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International Charity Centre is an international partnership of Christians

whose mission is to follow our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in working with

the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and

bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

At International Charity Centre, every contribution counts. Whether you

give \$4 or \$400,000, your generosity allows us to go where — and when —

the need is greatest.

In 2018, we raised \$198,553,157. 94% came from governments and 4% from

income-earning projects. Individual donors contributed nearly \$950,000.

Some donations were small. Some were large. All made a difference in the lives of families in vulnerable situations.

85% of every donation goes directly to programs in the field.

At International Charity Centre, the people we serve are not passive recipients of aid. They are participants in their own solutions. We engage local communities at the program design stage, because programs designed, built, and judged by the community they serve, are more likely to succeed. And to last.

### **What is a church supposed to do with the offerings it receives?**

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**Question: "What is a church supposed to do with the offerings it receives?"**

**Answer:**

Every church receives some type of [tithes or offerings](#). Be it via "passing the plate" or setting a box in the back of the sanctuary or some other collection method, a church needs funds to operate. How the church uses those funds is important, as the church has

responsibilities to its members, to its surrounding community, and to God.

First, a church has a responsibility to its members. The very first church, the one begun in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, took special pains to meet the practical needs of their members: “God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need” ([Acts 4:33–35](#)).

We see that the money was brought to the leaders of the church, who were responsible for the distribution of the money based on need. Food was also being distributed to the widows among them ([Acts 6:1](#)).

The apostles in Jerusalem, in affirming Paul’s ministry among the Gentiles, asked that he should “continue to remember the poor” ([Galatians 2:10](#)). So, charitable work to benefit the poor within the church should be part of a church’s budget. Later, Paul gives some guidelines on who should receive aid from the church and who should depend on another source for their sustenance ([1 Timothy 5:3–16](#)).

Various local churches in the first century also took up offerings to help other churches in need. Specifically, the church in Jerusalem was suffering from persecution and a famine, and the church in Antioch provided resources to help ([Acts 11:29](#)). Paul later took love gifts from Galatia

([1 Corinthians 16:1](#)), Corinth ([1 Corinthians 16:3](#)), and Macedonia and Achaia

([Romans 15:25–26](#)) to Jerusalem. He was accompanied by emissaries from Berea,

Thessalonica, Derbe, and the province of Asia ([Acts 20:4](#)).

Second, a church has a responsibility to its surrounding community.

Outreach is necessary. “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

This verse sets the priority—God’s family first—but we are also to seek ways to “do good” to everyone. Of course, this must involve evangelism ([Acts 1:8](#)).

A [healthy church](#) should be sending out missionaries (see [Acts 13:2–3](#)) or at least

supporting missionaries in various fields of service.

A church that loses its outward focus, as evidenced by where it spends its money, is showing signs of spiritual weakness. Church consultant and author Thom S. Rainer, in his book *Autopsy of a Dead Church*, states that one of the symptoms of a dying church is that the percentage of the budget for members’ needs keeps increasing, while the money earmarked for outreach decreases.

Third, a church has a responsibility to God. Our Lord knows His church ([Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19](#)), and He commands that His Word be preached ([Romans 10:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:2](#)) and that “the mystery of Christ” be proclaimed ([Colossians 4:3](#)).

Delivering the gospel is most important. Anything that furthers that

goal should be given priority, and paying the pastor is part of that goal. “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, ‘Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,’ and ‘The worker deserves his wages’” ([1 Timothy 5:17–18](#)). Those who faithfully minister the Word of God should receive due compensation for their work (see also [1 Corinthians 9:11](#)).

Wisdom regarding a church’s expenditures is necessary, and we should be praying for that wisdom ([James 1:5](#)). There is nothing sinful about having a fine building or nicely kept grounds, but we wonder sometimes if the money would be better spent supporting another missionary or aiding the poorer churches around the world.

The goal of the church should be to do the work of God in the world. And everything should be done to the glory of God ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). The early church “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” ([Acts 2:42](#)). Perhaps these actions—spreading the Word, fellowshiping with one another, observing communion, and praying—should be a basic guide to how a church uses its offerings.

