Letter to the Editor

SOCIO-ECONOMIC REHABILITATION IN LEPROSY—AN EXAMPLE

Editor

I read with interest the report on the study by P. Jayadevan and R. Balakrishnan in the March 2002 issue of Leprosy Review.

I agree with the emphasis placed on leprosy as a medico-social problem. Many rehabilitation workers would like to see people affected by leprosy included in the available mainstream rehabilitation services rather than leprosy rehabilitation projects. The Kerala project appeared to be designed to benefit ‘disabled leprosy affected persons’ only, whereas the listed selection criteria include ‘persons with disability.’ The analysed achievements only cover people affected by leprosy.

What were the results from the other categories of beneficiaries (if there were any)? Are there CBR projects for other people with disabilities?

It is also not clear what kind of persons are included in the terms ‘our patients’, ‘former leprosy patients’, and ‘cured leprosy patients’, all of which appear in the text. To some extent, such terminologies in a CBR programme might contribute to exclusion of people living with disabilities due to leprosy from the general pool of individuals needing rehabilitation.

The achievements recorded are impressive. It would have been interesting to know what the beneficiaries contributed, particularly in the housing projects. The people who were given goats and cows have some form of refund to the system, but what about those receiving the small residential houses?

In other cultures and settings, people might need assistance for utilization of the money obtained from sales of animals including grooming into the culture of saving. This is no small example. It is something worth emulating, with modifications to suit different environments.

German Leprosy Relief Association
Technical Assistance to National TB/Leprosy Programme
PO Box 3017
Kampala
Uganda

H. JOSEPH KAWUMA

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