

4. Disability – HIV/AIDS training



Deaf children
in Nigerian
classroom

Background

International attention to the rights of persons with disabilities is increasing, especially since in May 2008 the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities has come into effect. However, in general governments and policymakers have yet to include disability issues in their AIDS strategic plans. Even within disability programmes it is not yet common to ensure that clients have access to appropriate information and services related to HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. Leaving persons with disabilities out of HIV/AIDS prevention and care is shortsighted. Given the rapid growth of the epidemic and the size of the global disabled population; the AIDS crisis cannot be addressed successfully unless persons with disabilities are routinely included in all HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and outreach efforts!

Local CBR teams, professionals, persons with disabilities and their families share the same fears, misconceptions and risks as the general public with regard to the HIV-virus. They urgently need to receive accessible and appropriate information on HIV/AIDS. The launch of the new United Nations

CBR Guidelines in 2010 will mean that information on HIV/AIDS will become more easily available for CBR teams as these guidelines pay specific attention to this subject. The goal of the section focusing on HIV/AIDS is to ensure 'access for all' to HIV/AIDS information, services and programmes. This goal involves three key areas: increasing individual knowledge, reducing stigma and discrimination and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Overall goal

Mainstream development and HIV/AIDS organisations understand the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities in their HIV/AIDS programmes.

Specific objectives

- Participants have an increased awareness about the vulnerability of persons with disabilities to the risk and impact of HIV and AIDS.
- Participants have tools and arguments for how to ensure inclusion of disability in HIV/AIDS policies, strategies and programmes.
- Participants are able to advocate within their own organisations for equal access to HIV-prevention, treatment, care and support services for persons with disabilities.

Course content

- Sexual and Reproductive Health: a right of persons with disabilities.
- The situation of HIV/AIDS among persons with disabilities worldwide.
- Specific risk factors.
- Inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream HIV/AIDS programs: why or why not?
- Effectiveness of inclusive HIV/AIDS programmes.
- Community Based Rehabilitation and HIV/AIDS.

Target groups

This 1-week course has been developed for:

- Disability activists involved in DPOs.
- Staff of mainstream NGOs, development organisations as well as donor organisations.
- Rehabilitation professionals.