



SUMMARY DOCUMENT: COMMUNITY MAPPING STUDY: PEOPLE WITH IMPAIRMENTS IN MUSANZE

Component of Education, Equality and Empowerment (EEE) Project, Jubilee Action in partnership with Fair Children/Youth Foundation (FCYF)

Background

A recent national census on people living with disabilities found that despite improvements in national legislation, people and especially children who live with disabilities face great discrimination and stigma in Rwanda (UNICEF Rwanda: 2011).

In January 2013, Jubilee Action in partnership with Fair Children / Youth Foundation launched Education, Equity and Empowerment (EEE) project which aims to advocate for the rights of people with impairments and specifically to support those with hearing and communication impairments to gain access to education. This project acknowledged the gaps in reliable data about people with impairments in the Musanze district and so began the process of mapping people with impairment in April 2013.

Methodology

The three stage methodology designed by the team ensured that detailed information was also captured about the EEE project target group: children and youth with hearing and / or communication impairments. The process included village level scoping survey, targeted questionnaires and follow ups by specialist staff. The mapping team also developed a questionnaire which captured the information about 'experienced', 'anticipated' and 'self' stigma. Over 600 people were interviewed using this questionnaire at the second and third stage through a process of random sampling. The purpose of gathering this information was to ensure that the impact of the EEE project advocacy in the local community can be evaluated throughout the project lifetime.

Mapping outcomes

The outcome of the mapping study found 8,117 people living with impairments. 63% were over the age of 25 years.

Of the remaining 37% aged 3-25, 841 people were found to have a hearing or communication impairment (many of which were found to have multiple impairments). Due to the project team's restricted time and resources to gather detailed data about the entire 8,117 people living with impairments, instead the team focussed on collecting detailed data about their target group plus a sample of the remaining people with impairments.

The detailed data showed 45.9% of people living with impairment had no access to education despite 74% of respondent confirming there was a nearby school. This indicates barriers to access which are not geographical and supports the government's efforts to ensure education access for all but emphasizes the exclusion that minority groups with disabilities continue to feel.

Stigma identification

On average 20% of families indicated that stigma has a real impact of the lives of people with disabilities. We would suggest that this number is in fact even higher due to the limitation of gathering data from children who may be unable to communicate in a traditional way.

Due to the difficulty in communicating with children who have communication impairments, there are limitations to understanding the true extent of the discrimination felt towards these children and that stigma which stands in their way must be addressed from the root causes. In some cases, addressing discrimination against children with disabilities requires working towards the provision of services that meet their special needs. This includes early detection and intervention in health, and specialized education for children with intellectual or sensory disabilities. Efforts to address discrimination against children with disabilities at community level will also have the positive effect of preventing the development of discriminatory attitudes towards those with disabilities in subsequent generations.

Limitations to the data

During a critical review of the mapping process in Musanze district, we have identified the following limitations to our data which must be noted before utilising the data within this report:

Firstly our percentage data is based on a sample of 80% of children and youth (aged 3-25) with hearing impairments and a 40% sample of children and youth (aged 3-25) with other impairments. However, no person was turned away and this resulted in a very small number of people over 25 completing the questionnaire. Secondly, our data captures the number of people with multiple impairments but our analysis has not allowed us to understand any trends in combinations of impairments experienced by individuals. We will implement a better coding system to ensure that it is possible to analyse this in the further mapping studies undertaken by the EEE project. Thirdly, the original purpose of this mapping study was to map those children with hearing and communication impairments. However, the NCPD requested that the EEE project also noted all people with impairments. The expertise afforded to the project was that of audiology and speech and language therapy, specific to assessing the original target group as opposed to all disabilities.

Recommendations

The community mapping study should be duplicated in all districts of Rwanda to enable decision makers and other development partners to come up with intervention strategies which are evidence-based; The Ministry of Education should develop strategies ensuring that more deaf schools are put in place at sector level and tutors/peers for children with disability are coached; Since the large proportion of the disabled children in the district have physical impairments, wheel chairs and prosthetic services should be provided for those who are in need; Vocational schools are paramount to enable disabled children to acquire skills which would help them to generate income; Trainings on child rights should be conducted from the district up to the village level to improve protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

*Full Report available from Jubilee Action, Carroll House, 11 Quarry Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3UY
info@jubileeaction.org*