: The Falkland Islands

by Juan Carlos Ruan, Inter-American Defense Board and Jill E. Macheme

Introduction

Ever since John Strong, a British naval captain, first set foot on the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) in 1690, they have been a source of dispute and conflict between Britain and Argentina.

In 1765, Britain established a settlement on the Falkland Islands and declared ownership in the name of King George III. Since then, the British have maintained control over the Falkland Islands asserting their sovereignty. However, Argentina contests Britain's rights to the islands and contends that their rights to the islands are defined in the Spanish Papal Grants of 1493 and 1494, which claimed all of South America (except for regions maintained by Portugal as territory of Spain). Argentina also sees the Falkland Islands as a representation of British colonialism, and it states that its proximity to the islands compared to that of Britain warrants control. Though these opposing views have created conflicts over the Falkland Islands, the Royal Marines were ineffective against the thousands of Argentine troops. The British forces retreated to Montevideo, Uruguay, in order to organize a counterattack.

The Falkland Islands

The British were unprepared for the attack, and the defensive attempts of the Royal Marines were ineffective against the thousands of Argentine troops. The British forces retreated to Montevideo, Uruguay, in order to organize a counterattack. During the next two months, the Argentines justly successfully gained control of the islands building up a military post of more than 10,000 troops and naming themselves the Falkland Islands' flag and a poster that reads "We don't want Argentine citizens on our British Islands'" and "it is not just to protect a new agreement between Britain and Argentina."