

EMPOWERING CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

A PARTICIPATORY GROUP APPROACH

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FACTS ABOUT ZAMBIA

- Population 13.1 million
- Disability distribution is estimated at 2%
- Unemployment rate 7.53%

(Central Statistical Office 2010)

- Poverty 60% below poverty line
42% extremely poor

(Central Statistical Office 2015)

- Malnutrition
- Communicable and non communicable diseases

FURTHER CHALLENGES

Parents with children with disabilities face a double burden

Stigma and negative attitude

Inadequate rehabilitative services

Lack of adaptive equipment

OT in Zambia

Working as an occupational therapist in Zambia requires one to use a lot of initiative:

- ▣ Resource mobilization
- ▣ Complimenting governments efforts of addressing issues of disability at all levels

Participatory group project

- ▣ Staff involved: one OT, two OT assistants, two Norwegian OT students
- ▣ 5 carers meeting twice per week for five weeks
- ▣ All the children required adaptive equipment
- ▣ The project received financial support from a local NGO

Goals

- ▣ Support children's' development and participation in family life and play
- ▣ Provide an arena for sharing experience between carers and professionals
- ▣ Empower carers in supporting their children's' development
- ▣ Produce equipment that would promote childrens' participation in ADL

Approach

- ▣ Education and supervision about different conditions, disabilities, stigma and benefit of therapy
- ▣ Making APT corner seats for each child in the group.
- ▣ Sharing of experience between the careers
- ▣ Sharing a meal after the days work



Results

- ▣ Enhanced understanding of disability and therapeutic approaches
- ▣ Knowledge and skills on how to produce low cost devices
- ▣ Arena for strong bond among carers and their children.
- ▣ Close contact between carers and professionals
- ▣ Cultural experience sharing between Norway and Zambia
- ▣ An arena of story telling and laughter different from an arena of therapy

Results continued

- ▣ Each child had an adaptive equipment that would promote participation in self care, play and learning activities
- ▣ Carers have more time and opportunities to engage in other productive activities
- ▣ The knowledge and skills gained will be used to produce equipment for other children
- ▣ Carers have formed a parent support group
- ▣ Policy makers working on expanding the project to other areas in the province



Conclusion

- ▣ Group approach leads to empowerment
- ▣ Peer approach promotes individual strength and ability to change
- ▣ Occupational therapists can provide opportunities for carers to realize their rights and those of their children
- ▣ Carers developed self confidence to address challenges within their communities





»...This has changed my life. I thought there was nothing I could do. But now I know, there is something I can do for my child. Now I have hope.»

References

- Census of Population and Housing, Central Statistical Office, Lusaka, Zambia, 2010
- Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013-2014, Central Statistical Office, Lusaka Zambia 2015

THANK YOU
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