Needs Assessment in Community Based Rehabilitation of Children with a Physical Disability

An Analysis of Successful Facilitators

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Preface

Before you lies the thesis "Needs Assessment in Community Based Rehabilitation of Children with a Physical Disability; An Analysis of Successful Facilitators." It has been written as a part of my master Youth, Education and Society at Utrecht University. The data collection for this research took place in the Philippines. The country and its inhabitants have made my stay and research not only educative but also very pleasant. I could have not written this thesis without the help of others. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have contributed to the realisation of this thesis. First of all I would like to thank the Liliane Foundation and the Norfil Foundation for giving me the opportunity to conduct this research. I would also like to thank all the partner organisations for receiving me so welcoming. This also applies for all the families who have opened up their homes. There are a couple of people I would like to thank in particular. First of all, I would like to thank Dian de Vries, my supervisor at Utrecht University, for her wonderful guidance, suggestions and patience when I did not know how to proceed. Second, Anneke Hofs and Karin Rozendal, my supervisors at the Liliane Foundation for their meaningful insights, constructive criticism and enthusiasm about the topic. Last but not least I would like to thank Lizzy Hutten, my fellow student and travel companion, without whom I would not have been able to finish this thesis and would not have enjoyed my time in the Philippines as much as I did.

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Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek is gericht op het in kaart brengen van behoeften van kinderen met een lichamelijke beperking en hun familie door facilitators werkzaam binnen de CBR strategie. Er is onderzocht of facilitators die in staat zijn om accuraat behoeften vast te stellen over gemeenschappelijke eigenschappen bezitten die bij kunnen dragen aan richtlijnen voor een betere selectie en training van facilitators. Tevens zijn eigenschappen met betrekking tot de methode, aanpak en houding ten opzichte van behoeften en needs assessment onderzocht. Voor dit onderzoek zijn 30 kinderen en hun familie en 18 facilitators binnen zes verschillende organisaties geïnterviewd. De behoeften gerapporteerd door kinderen en familie zijn vergeleken met de gerapporteerde behoeften door facilitators om te kunnen bepalen welke facilitators succesvol zijn. Vervolgens is geanalyseerd welke eigenschappen deze facilitators bezitten, welke methode en aanpak zij hanteren en welke houding zij hebben ten opzichte van needs assessment. Geconcludeerd kan worden dat een hogere opleiding, een betaalde functie bekleden, zelf geen beperking hebben en niemand in de familie met een beperking en in een ruraal gebied werkzaam zijn voor een organisatie met een rurale standplaats facilitator eigenschappen zijn die de kans vergroten op een accurate needs assessment. Needs assessment eigenschappen die de kans op het accuraat identificeren van de behoeften van kinderen en families zijn het hanteren van een holistische aanpak, het gebruik van meerdere assessment formulieren en het betrekken van meerdere respondenten.

Abstract

The focus of this research is the process of needs assessment of children with a physical disability and their family as conducted by CBR facilitators. It is investigated if facilitators who are able to accurately identify the needs of child and families share common characteristics, which can be used in the selection of facilitators. Furthermore needs assessment characteristics in relation to methodology, approach and attitude towards needs and needs assessments are examined which may provide guidelines on how to train facilitators. Interviews have been conducted with 30 children and their family and 18 facilitators within six organisations in the Philippines. The needs as reported by child and family have been compared to the needs reported by facilitators to determine which facilitators are successful at conducting needs assessments. Subsequently is analysed which characteristics these facilitators exhibit, which methodology and approach they apply and which attitude towards needs and needs assessment they hold. This study shows that having a college degree, being a paid employee, not having a disability themselves or someone in the family with a disability and working in a rural area for a rural based organisation are facilitator characteristics which are associated with the ability to accurately identify needs. Needs assessment characteristics that increase the chance of accurately identifying needs are: applying a holistic approach and involvement of multiple forms and respondents.

Keywords; CBR strategy, CBR facilitators, needs assessment, physical disabilities

Introduction

In 1978 the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the Community Based Rehabilitation Strategy (CBR): a strategy that promotes collaboration on the/a community level to enhance social inclusion and participation, reduce poverty and create equal opportunities for all people in the community, including those with disabilities (WHO, 2004). The strategy is implemented through the combined effort of people with disabilities themselves, their families, institutions and organizations on governmental and non-governmental level. The main objectives of this approach are twofold. First, to ensure that people with disabilities are able to maximize their physical and mental abilities, to access regular services and opportunities, and to become active contributors to the community and society at large. Second, to protect the human rights of people with disabilities through changes within the community, for instance by removing barriers to participation (WHO, 2004). The rehabilitation of people with disabilities through the CBR strategies focuses on five domains, namely; health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment. These five domains can be illustrated by the CBR Matrix which will be discussed below.