**What we expect church(es) to do with donation we give:**

**The mission of the local church is:** Preaching and teaching; Making disciples; Fellowship; Worship; Missions and evangelism; Maturity of the believer; Ministry in the home; Ministry to material needs.

**Ministry to material needs:**



Many people religiously think of the Church merely as an institution, however, the Church is you and me; the believers; the Body of Christ. Some people seem to think that the Church's primary and only job is to give hand outs, to feed people and fix their roofs after a hurricane, but Jesus told us first to preach the Gospel, save, heal and deliver. Jesus preached and demonstrated the Gospel, by saving, healing and delivering. When they needed food, He multiplied what they had and fed a multitude. He did this out of compassion for people. We, too, are obligated to one another in the love of the Lord. We are not responsible FOR each other, but we are responsible TO each other. We are responsible to be hospitable to the Church first and then to the world. The Church is not responsible for lazy people, but out of love for humanity, they lend a helping hand to those who are struggling as a result of circumstances beyond their control. They do this out of love, not because they are forced to do it.

1. The Early Church, motivated by the Holy Spirit and by compassion, were hospitable and gracious to one another. They cared for one another like family and shared what they had with everyone who had a need.

Acts 2:44-45 NKJV - *Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.*

Romans 15:25-27 NKJV - *But now I am going to*

*Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.*

2. Everyone is responsible to meet the needs of their own family first. The Church may step in to help those who truly have no family and no help and no way to earn a living themselves. Those receiving the Church's help, should, in turn, be serving others in the Church — not staying home and/or getting into trouble.

1 Timothy 5:3-16 NKJV - *Honor widows who are really widows. 4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. 5 Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. 6 But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. 7 And these things command, that they may be blameless. 8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, 10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.*

*11 But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, 12 having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. 13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. 14 Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some have already turned aside after Satan. 16 If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.*

3.

Faith or true religion is not in pretending to be Holy, but in ministering to the needs of others, spirit, soul and body as we have capacity to help.

*James 1:26-27 AMP - If anyone thinks himself to be religious (piously observant of the external duties of his faith) and does not bridle his tongue but deludes his own heart, this person's religious service is worthless (futile, barren). 27 External religious worship [religion as it is expressed in outward acts] that is pure and unblemished in the sight of God the Father is this: to visit and help and care for the orphans and widows in their affliction and need, and to keep oneself unspotted and uncontaminated from the world.*

*James 2:15-17 NKJV - If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do*

*not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*

*2 Corinthians 9:9 AMP - As it is written, He [the benevolent person] scatters abroad; He gives to the poor; His deeds of justice and goodness and kindness and benevolence will go on and endure forever!*

4. Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:34-46, that whatever good we do, whatever kindness we show, to others in Jesus Name, it's as if we have done it to Him. Our kindness and generosity toward others, is a demonstration of God's love and goodness toward them, causing them to repent and turn to Him. Jesus said in verse 40, *"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."* And in verse 45, *"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me."*

5. The account of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37, lets us know that Jesus wants us to care for our neighbor as best we can and also that *everyone* is our neighbor, not just certain people.

6. The disciples concentrated their efforts on prayer, preaching the Gospel and ministering to people's spiritual needs. In Acts 6:1-6, they appointed anointed, responsible men to minister to the material needs. Two of these men were Stephen and Philip who later did extraordinary things themselves.

## What should schools use funding for?

**School funding should** provide significant additional resources for low-income students. It costs more to educate low-income students and provide them with a robust education. To overcome issues of poverty, low-income students need significant additional **funds**.

**Transportation:** Schools often have a duty to provide transportation to get their students to and from **school**. Interest on Debt: Many **school** districts have to borrow **money to** make their budget, and interest payments represent a significant portion of **school** budgets.

Generally, funds received from us should be used for a well-being of the church ministry or school institution and its members or whoever it may concern and not for the purpose of individual's gain.

