

Department of Social Development/Japan International Cooperation Agency's Journey from South African Community to Southern African Region

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Abstract : South Africa has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on 30th November 2007. In line with this, the Department of Social Development (DSD) revised the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD), and the Cabinet approved it on 9th December 2015. The South African government is striving towards the elimination of poverty and inequality in line with UNCRPD and WPRPD. However, there are minimal programmes and services that have been provided to persons with disabilities in the rural community. In order to address current discriminative practices, disunity and limited self-representation in rural community, DSD in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is implementing the 'Project for the Promotion of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Disability Mainstreaming' from May 2016 to May 2020. The project is targeting rural community as the project sites, namely 1) Collins Chabane municipality, Vhembe district, Limpopo and 2) Maluti-a-Phofung municipality, Thabo Mofutsanyana district, Free State. The project aims at developing good practices on Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) at the project sites which will be documented as a guideline and applied in other provinces in South Africa and neighbouring countries (Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique). In cooperation with provincial and district DSD and local government, the project is currently implementing various community activities, for example: Establishment of Self-Help Group (SHG) of persons with disabilities and Peer Counselling in the villages, and will conduct Disability Equality Training (DET) and accessibility workshop in order to enhance the CBID in the project sites. In order to universalise good practices on CBID, the authors will explain lessons learned from the project by utilising the theories of disability and development studies and community psychology such as social model of disability, twin-track approach, empowerment theory, sense of community, helper therapy principle, etc. And the authors conclude that in order to realise social participation of persons with disabilities in rural community, CBID is a strong tool and persons with disabilities must play central roles in all spheres of CBID activities.

Keywords : community-based inclusive development, disability mainstreaming, empowerment of persons with disabilities, self-help group

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