Several researchers devote their time and expertise to evaluate and provide guidelines on the implementation of the CBR strategy (Cornielje, Nicholls & Velema, 2001; Cornielje & Tsengu, 2015; Thomas & Thomas, 2002; Velema & Cornielje, 2010). However, little to no mention is made of the process of identification of the needs of people with a disability in this specific strategy. The literature regarding the CBR strategy makes no references to how to conduct a needs assessment or evaluation of this process. Identification of the needs of people with a disability is the first, and therefore important, step towards rehabilitation. Sloper and Turner (1992) have found that parents of children with disabilities and professionals often disagree about identified needs. A more recent study by Kersten, George, McLellan, Smith

and Mulee (2000) confirmed these findings. They, however, give no reason or clarification on the explanation on this finding. These findings and the lack of research on successful factors in needs assessments in the CBR strategy provide an opportunity to evaluate facilitator and needs assessment characteristics in practice.

The current study focuses on characteristics of the CBR facilitator and the approach used to conduct needs assessments. When looking at facilitator characteristics factors such as education, previous work experience and employment status will be explored. Within the approach to needs assessment the distinction will be made between methodological approach, holistic approach and the attitude towards needs and needs assessments. The current study and its results aims to contribute to creating an ideal CBR facilitator. An ideal CBR facilitator profile provides a tool for better selection of CBR facilitators and offers an indication what approach to needs assessment seems best applicable within the CBR strategy. This can be implemented in the education and training of CBR facilitators. The focus in this study lies on children in the age of 6-12 with a physical disability. This leads to the following research question: *What are the characteristics of facilitators and needs assessments that best identify the needs of children with psychical disabilities and their family?*

CBR Matrix

The CBR matrix is the basis of the CBR strategy. The five domains within the strategy consist of five different elements which combined cover all aspects related to full rehabilitation and community participation. To gain a more comprehensive view of the CBR strategy an explanation of the five domains will follow.
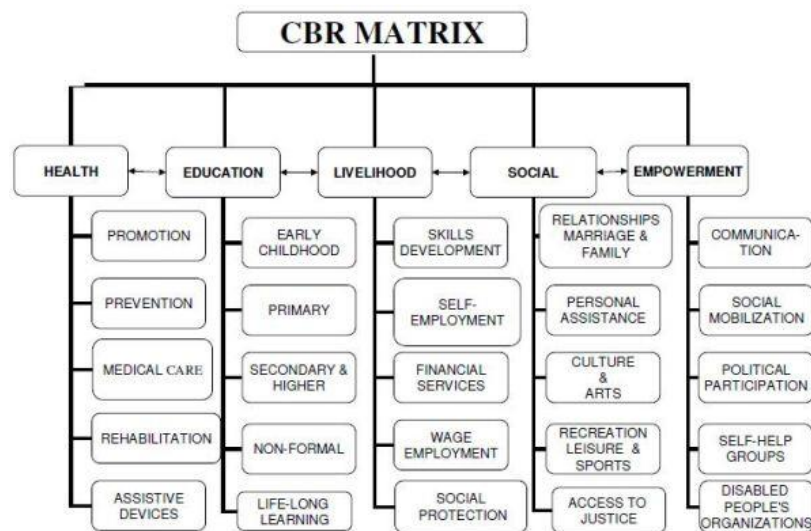
Figure 1. CBR Matrix (World Health Organization, 2010).

The first domain within the CBR strategy is health. According to the constitution of the WHO, health can be defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, not merely the absence of disease of infirmity" (WHO, 2006). CBR programmes support people with disabilities in achieving the best possible levels of health. This is done through the work within five areas illustrated in the CBR matrix; promotion, prevention, medical care, rehabilitation and assistive devices (WHO, 2010). The role of CBR is to work closely with the health sector, and individuals and their families to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are addressed within the above described five areas. People with disabilities often need lifelong medical care, but because of their disability have limited access/experience barriers to the health services they need. For this purpose CBR strives for 'Inclusive Health'. Inclusive health means that all people can access health care irrespective of disability, gender, age, colour, race, religion and socioeconomic status (WHO, 2010).

The second domain within the CBR strategy is education. In this domain the following elements are included: early childhood care and education, primary education, secondary and higher education, non-formal education and lifelong learning (WHO, 2010). The goal of CBR

is for people with disabilities to have access to education and lifelong learning, leading to fulfilment of potential, a sense of dignity and self-worth, and effective participation in society. The role of CBR is to collaborate with the education sector to work towards inclusive education at all levels for people with disabilities.

Livelihood is the third domain within the CBR matrix. The domain of livelihood is about giving people with disabilities access to social protection measures and being able to generate an income for themselves, leading to a dignified life in which they contribute to their families and the community (WHO, 2010). The role of CBR programmes is to facilitate access to acquiring skills, livelihood opportunities, enhanced participation in community life and self-fulfilment. The elements illustrated in the CBR matrix in this domain are: skill development, self employment, financial services, wage employment and social protection. In this domain the focus is on the whole family. Families in poor communities usually survive through several sources of income. A family member with a disability can make a contribution to family life and livelihood, and therefore activities to support livelihoods must take the whole family into account (WHO, 2010).