We pursue this mission through integrated, holistic commitment to:

- Transformational development **that is community-based and sustainable, focused especially on the needs of children.**
- Emergency relief **that assists people afflicted by conflict or disaster.**
- Promotion of justice **that seeks to change unjust structures affecting the poor among whom we work.**
- Partnerships with churches **to contribute to spiritual and social transformation.**
- Public awareness **that leads to informed understanding, giving, involvement, and prayer.**
- Witness to Jesus Christ **by life, deed, word, and sign that encourages people to respond to the Gospel.**

**Grant-giving charities** (also known as '**charitable** funds') give financial help in the form of a **grant** to people in need. ... **Grants** can be given as money, products or services. We offer advice, information and support alongside financial **grants**.

## **Types of grants and application procedures**

- Religion
- Education
- Self-help groups
- Arts, Culture, Humanities
- Community Development
- Environment
- Health
- Human and Civil Rights
- Human Services
- International
- Research and Public Policy

### **\*Self-help groups**

Introduction

Self-help groups are informal groups of people who come together to address their common problems. While self-help might imply a focus on the individual, one important characteristic of self-help groups is the idea of mutual support – people helping each other. Self-help groups can serve many different purposes depending on the situation and the need. For example, within the development sector, self-help groups have been used as an effective strategy for poverty alleviation, human development and social empowerment, and are therefore often focused on microcredit programmes and income-generating activities (Livelihood component).

Over the past 20 years, self-help groups have been used in various forms in the disability sector, and self-help groups of people with disabilities and their families are engaged in a whole range of activities including health care, rehabilitation, education, microcredit and campaigning. Self-help groups can facilitate empowerment; belonging to a group (or organization) is one of the principal means through which people with disabilities can participate in their communities (Disabled people's organizations), and it is through the involvement in groups that they can begin to develop their awareness and the ability to organize and take action and bring about change .

While many CBR programmes focus their activities at the level of the individual, e.g. on providing direct assistance, such as basic therapy, they are encouraged to bring people with disabilities and their family members together to form self-help groups to address and resolve their own problems. Self-help groups are a key element of the CBR matrix and can be a means to achieving the newly emerging CBR goals of inclusion of and ownership by people with disabilities, and to enhance their participation in development processes . This element mainly focuses on how CBR programmes can facilitate the formation of new self-help groups, but it also looks at the linking of CBR programmes with existing self-help groups of people with disabilities and their families, including mainstream self-help groups.

## **Viet Nam**

### ***SELF-HELP GROUPS FOR LANDMINE SURVIVORS***

The Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) started working in the Quang Binh Province of Viet Nam in 2003, where the network has helped establish 15 self-help groups for landmine survivors. Many of these survivors have injury related impairments but a unique characteristic of the groups is that they also include people with disabilities unrelated to conflict. These groups aim to facilitate the process of self-empowerment by overcoming social exclusion, enhancing participation in decision-making processes and improving quality of life. The ultimate goal of LSN-Viet Nam is to have a self-help group in each commune.

Outreach workers from LSN-Viet Nam, many of whom have a disability, are responsible for supporting communes that have expressed an interest in forming a self-help group. These workers start by fostering collaborative relationships with the local authorities as well as with major representative organizations such as the Farmers' Association, the Women's Union and the Veterans' Association. They provide training on the concept of self-help groups for the organizing group and guidance on the legal steps associated with registration of the group with the local authorities, and arrange initial stakeholder meetings.

Once groups are formally registered and formed, they are run independently by the members. Outreach workers provide ongoing support where required. For example, they may provide training for group members on disability issues and/or group facilitation (e.g. how to chair meetings). Group members are responsible for directing activities which may include: inviting representatives from local authorities to discuss health services for people with disabilities, working with local authorities to improve the quality and accessibility of health services for people with disabilities, organizing local sports events, participating in national sports events, providing peer education on health care and treatment, creating small business ventures and work opportunities, and promoting a positive image of people with disabilities in the local community. Many self-help groups have assumed responsibility for the National Day of People with Disabilities in Viet Nam by setting the agenda for the day and leading public celebrations.



One of the greatest achievements of the self-help groups is the impact they have had on raising the awareness of local authorities about the needs of people with disabilities and the important participatory role people with disabilities can play in addressing their needs. The next step is to bring all self-help groups together under one umbrella.

## Goal

People with disabilities and their family members participate in groups to resolve common problems, enhance their individual strengths, and improve their quality of life.

## The role of CBR

The role of CBR is to provide support and assistance to people with disabilities and their families to form new self-help groups or sustain existing ones. Where mainstream groups exist within communities, e.g. women's groups and microcredit groups, the role of CBR is to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and their family members in these groups.

## Desirable outcomes

- Self-help groups exist within local communities for people with disabilities and their family members.
- Self-help group members develop knowledge and skills that enable them to become contributors in their families and communities.
- People with disabilities and their family members are able to access mainstream self-help groups that are available to other members of the community.

- Self-help groups promote CBR, and members become involved in the planning and implementation of CBR programmes.
- Self-help groups join together to form federations and become self-sufficient.

Key concepts

### **Self-help groups**

#### ***CHARACTERISTICS***

Some common characteristics of self-help groups that are associated with CBR programmes include their:

- voluntary nature – they are run by and for group members, have regular meetings, and are open to new members ;
- generally being formed in response to a particular issue, e.g. no access to education for children with disabilities, limited income-generating opportunities;
- clear goals, which originate from the needs of group members and are known and shared by all members ;
- informal structure and basic rules, regulations and guidelines to show members how to work effectively together;
- participatory nature – involving getting help, sharing knowledge and experience, giving help, and learning to help oneself ;
- shared responsibility among group members – each member has a clear role and contributes his/her share of resources to the group;
- democratic decision-making;
- governance by members, using an external facilitator only if necessary in the formation of the group ;
- evolution over time to address a broader range of issues;
- possibility of joining together to form a federation of groups across a wider area.

## **Ghana**

### ***SELF-HELP GROUPS PROVIDE LIVELIHOODS***

In Kodobeda, Akwapim South District of the Eastern Region, Ghana, four people with disabilities decided to form a self-help group to improve their economic situation. At a meeting with the chief and elders of the village, they asked to be given three female goats to help them start an animal husbandry initiative. It was agreed, and the group started their initiative. The goats soon gave birth. The young goats were given to one member to rear, whilst the original goats remained with the first member of the group. When the goats gave birth again, the kids remained with the member and the original goats were sold, and the money used to buy another goat for the next member. The process went on until all the members had goats to rear and were able to earn enough to sustain themselves.

### ***MEMBERSHIP***

Group members are volunteers, in the sense that they are not paid, but they work systematically and regularly to change their own situation through mutual support. Within the context of CBR, self-help groups usually comprise people with disabilities and their families. These groups are usually small, consisting of only a few people, but over time may grow and include 7–30 members. Small groups enable effective participation of all members in discussions and decision-making, whereas larger groups may have more power and influence.

### ***FACILITATION AND LEADERSHIP***

CBR personnel may be required to take on a facilitator role, particularly when new self-help groups are being formed. CBR personnel can provide guidance to ensure chosen leaders do not dominate the group; they can prevent the hijacking of benefits by some individuals, keep the group motivated, and provide training on different aspects of group functioning. It is not necessary to be a person with a disability to work with people with disabilities, but the shared experience of discrimination may strengthen

understanding and empathy between an external facilitator and a group. A facilitator with a disability may also be a role model for people with disabilities in the group.

## **China**

### ***PROMOTING SELF-HELP GROUPS***

The CBR project in the Tibet Autonomous Region, People's Republic China, works with parents of children with disabilities to discover new ways of responding to their children's needs. These parents identified that prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behavior directed towards their children was a priority issue because it prevented their children from attending school, and it was uncomfortable taking their children into the community. CBR personnel, who had previously been introduced to the concept of self-help groups, saw the potential benefit that a self-help group would have for this group of parents.

A couple of parents decided to create a self-help group and started by focusing on raising public awareness about disability. They held these awareness sessions in local tea houses. As the parents came to rely upon one another, and drew increasing comfort from sharing their similar experiences, the group grew from two to 12 members. The community was positive and slowly their attitudes began to change, with many community members offering support, e.g. through donating wheelchairs, during these awareness sessions. This was a great source of encouragement. Many children with disabilities also started attending schools and families are now accepted and included in community activities.

The self-help group has slowly branched into other activities with the support of the CBR programme. It has opened a teahouse, dedicating the profits to poorer families who have members with disabilities. The CBR programme provided the initial grant and business training. The self-help group has also started visiting families at home to provide assistance when they are finding it difficult to follow their child's rehabilitation plan, due to low educational levels or work obligations. The CBR programme provided training for self-help group members on simple rehabilitation activities to promote child development and CBR

personnel accompany them on home visits, to slowly build their capacity and confidence levels. The success of this self-help group has inspired others to form similar groups.

## **Challenges of organizing self-help groups**

### ***RURAL VS. URBAN SELF-HELP GROUPS***

CBR experience shows that it is often easier to facilitate the formation of self-help groups in rural areas. Formation of self-help groups in urban settings can be particularly difficult because of frequent migration and difficulties in building trust and a sense of belonging among group members. Although it should be noted that, in rural areas, geographical isolation and the long distances group members may need to travel, and the limited means of communication, may make it difficult to hold regular meetings.

### ***WOMEN AND MEN***

The CBR experience indicates that women's groups are generally easier to form than groups for men. Women tend to have a stronger sense of solidarity towards one another and work more easily in a collaborative way. Where groups have both male and female members, it is important to ensure that women are represented, their voices heard and their issues discussed.

### ***LEVELS OF EDUCATION***

Within self-help groups, members may have varying levels of education. It is likely that people with disabilities will have lower levels of education and therefore may be disadvantaged. It is important that self-help meetings are not monopolized by those people who may have a higher level of education, and for those self-help groups that are based around microcredit, it is important that there is not an uneven distribution of benefits. To prevent inequalities from arising within groups, time needs to

be dedicated in the early stages of group formation to building a sense of cohesion and empowerment among the less literate or vocal members.

### ***SINGLE-IMPAIRMENT GROUPS***

Many groups have been formed for and by individuals with similar impairments. While single impairment groups have a clear and well defined purpose, often cross-disability groups are more practical in small communities where there are few people with one particular type of impairment. The basic needs of people with disabilities, irrespective of their impairments, are the same, e.g. food, shelter, health care, education. Single-impairment groups can often divide people with disabilities and set up competition for scarce resources.

### ***DEPENDENCY***

Disability is often associated with dependency, e.g. with doing things for people with disabilities rather than doing things with them. As a result, people with disabilities who are used to being recipients rather than contributors may lack the motivation and confidence to participate in self-help groups and activities.

Suggested activities

#### **Provide assistance to form new self-help groups**

CBR programmes need to play an active role in creating self-help groups of people with disabilities and their family members. The process of forming a self-help group will vary according to the local situation, with different levels of support required for each group. A general outline of suggested activities is provided below.

## **GETTING STARTED**

CBR personnel usually start working with people with disabilities and their families in their homes, identifying their needs and providing basic information about disability and the types of support available. As trust and confidence strengthens over time, they can be encouraged to meet with others who share similar experiences. At this stage CBR personnel can:

- provide information to people with disabilities and their family members about the concept of self-help groups and encourage them to form a group in their community – this may include talking about the advantages of being in a group and the types of concerns that can be addressed, e.g. concerns about forming a group when the primary focus is to generate income to sustain the family – people may want to know how the group can help them directly by providing regular work and income;
- encourage people with disabilities and their family members to identify and talk with other people in their communities who may be interested in joining;
- organize a formal planning meeting in an accessible location, if there is enough interest and motivation.

## **PLANNING**

- Discuss what the shared concerns are and establish what the initial focus of the group will be, e.g. sharing feelings and experiences, raising awareness, exchanging information and resources.
- Ask people what resources they are willing to contribute for the benefit of the group.
- Identify a group leader or coordinator – it may be necessary to have more than one.
- Allocate tasks as early as possible to help promote ownership and responsibility.
- Establish a group identity by adopting a name for the group.
- Decide who can join the group – try to keep the group small to begin with as this will provide everyone with a chance to participate.

- Decide on how often to meet, setting a date and time for the first meetings. Ensure meetings are arranged in accessible locations and not too far from where the group members live. Consider holding meetings in community locations, e.g. schools, to ensure visibility of the group and the CBR programme.
- If necessary, decide how to publicize the group to encourage people to attend the first meeting. This might include talking to people, putting up a poster or advertising on the local radio station or in the newspaper.

## ***RUNNING THE MEETINGS***

While CBR personnel are encouraged not to be in charge of running meetings, they need to be aware of the basic structure for a self-help group meeting so they can support and assist groups where necessary. The basic structure involves:

- welcoming people to the meeting as they arrive;
- opening the meeting and encouraging members to introduce themselves;
- establishing the rules for confidentiality – for keeping private what is discussed and what happens during a meeting – different cultures may interpret confidentiality in different ways, so it is important to decide what the group wishes to keep confidential;
- carrying out the main activities of the meeting;
- taking minutes of the meetings, making a record of attendance, key topics of discussion and decisions made;
- dealing with administrative matters, e.g. date and time of next meeting;
- closing the meeting.

## ***FACILITATING***

CBR programmes should fulfil a facilitative role in self-help groups, enabling them to work cooperatively and effectively. For example, CBR programmes can:

- provide support and assistance for group leaders when requested;



- ensure meetings are run so that all members understand what is going on and are able to take part;
- encourage the rotation of roles and responsibilities within the group;
- assist the group to see how they can provide mutual support to one another, e.g. companionship, taking children to school, starting group saving activities;
- check to see that there are fair and transparent methods for sharing the benefits of group activities;
- assist with drafting group rules and regulations once the group is well established;
- provide financial contributions, e.g. seed money or matching grants to enable self-help groups to expand their activities, and to open bank accounts.

### ***BUILDING CAPACITY***

Groups often need considerable support and capacity-building before they can function effectively and independently. Important skills for group members include: preparing agendas, conducting meetings, speaking in public with confidence, writing minutes, resolving conflicts, problem-solving, democratic decision-making, delegation of tasks, monitoring progress. Sometimes self-help groups will benefit from the development of specific skills, and sometimes the skills may already exist within the group. Self-help group meetings in themselves provide a good opportunity for members to practise new skills.

New self-help groups can learn from already established groups in the community. New groups may benefit from inviting members from existing self-help groups within the community – a new self-help group will value most the experience of people in circumstances similar to their own. Early contact between self-help groups of people with disabilities is important for learning, future links and mutual help.

Groups may be hesitant about getting involved in social or political action at first because they feel they lack the know-how or ability. But with time, patience and encouragement, group members will begin to discover their ability to understand, plan and implement the activities needed to change their situation, e.g. mobilizing the community in the form of a petition to local authorities as a first step towards safe drinking water and improved sanitation.

## **Dominican Republic**

### ***A MOTHERS' SELF-HELP GROUP IMPROVES THE LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN***

A self-help group for mothers of children with disabilities was formed in the slums of Santiago, in the Dominican Republic, with the assistance of an international nongovernmental organization. The common interest among the group members was to access services for their children. The government was unresponsive to their children's needs in both the health and education sectors. In the absence of government support, the mothers made a decision to undertake basic rehabilitation and education services themselves. They received training from the nongovernmental organization, and in time extended their services to include other children in the slum areas of Santiago. The mothers' group has continued to grow and has developed support services for adolescents with disabilities and a revolving loan fund. The mothers sought the expert help of the Government's Institute for Co-operatives in forming and managing their revolving fund. The mothers' group continues to grow as it identifies further areas of need; it now organizes social events, awareness-raising opportunities and income generation. The mothers are proud of their success and proud of the success of their children and teenagers.

### **Develop partnerships with existing self-help groups**

In many communities, self-help groups for people with disabilities and their family members already exist and operate independently of CBR programmes. These groups might be for people with a specific condition or impairment, e.g. for people who are blind or deaf, have leprosy, or are victims of landmines. Some groups may focus on a specific topic or issue, e.g. disability rights, income generation, women. Other terms that may be used for “self-help groups” include: local disability groups, parents groups, social groups, peer groups, clubs or mutual aid groups.

The objectives of these groups and the self-help groups initiated by CBR programmes are often similar. Therefore it is important that CBR programmes identify and make contact with any groups that currently exist in the community and work towards

developing partnerships to share knowledge and resources and ensure that more people with disabilities and their family members are reached.

### **Encourage inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream self-help groups**

While self-help groups specifically for people with disabilities and their families play an important role, CBR programmes should also encourage people with disabilities and their families to become members of mainstream self-help groups, e.g. women's groups, youth groups, microcredit groups, farmers' groups. The following activities are suggested:

- encourage mainstream self-help groups to include people with disabilities as regular members with equal rights, e.g. ensure they meet in accessible venues;
- highlight common issues faced by people both with and without disabilities, e.g. facilitate a discussion about gender discrimination with a women's group and highlight how this issue is shared by all women – this may provide an incentive for mainstream self-help groups to work in alliance with disability self-help groups and/or include people with disabilities in their groups;
- identify existing members of mainstream self-help groups who are either disabled or have a family member who is disabled and encourage them to talk about the issues and problems they face and to put disability on the agenda of their self-help group for discussion and debate;
- ensure people with disabilities and their families have the necessary skills and knowledge before linking them to mainstream self-help groups, as otherwise they may be vulnerable to discrimination.

### **Encourage self-help group members to participate in CBR programmes**

Self-help group members (from both disability specific and mainstream self-help groups) have the potential to be important resources for CBR programmes, and thus need to be well informed about CBR. Self-help groups can play an important role in creating awareness about disability and promoting inclusive development. Self-help group members may also be able to volunteer their time and contribute to CBR activities, e.g. by identifying people with disabilities in the community, supporting

people with rehabilitation activities, and providing follow-up. Disability-specific self-help groups should be particularly encouraged to gradually play a bigger role in CBR programmes. Their participation in the management (e.g. planning, implementing and monitoring) of CBR programmes can make programmes more appropriate, credible and sustainable.

### **Encourage self-help groups to join together**

While self-help groups for people with disabilities and their family members may be able to make a difference at the local level, their members may be limited in capacity to make changes at higher levels. Greater numbers of people can bring about change and therefore the next step is to encourage self-help groups (both those which have been started by CBR programmes and those which exist independently) to come together under one “umbrella” – this is commonly known as a federation. CBR programmes can facilitate the formation of a self-help group federation by bringing together one or two elected representatives from each self-help group. Self-help group federations need to ensure that people of different groups (e.g. of different age, impairment, gender, socioeconomic status) are equally represented. A self-help group federation can also take on greater responsibilities and one day may become a formal organization in its own right.

## **Bangladesh**

### ***STRENGTH IN NUMBERS***

Azgar became one of the first members of the Belgachi self-help group in Bangladesh. His enthusiasm and hard work led to his election as chairman. Today the group has 21 members and meets on a weekly basis to discuss problems and possible solutions. Azgar's physical difficulties, together with his limited access to land, meant that he found it very difficult to support his family. He normally had work for only 10 or 12 days each month. He applied to the Government for permission to farm on nearby wasteland. Although his application was opposed by some villagers, the self-help group continued to support him. After Azgar was awarded an acre of land, a nongovernmental organization provided him with training in agricultural techniques. Today, Azgar grows and sells vegetables and has raised his family's standard of living. Azgar stood for election in the Poradha federation of self-help groups and was elected vice-chairman. He persuaded a Government official to allocate a small piece of wasteland to the

federation and inspired members to collect bamboo to build a meeting hall. His continuing task is to establish rights for people with disabilities and ensure their acceptance by the community.

A well established Self-help group(s) is entitled to our charity services.

International Charity Centre only considers requests for funding through our online application platform.

**STEP 1:** Read about our Grants portfolio. Determine whether your project or program fits either of our categories.

**STEP 2:** Make sure your organization and project or program is eligible for funding by providing us with your 12-Months bank statement.

**STEP 3:** Prepare your project proposal/plan comprehensively ensuring that any monetary quotation is in (\$ US DOLLARS)

**STEP 4:** Fill out our online questionnaire and wait for response -during which you can send project proposal and your latest 12-months bank statement in email address: [projectmanager@internationalcharitycentre.org](mailto:projectmanager@internationalcharitycentre.org) or [info@internationalcharitycentre.org](mailto:info@internationalcharitycentre.org)

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