Fourth in the CBR strategy is the social domain. Being actively included in the family and community life is important for personal development. The opportunity to participate in social activities has a strong impact on a person's identity, self-esteem, quality of life, and ultimately his/her social status. People with disabilities face many barriers in society and therefore they often have fewer opportunities to participate in social activities. The five elements in this domain are: relationships, marriage and family; personal assistance, culture and arts, recreation, leisure and sports and access to justice (WHO, 2010). CBR strives to achieve that people with disabilities have meaningful social roles and responsibilities in their families and communities, in which they are treated as equal members.

Empowerment is the final component of CBR matrix and is a theme that is embedded in all domains of the CBR strategy. While the first four components of the matrix relate to key development sectors, the empowerment component focuses on the importance of empowering people with disabilities, their family members and communities to facilitate the mainstreaming of disability across each sector and to ensure that everybody is able to access their rights and entitlements (WHO, 2010). This is done by promoting, supporting and facilitating active involvement of people with disabilities and their families in issues that affect their lives. This has the desirable outcome that people with disabilities and their families make their own decisions and take responsibility for changing their lives and improving their communities. The five elements within this domain are: communication, social mobilization, political participation, self-help groups and disabled people's organizations (WHO, 2010). For a CBR facilitator to be successful at identifying the needs of children with a physical disability it is important that all of the domains of the CBR strategy are addressed in the assessment. This issue will later be addressed in the section about applying a holistic approach to needs assessments.

CBR Facilitators characteristics

The CBR facilitator (also called CBR Worker) is the core of the CBR strategy and has several tasks. First of all the CBR facilitator identifies people with disabilities and is responsible for the assessment of their needs. After identification of a person with a disability CBR workers provide these persons with advice and assistance in tasks of daily living. They also act as an advocate for people with disabilities by contacting schools, health centres, training centres, workplaces and other organizations to promote accessibility and inclusion. In addition, the CBR facilitator provides information on and referrals to services people with disabilities might need, in and outside of the community. And finally the CBR facilitator

should be able to identify which skills people need to learn and give training in these skills (ILO, UNESCO & WHO, 2004).

One of the aims of this research is to identify facilitator characteristics that are associated with accurately identifying the needs of children with a physical disability and their family. While in the literature no specific mention is made about characteristics in relation to needs assessment, several researchers discuss favourable facilitator characteristics in general. Since the needs assessment is one of the tasks of the facilitator it should be expected that these characteristics also apply for this specific task. Based on the description and the requirements of the CBR facilitator ILO, UNESCO and WHO (2004) suggest in their joint position paper that the CBR facilitator should preferably be someone with a disability or someone who has a person with a disability in his family or nearby environment. The advantage of a CBR facilitator with a disability or someone with a disability in his environment is that this person already has a network or knowledge of services that might contribute to the rehabilitation of people with disabilities (Cornielje et al., 2001). Thomas and Thomas (2002) add in their article that a CBR facilitator should be preferably be a volunteer. A volunteer worker, they argue, is intrinsically more motivated than a paid employee and therefore more valuable. This is contradictory to the Expert Model of Cunningham and Davis (1985) where the emphasis is placed on the requirement of professional staff in the health sector. The expert model is often associated with the institutional health sector (Hartley, Nganwa &Kisanji, 2002). This can explain the contradiction in literature, since CBR is very much a community effort and therefore has other demands and requirements than health institutions.

Since the above described characteristics have not been tested in practice in relation to performing a needs assessment, this will be analysed in this research. Are the above discussed

characteristics indeed associated with accurately performed needs assessments, and if not, which characteristics are? This leads to the following sub question: *What characteristics (demographics) does a CBR facilitator exhibit that accurately identifies needs of children with a physical disability and their family?*

Needs Assessment characteristics

Not only facilitator characteristics can influence the assessment process, also how the needs assessment is conducted has impact on the outcomes. In this research three elements of approaches to needs assessments will be examined, namely; methodological approach, holistic approach and attitude towards needs and needs assessments. The process of needs assessment within the CBR strategy is not discussed in the literature. This topic however is thoroughly discussed in related fields such as social work and medical strategies towards rehabilitation of people with disabilities. Since the discussed literature are associated with the same target audience and share the same goals of the CBR strategy, the approaches discussed in this literature can be applied to the CBR strategy as well.

Methodological approach

When conducting a needs assessment different methodologies can be applied for gathering information on each domain. Procedural options include interviews, direct observation and ratings either completed by families or CBR facilitators. These options vary in difficulty level; observations for example demand more knowledge and expertise from the CBR facilitator, as these are more prone to erroneous interpretations (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1988). Applying multiple assessment tools in the process of identifying needs is considered to be more effective in accurately identifying needs than the use of no or only one tool (Eastmond, 1994). Further is it important that the person(s) involved in the needs assessment works structured and orderly. The needs assessment should be conducted according to a needs

assessment protocol or plan and logic phases should be gone through according to a fixed order. When the needs are identified they should be prioritized on order of importance (Parker & Bradley, 2014).

Lastly, for an assessment to be successful it is important to involve multiple respondents as well as professionals in the assessment. Involvement of multiple respondents in the needs assessments makes it possible to verify answers given by a respondent and leads to a more comprehensive view (Watkins, Meiers & Visser, 2012). The presumptions made in the discussed literature have never been tested within the CBR strategy. This study aims to analyze whether successful facilitators indeed apply these methodological approaches, and if not which methodology they do apply. The sub question on this topic is as follows: *What methodology to conducting needs assessments is used by CBR facilitators or teams who are able to accurately identify the needs of children and their family?* To answer this question three elements within methodological approach are examined; use of assessment forms, protocol use and consultation of multiple respondents.

Holistic approach

The holistic approach of the CBR strategy aims to include all different aspects of the person with disability's life in the needs assessment. Because the strategy aims at the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in all aspects of their lives, needs also should be identified at all levels. The holistic approach can be compared to an ecological approach of an assessment, which also focuses on more than only individual factors. Ecological approaches to an assessment are based on the presumption that development and needs of individuals can only be fully understood when explored in the context and environment they live in (Jack, 2001). A holistic approach to a needs assessment can be conducted through the use of the CBR matrix which is described above. Making use of the

CBR matrix is a holistic approach in which the child's needs, the parent's capacity to respond to these needs and the involvement of the community to provide in the child's needs are assessed. Identifying needs within all domains of the CBR strategy requires facilitators to know and work according to the core values and principles of the program, which is holistic by nature (Velema & Cornielje, 2010). This can be achieved through making sure that all needs that influence the inclusion into society and the empowerment of people with disabilities are identified. Chappel and Johannesmeier (2009) furthermore emphasize the community aspect of the CBR strategy and the influence this has on the requirements and tasks of CBR facilitators. They agree that CBR facilitators should apply a holistic approach, by applying a broader focus than only health issues (Chappel & Johannesmeier, 2009).

The following sub question can be asked: *What approach is applied to needs assessments by CBR facilitators or teams who are able to accurately identify the needs of children and their family?*
To answer this sub question the used assessment techniques and forms will be analyzed to determine whether or not all aspects of the CBR matrix are covered.

Attitude towards needs

The attitude someone holds about needs determines the methodology and approach (Parker & Bradley, 2014). For this purpose the attitude towards needs will also be examined. To be able to conduct an accurate needs assessment a professional should be aware that his/her values can differ from those of the child/family (Kersten et al., 2000).

CBR facilitators should be able to recognize disagreement and should be able to form assessments families can agree with. Further, the person conducting the assessment should be aware that needs can change over time. This asks for an approach where the identified needs are evaluated and the child/family is being monitored over time to be able identify

additional/changed needs (Parker & Bradley, 2014). Again, these assumptions in literature will be examined in practice to evaluate whether or not these factors are indeed associated with an accurate needs assessment. This leads to the following sub question: *What attitudes towards needs and needs assessments do CBR facilitators or teams who are able to accurately identify the needs of children and their family hold?*

The assessment characteristics that will be analyzed to answer this research question are whether or not needs are monitored over time and if facilitators are aware that they do not necessarily share the same values as children and their family regarding needs and needs assessments.

Through answering the above described sub questions the following main research question can be answered: *What are the characteristics of facilitators and needs assessments that best identify the needs of children with psychical disabilities and their family?*

Method

To answer the research questions, the CBR strategy as implemented in the Philippines was examined. The Philippines is a low middle income country in South-East Asia, which according to the World Bank places 127th in the world ranking. With this position they can be compared to countries like Congo, Ukraine and Vietnam. In 2010 when the population was 91 million the estimated number of people with a disability was 1.6%. Statistics on disabilities are rare in the Philippines and official statistics are even non-existing. Two studies; a study from 2008 in an urban setting and 2010 in a rural setting, provide statistics on the number of people with a physical disability. In both studies the number of people with a physical disability forms the second largest group, namely 30% of all people with a disability (Tabuga & Mina, 2011). The largest groups of disabilitys differ in the urban and rural settings.

Because the current study included both urban and rural environments the second largest group of disability is chosen as the focus of this study.

One of the organizations that is involved with the implementation of the CBR strategy is Norfil. This is a NGO based in the capital of the Philippines, Manila. Norfil offers several different programs, one of which is the CBR strategy. They work with 45 partners who work with the CBR strategy, located all over the Philippines. Their main task in relation to their partner organizations is to supervise, provide financial assistance and provide training programs to CBR staff. Furthermore they offer a CBR program themselves. Norfil has selected five of their partners and one of their own CBR programs to be examined/included in this research. These organizations are all situated on the mainland (Luzon Island) of the Philippines but in different regions or cities, namely: Sorsogon, Daraga, Naga City, Pili, Ilocos Sur and Manila. The organizations are selected based on location, performance and staff running the program. The performance of the organizations and the staff running them varies between the organization. Five of the six programs are run by professionals, one organization is a parent organization which fully runs on parents of children with a disability. Since the Philippines is a country spread over several islands, all the visited organizations had to be in short travel distance from each other, to be able to collect the data in a three month timeframe. The researcher of this study has not been informed about the performance of the organizations as to remain objective. A brief description of the respondents will follow.

Respondents

At each partner organization five interviews with children, their parent(s), and their appointed CBR facilitator were conducted separate from each other. In total 30 children and their family and 18 facilitators were interviewed. The number of CBR facilitators differs from the number of children because within some organizations the same facilitator performed the

needs assessment for more than one child included in the study. The research focuses on children within primary education age (6-14) with physical disabilities. Limiting the respondents to a single type of disability makes it easier to compare data than when multiple disabilities types are involved in the study. Children with intellectual or sensory disabilities (a large group of beneficiaries of the organizations) have therefore been excluded from the study.

Before conducting the interviews all respondents have been informed that they participate voluntarily and they can withdraw from the interview at any time. They are further informed that if they do not know an answer or do not wish to answer a question they do not have to and that all information will be processed anonymously.

Instruments

The CBR facilitators in charge of the needs assessments of children and families were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. These interviews consisted of two parts. In the first part the CBR facilitator was asked about how he/she had conducted the needs assessment of the child. The second part focused on the current needs of the child. The first part of the interview was constructed using the literature discussed in the introduction of this article. Facilitators were asked about the methodology they apply in needs assessments (used forms, protocol use and involvement of respondents) and about the attitude towards needs and needs assessments (monitoring of needs and awareness of different values. Furthermore in this interview facilitators were asked about their education, employments status, years in function and previous work experience. The second part of the interview consisted of questions regarding the needs of the child they are assigned to. The questions concerning the current needs of the child are based on the CBR matrix and the Child Status Index (Nyangara,

O'Donnell, Murphy, & Nyberg, 2009). All the elements of the CBR matrix are discussed in the interviews. The interview questions can be found in the appendix.

Children and families were also interviewed using a semi-structured interview. This interview is similar to the second part of the interview held with the CBR facilitators. The child and family are asked about their current needs. To make the interview more appealing for children pictograms were used to introduce the different topics. The questions where again based on the Child Status Index and the CBR Matrix, all elements of the CBR matrix are again discussed. The used pictograms derived from the Child Status Index The interview questions can again be found in the appendix.

The interviews with different respondents were kept similar to be able to compare answers. Interviews with the child and family and the facilitator have been conducted separate from each other in order to minimize chances of influencing each other's answers.

Analysis

The given answers have been analyzed. To answer all research questions it was necessary to first determine which CBR facilitators correctly identified the needs of children and families. Needs assessments were considered accurate when the CBR facilitator identified all the needs that children and families also reported. In this process a distinction was made between primary and secondary needs. Primary needs are needs that can be placed in one of the elements of the CBR matrix. Secondary needs are needs that can not directly be placed in one of the elements of the CBR matrix. An example of a secondary need is the need for a chess board. Secondary needs are not taken into account when determining whether or not a facilitator accurately performed the needs assessment. Child and family were asked about the same needs as facilitators, this made it possible to compare the answers. CBR facilitators sometimes reported needs the child/family did not report. When the child/family in the

interview actively contradicted two or more of such the assessment was considered inaccurate. For instance when a facilitator reported the need for a wheelchair but child and family reported they do not consider a need for a wheelchair because the child is mobile and can participate in all activities without the use a of a wheelchair this is considered an active contradiction.

Next the two groups of facilitators (those who accurately performed the needs assessment and those who did not) were compared on characteristics, approaches to needs assessment, methodology and attitudes towards needs and needs assessment. This was done using the descriptives function in the SPSS program.

Results

What characteristics (demographics) does a CBR facilitator exhibit that accurately identifies needs of children with a physical disability and their family? The first question focused on facilitator characteristics that could be related to accurately identifying needs. In Table 1 the results on facilitator characteristics can be found. The biggest differences between the two groups are the employment status, education and location. The facilitators who accurately identified the needs of child and family are for the most part paid employees of an organization. In contrast, when looking at the facilitators who did not accurately performed the needs assessment it shows that the majority is volunteer. Education level is also related to the ability to accurately identify needs. While in the group of inaccurately performed assessments some facilitators do not have more than an elementary or secondary school certificate, are all facilitators in the accurate group college graduates. Furthermore, whether or not a facilitator has a disability or someone in the family with a disability seems to play a role. Not having a disability themselves or having someone in the family with a disability seems to increase the chances or accurately identifying the needs of

children and their families. Lastly, it seems that the location of the organization and the facilitator plays a role. Facilitators who work in a rural area and are linked to a rural based organization perform better than facilitators in a rural area who are linked to an urban based organization.

Table 1

Facilitator characteristics in percentages divided in whether or not they accurately performed the needs assessment

	Accurate	Inaccurate
Function		
Social worker	42.9	36.4
Health & Rehabilitation coordinator	14.3	-
CBR volunteer	32.9	63.6
Employment		
Paid employee	57.1	36.4
Volunteer	42.9	63.6
Education		
Elementary school graduate	-	9.1
Secondary school graduate	-	18.2
College graduate social work	42.9	27.3
College graduate teacher	14.3	-
College graduate non related	42.9	45.5
Experience		
No work experience	14.3	9.1
Non related work experience	85.7	81.8
Related work experience	-	9.1
Disability		
No disability	57.1	36.4
Disability in the family	42.9	36.4
Facilitator with disability	-	27.3
Location		
Rural based organization and facilitator	42.9	9.1
Urban based organization and facilitator	28.6	36.4
Urban based organization and rural based facilitator	28.6	54.5

What methodology to conducting needs assessments is used by CBR facilitators or teams who are able to accurately identify the needs of children and their family?

The second question focused on the characteristics related to the methodology of the needs assessment. Three components have been analyzed; assessment form use, protocol use and the involvement of multiple respondents. Table 2 shows the results. These results show that involvement of multiple respondents particularly is associated with better assessment outcomes. Facilitators who involve multiple respondents in the assessment mostly include professionals such as physiatrists and neurologists. The use of multiple assessment forms also appears to increase the chances or accurately identifying the needs of children and families. Which forms are used and their content are discussed in the next sub question. The use of a protocol while conducting a needs assessment does not seem associated with better results. The number of facilitators who do not work according to a protocol however is very small, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions.

Table 2.

Methodology used by facilitators in number and percentages

	Multiple assessment forms				Protocol use				Involvement of multiple respondents			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Accurate	6	42,9	1	25	7	43,8	0	0	3	75	4	28,6
Inaccurate	8	57,1	3	75	9	56,3	2	100	1	25	10	71,4

What approach is applied to needs assessments by CBR facilitators or teams who are able to accurately identify the needs of children and their family?

To answer this question CBR facilitators are asked about the way they identify the needs of children and families. Furthermore assessment forms and rehabilitation plans are studied to examine on which domains the needs assessment is focused. From the interviews held with the CBR facilitators all facilitators without exception express the importance of assessment on all domains of the CBR Matrix. However, for an approach to be qualified as a holistic approach both the assessment should be focused on all domains and services should be present at or needs identified at each domain.

To examine whether the needs assessment focuses on all domains the used forms (if any) are analyzed. A common used assessment tool by facilitators is the Portage Checklist. The portage checklist is an assessment checklist to evaluate the development of children in the age of 0-6. The checklist focuses on five developmental areas namely socialization, self-help, cognitive, motor and language skills. Another often applied form is an intake sheet developed by one of the donors of the organizations. The intake sheet focuses on the social environment, physical functionality of the child, participation within the family, education and/or daycare program and economic independence. This intake sheet is the only used form that can be characterized as holistic. The other (more often used by facilitators) forms focus mainly on the domain of health. The second criteria for an assessment to be characterized as holistic is the presence of identified needs on all domains that children and their family perceive needs or do not participate in or receives services at yet.

Table 3 shows that facilitators who apply a holistic approach produce better results when identifying needs of children and families. While in the group of facilitators who did not apply a holistic approach only 25 percent accurately identified the needs of children and families, is this percentage doubled in the group who did apply a holistic approach.

Table 3

Approach used by facilitators in number and percentages

	Holistic approach		Non-holistic approach	
	n	%	n	%
Accurate	5	50	2	25
Inaccurate	5	50	6	75

What attitudes towards needs and needs assessments do CBR facilitators or teams who are able to accurately identify the needs of children and their family hold?

To answer the last sub question two components related to the attitude towards needs and needs assessments are analyzed, namely; monitoring of needs and the awareness that values between facilitator and child and family can be different. The results are demonstrated in Table 4. Both factors appear not to be related to accurately identifying needs of children and families. The differences between the groups of facilitators who accurately identified the needs and those who did not are too small to speak of a relationship between the characteristics and needs assessment results.

Table 4

Attitude towards needs by facilitators in number and percentages

	Monitoring of needs				Aware of different values			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Accurate	6	40	1	33,3	4	36,4	3	42,9
Inaccurate	9	60	2	66,7	7	63,6	4	57,1

Discussion

This study investigated factors that contribute to accurately identifying the needs of children with a physical disability and their family. Results show that there are several characteristics that influence the success of a needs assessment. The characteristics can be divided into approach related characteristics and facilitators related characteristics. Both of these characteristics contribute to creating an ideal facilitator profile. Facilitator characteristics that are associated with the ability to accurately identify needs are; being a college graduate, being a paid employee, not having a disability themselves or someone in the family with a disability and working in a rural area for a rural based organization. Needs assessment characteristics that increase the chance of accurately identifying needs are: applying a holistic approach and involvement of multiple forms and respondents.

Implications

The above mentioned characteristics can all be applied to the selection and training of facilitators working in the CBR strategy. While the facilitator characteristics can serve as guidelines in the selection process of facilitators, the needs assessment characteristics can be put to use in the training of facilitators. An important finding that can contribute to the training of facilitators is not only to apply the characteristics that are found to be associated with successful results but also how this should be done. For instance, all facilitators without exception expressed the importance of a holistic approach and that they incorporated this in their assessment, while not all actually applied a holistic approach. The facilitators who did not apply a holistic approach focused their assessment mainly on the health domain. Making facilitators aware of this and training them to employ a methodology which does focus on all domains of the CBR strategy may contribute to more accurate results. According to the results of this research better results in identifying the needs of children and their family can be

achieved through applying multiple assessment forms which cover all domains of the CBR strategy.

While the intention of this research was to identify characteristics that are associated with accurately identified needs of children and families, a realization in this research was that in less than half of the examined cases the needs of child and family were accurately identified. This stresses the importance of guidelines for better selection and training of facilitators.

The found characteristics should be viewed with caution however. While the characteristics associated with accurately performed needs assessment can partly explain why some needs assessments are conducted more accurate than others, it cannot fully exclude other options that can cause the differences between needs perceived by child and family and needs identified by the facilitator. This difference can be explained by fault on the facilitators end, but it could also be because of limited knowledge of disability and it's implication of families. Families may for instance lack the knowledge of the disability and it's rehabilitation process of the child and therefore perceive other needs than the facilitator. All facilitators in this research have expressed that they are aware that the perception of needs can be different between them and their clients, they also unanimously express that they feel that parents or caregivers should be educated on the importance of certain needs when they do not agree. Further research is recommended to gain more insight into causal factors to inaccurate needs assessment to eliminate these causes and provide more sufficient training.

Strengths and limitations

The current research has a couple of limitations that should be addressed. First of all, the respondents have not been randomly selected. The visited organizations have all been selected by a Partner Organization. Diversity between organizations however was taken

into account. A second limitation is the language barrier and cultural differences between children and families and the researcher. Because of the language barrier a translator was needed for the interviews, most of the times this was done by a facilitator. While this facilitator was often not assigned to the particular child and family she was affiliated with the organization the child was in care of. Because of this a total objective translation of the interviews cannot be guaranteed. To counter this possible bias translators have been informed about their task as translator and ask to forget their position as facilitation in this function. Furthermore the cultural differences between children and families and the researcher had some implications for the interviews. The families often felt honoured by the visit by Europeans. While their hospitality was personally more than appreciated, this could also influence their inclination to provide socially desirable answers. To limit the inclination to provide socially desirable answers respondents have been properly informed about the purpose of the research and the need for objective answers.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that not all factors as discussed in literature appear to be associated with accurate needs assessment results. While education, employment status and location provide new insights into which facilitator characteristics increase the chance of accurate identifying the needs of children and their family, is disability a factor which has been found unrelated to successful results. This is contradictory to CBR strategy literature which states that a facilitator with a disability themselves or someone in the family with a disability would be preferred. More research is needed to further explore the relationship between facilitator characteristics and the performance of needs assessments to be able to speak of a direct relationship.

With regards to needs assessment characteristics most findings of this research are in line with the discussed literature. The research findings confirm that using multiple assessment forms, involving multiple respondents and applying a holistic approach are related to successful needs assessments. More causal research however is needed to examine whether the characteristics which cannot be confirmed in the current research indeed are not associated with a successful needs assessment.

The characteristics that are proven to be associated with good results contribute to the literature on CBR as well as they provide input for the guidelines on selection and training of CBR facilitators. As has been discussed above, a lot of questions on the subject still remain. Hopefully this research can be a starting point and motivation for future research to further elaborate on the topic.

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Semi-structured interview child and parents

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Since when are you included in the CBR program?
4. Why did you join the CBR program?

Specific questions about the needs of the children; which services do they already visit and which services do they wish to visit?

Education

- Are you going to school?
- Is school easy accessible to you?
- Can you participate in all subject?
- How is your performance in school?
- Do you have any needs on the domain of education?

Health

- Which health care services are you visiting?
- Do you visit physical therapy? Do you need it?
- Do you receive speech therapy? Do you need it?
- Do you use any assistive devices? Do you need it?
- Do you need to visit any other health care service?

Livelihood

- Did you receive skills training? Do you need skills training?
- Do you receive financial support from the program? Do you need it?
- Do you receive microfinance? Do you need it?
- Do you have any other needs on the domain of livelihood?

Social

- Do you participate in sport activities? Do you need/want to participate?
- Do you participate in cultural activities? Do you need/want to participate?
- Are you going to church? Is it easy accessible?
- Do you have any other needs on this domain?

Empowerment

- Are you member of a self-help group or Parent Organization?
- Are you satisfied with the level of awareness on disabilities in the barangay?
- Do you have the PWD ID-card?

Final question to child: What do you want to become when you grow up?

Semi-structured interview CBR facilitator

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Sex?
4. How long are you working as CBR facilitator now?
5. Which education/training did you follow?
6. What is your previous work experience?
7. Are you volunteer or paid employee?
8. Do you yourself or someone in your family have a disability?
9. Rural/urban environment?

Questions related to needs assessment characteristics
- How did you conduct the needs assessment?
- Who did you involve in the needs assessment?
- Did you use any tools? Which tools?
- Do you have a protocol for conducting needs assessments?
- Do you evaluate the needs assessment?
- Do you continue to identify needs after the first assessment when entering the program?
- Do you have supervision?
- Do you think you and the child/family agree on the importance of certain needs?
- What do you do when you and child/family do not agree about needs?

Questions about the currents needs of children and their family

Education
- Is the child going to school? Does he/she needs to go to school?
- Is school easy accessible to the child?
- Can the child participate in all subjects?
- How is the child's performance in school?
- Does the child/family have any needs on the domain of education?

Health
- Which health services does the child visit?
- Does the child need speech therapy?
- Does the child need physical therapy?
- Does the child need assistive devices?
- Does the child/family have any other needs on the domain of health?

Livelihood
- Does the child/family have/need skills training?
- Does the child/family need financial assistance?
- Does the child/family need microfinance?
- Does the child/family have any other needs on the domain of livelihood?

Social
- Does the child participate in cultural activities? Does he/she need to participate?
- Does the child participate in sports activities? Does he/she need to participate?
- Does the child visit church? Is there a need?
- Does the child/family have any other needs on the domain of social?

Empowerment
- Is the family involved in a parents organization? Do they want to be involved?
- Do you think child/parents are satisfied with the level of awareness in the barangay?
- Does the child have the PWD-ID card? Does he/she need it?
- Does the child/family have any other needs on the domain of empowerment?

Informed consent form for CBR facilitators

Informed consent form for CBR field staff

Concerning the study*: "Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in the Philippines; which characteristics, approach and network lead to accurate identification of and provision in needs of children with disabilities and their families"*

Dear participant,

In this interview we would like to talk with you about the way you identify needs of children and families and your network.
This interview will be part of a study which explores CBR facilitator characteristics, approach to needs assessments and network to provide in needs of children with disabilities and their families.

During the interview Lynn van Duurling and Lizzy Hutten will be present. Your involvement in this research is voluntarily. You may withdraw from this research project at any time by giving a written or spoken notice. You are not obliged to give any reason for wanting to be left out of this research project. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded. The audio recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will only be used for transcription. The audio tape will be erased after transcription. We will not provide any incentive for your participation in this interview. All your provided information will be treated confidentially and will be processed anonymously.

I hereby declare that:

- I have understood everything from this consent form.

- I am willing to participate in this interview.

Name participant: Name interviewer:

…………………………………………   …………………………………………..

Signature participant: Signature interviewer:

…………………………………………   …………………………………………..

Date:

…………………………………………

Informed consent form Child and Family

Informed consent form for Child and Family

Concerning the study*: "Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in the Philippines; which characteristics, approach and network lead to accurate identification of and provision in needs of children with disabilities and their families"*

Dear Parent/Caretaker,

In this interview we would like to talk with you and your child about the needs of your child and the provided services by the program your child is involved in.
This interview will be part of a study which explores CBR facilitator characteristics, approach to needs assessments, and network to provide in needs of children with disabilities and their families.

During the interview Lynn van Duurling and Lizzy Hutten will be present. Your involvement in this research is voluntarily. You and your child may withdraw from this research project at any time by giving a written or spoken notice. You are not obliged to give any reason for wanting to be left out of this research project. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded. The audio recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will only be used for transcription. The audio tape will be erased after transcription. We will not provide any incentive for your participation in this interview. All your provided information will be treated confidentially and will be processed anonymously.

I hereby declare that:

- I have understood everything from this consent form.

- I am willing to participate in this interview.

Name participant: Name interviewer:

…………………………………………   …………………………………….

Signature participant: Signature interviewer:

…………………………………………   …………………………………….

Date:

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Research Permission Letter

Research permission letter

I grant Lynn van Duurling and Lizzy Hutten permission to conduct research at (name organization):_____

The research concerns the characteristics and network of CBR facilitators in identifying and providing in the needs of children with disabilities and their families.

This research is part of the Master's Thesis' of Lynn van Duurling and Lizzy Hutten, students from Utrecht University, The Netherlands. The research is supervised by Utrecht University and the Liliane Foundation. The final reports will be send to the participating programmes.

I approve the following research methods to be used:

☐ Interview with CBR faciliators

☐ Interview with children/families

Name: Date:

Position: Signature: