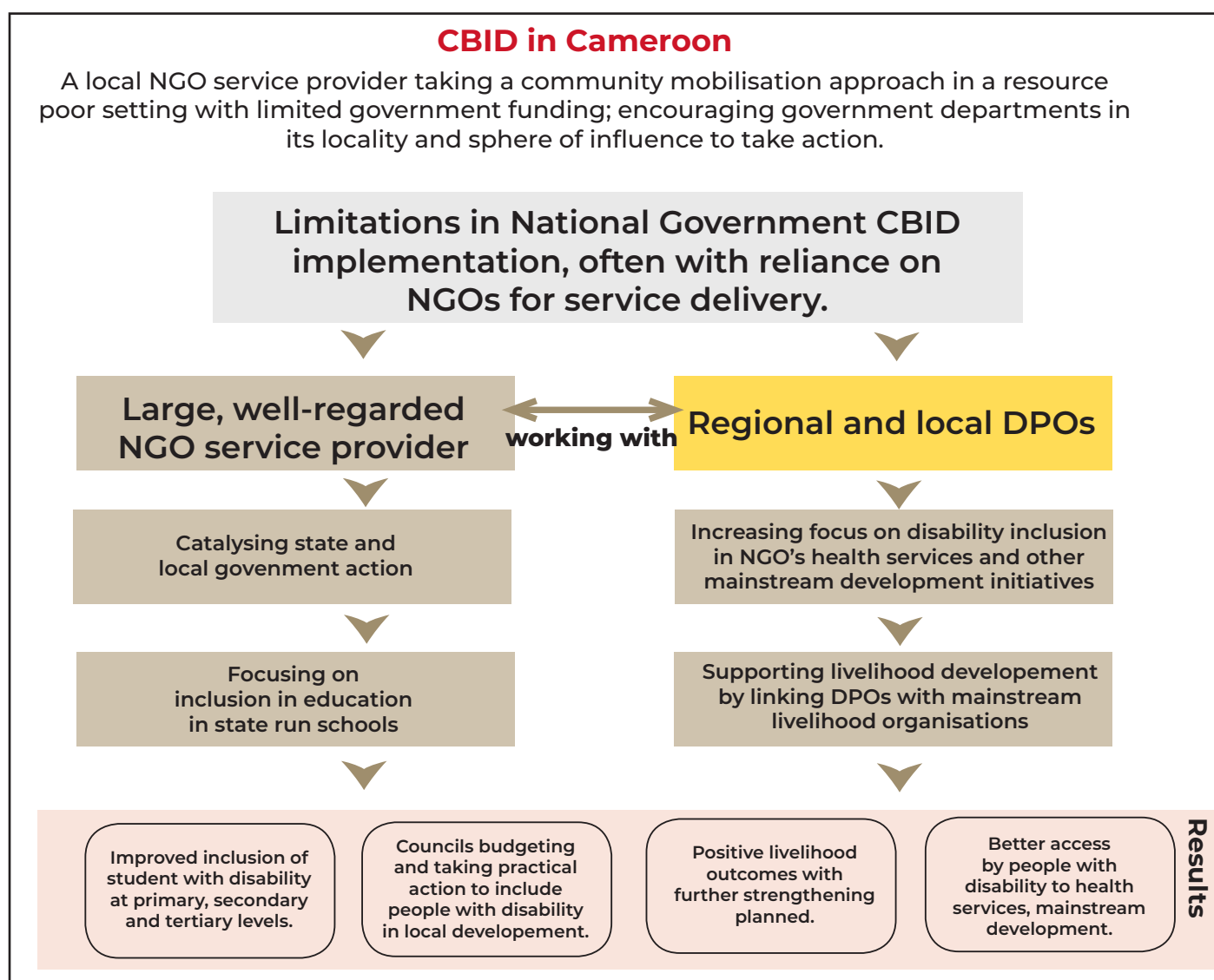


A comprehensive approach from working together

Community based inclusive development (CBID) practice focuses on the creation of inclusive societies where people with disability have access to social and development benefits like everyone else in their communities. The rationale is that no one should be excluded from development for any reason, and that the inclusion of marginalized people in development processes reduces poverty, builds community resilience and benefits the whole of society. CBID uses a twin track approach in which people with disability, governments and community based organisations work together to address barriers to meaningful participation and inclusion experienced by people with disabilities. At the same time, it ensures specific services and supports required by the diverse population of people with disabilities are provided to enable full participation and the movement’s capacity to engage effectively with government and other development stakeholders.



Quick Snapshot

The approach to CBID in Cameroon's Northwest Region involves a significant local NGO service provider, taking a community mobilisation approach in a resource poor setting where there is some government attention and legal framework around disability but limited direct funding. Local government departments and service providers have been encouraged to take action.

What does CBID look like in the Northwest Region of Cameroon?

The establishment of CBID in the Northwest Region has involved the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Health Board, together with a range of stakeholders, working for increased inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life¹. This large social welfare NGO is driving this approach in the Region. Although there are some limitations in national government engagement in CBID at this stage, CBC is seen by government as a key partner in delivering on government obligations.

CBC is facilitating a CBID approach to achieve improved access and participation for people with disability in health services, education, livelihoods, community and political life. This work engages people with disability and their organisations; local government; schools and education authorities; health services and mainstream development agencies in working together for inclusion. Local community workers have an important role to play in identifying and connecting people with disability with these opportunities. Approaches taken across the different sectors are outlined below.

Access to health

CBC runs hospitals and health centres in the region, and so their focus on health has been one of generally strengthening comprehensive health services in the area – prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and access to assistive devices. At the same time they have focused on ensuring access and inclusion in all of their health services, by people with disability. Since 2009, 624,000 people have been connected to health services - addressing both disability prevention and supporting people with existing impairments. Of this, 56% accessed health care for the first time, particularly through CBM funding of outreach clinics, making it easier for people to access health support. This included 41,000 people with disability accessing services for the first time.



> People with disability now are have better access to services

An important part of ensuring this increased access has been working for accessibility of health services, including improved accessibility of hospitals and clinics as well as staff being more alert to the communication barriers faced by people with disability. Support and awareness on mental health has also been strengthened.

¹ This work is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) and CBM Australia supporters.

Training of mental health professionals and increasing community awareness means there is now a sizeable demand for mental health support.

Ensuring awareness of disability rights and strengthening groups

A key part of CBID is ensuring people with disability are part of the development process. CBC has worked with over 5000 people with disability to develop 182 community-level disabled people's organisations (DPOs) – working together for knowledge about their rights, strengthening leadership and local engagement. This is resulting in people with disability being more assertive, vocal, visible and confident and more connected with each other and their communities. There are many examples of women with disability in leadership in these groups. People with disability are more engaged with local political and decision making processes and three people have been elected to local councils. A pre-existing regional peak DPO (the Coordinating Unit of Disabled People's Organisations) can now take on more of a leadership role, supporting these DPOs and the DPOs can take an increasing role in advocacy and advice with local governments.



> Women with disability are now running in local government elections

These DPOs have also been working towards livelihoods development through access to loans, apprenticeships and vocational training. There have been positive outcomes for a number of people, but this aspect of the CBID work has been recommended to be further strengthened through working more with experienced mainstream livelihood initiatives for inclusion in their programs and generating a focus on village savings and loans initiatives (VSL) with a aim of guaranteeing financial sustainability.

Local councils engaged

CBC offered training for councils on disability inclusion, inviting each council to send their mayor and the council development officer, with a prerequisite that councils sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) undertaking to develop an action plan on how they would include disability in local government development plans, and to identify a disability focal person. CBC clearly articulated that it was the responsibility of local government to include people with disability, and that they could provide advice as needed. Training has resulted in clear attitude change from a charity to an inclusive approach with recognition of the need for more representation of people with disability. Strong buy-in from local councils means many mayors are themselves now strong advocates for inclusion of people with disability in local development. Twenty of the 34 councils in the



> Local councils are now actively budgeting for disability inclusion

region now have policies, focal people and budget for disability inclusion and more public places are being made accessible. In addition, CBC in promoting CBID has given particular attention to the protection and inclusion of children in all development initiatives. CBC's promotion of the rights of children with disabilities has generated a strong response for effective child safeguarding systems from the wider community, resulting in seven municipal councils putting in place municipal child protection committees. Showcasing of examples of change in local government approaches is motivating other councils to become engaged.

Education services engaged and supported

An important part of the CBID work in NW Cameroon has been the approach employed to strengthening inclusion in education. To support genuine, quality inclusion in education and demonstrate that inclusive education is feasible in Cameroon, 17 government primary and secondary schools have been set up as pilot schools to model inclusive education. Resource centres have been established with staffing and resources to support inclusion of students with disability in each school, and the project works with teacher training institutes to build inclusive education skills of teachers. Over time, this approach has gained strong support from the Ministries of



> More children with a disability are attending school.

Education and Exam Board and parent teacher associations have also been engaged with working for inclusion. This work has resulted in 1045 children with disability being included in mainstream education since 2009, though there is still work to be done on ensuring more children who are enrolled in school, continue to attend. Informed in part by this pilot, in 2015 government started a nation-wide pilot with 68 primary schools, revised the curriculum to reflect a more competence based approach and is currently developing a national inclusive education policy. This offers a unique opportunity that should not be missed for CBC to work with government towards ensuring an effective approach to inclusive education.

GRID Network for DID mainstreaming

CBID involves ensuring both disability-specific interventions where needed and inclusion in mainstream services and opportunities. A "GRID" (Group for Rehabilitation and Inclusive Development) network has now been established to work towards disability inclusion in mainstream community development. This involves 70 civil society organisations in learning together about disability inclusion, highlighting the importance of the mainstreaming track of the twin track approach. For example, the network members have been learning and creating awareness about gender based violence and providing services for women with disability who have experienced abuse.

What frameworks, structures and events have been important to have in place?

International frameworks and national legislation

Cameroon signed the UNCRPD in 2008. This convention has not yet been ratified, but communications from the Ministry of Social Affairs have indicated that the Government is seeking to do so. They have ratified a number of other international human rights treaties.

The Cameroon government has also passed a law in 2010 on the Protection and Promotion of Persons with Disabilities, with a National Policy Paper signed in 2018. The Ministry of Social Affairs has also indicated a plan to develop a national strategy on CBR. A number of specific laws are in place that detail the rights of people with disability.

These laws and commitments have provided development actors including CBC, with an opportunity to remind local governments and institutions (e.g. local councils) of their responsibilities to promote disability inclusive development.

Government decentralisation

Decentralisation of government has provided an opportunity for CBC, who have used this entry point to engage with local governments in raising awareness of disability inclusion and working together with them for development of plans that are disability inclusive.

What ways of working have been most important?

Communications promoting disability inclusion (evidence, influencing others)

One aspect of the approach that has really helped with awareness raising and engaging local government has been CBC implementing an effective communications strategy. CBC runs a dedicated communications department that raises the profile of disability in relation to development. An important part of its work has been using a radio program, print media, internet, and television time, to showcase good disability inclusion practice of local governments. Their messaging has been that it is the responsibility of government to address disability inclusion as part of community development, and that CBC can support them in meeting their objectives.

Using a participatory approach towards sustainability

The participatory approach taken throughout the planning and implementation of the program has been important to ensuring that people with disability are informing the program based on their needs and experiences and also that key stakeholders and government institutions are taking active responsibility in promoting disability inclusion in development. This approach is important for the sustainability of changes achieved. In addition, a sustainability perspective has been taken in planning each activity and more local government units are increasingly taking up interventions previously funded by the program.

What are some of the challenges/ learning?

Using the evidence of a successful pilot to advocate for a strengthened national approach to inclusive education

The pilot approach of developing inclusive education through model schools has generated strong success and learning. CBID and inclusive education stakeholders in the Northwest Region need to now take these experiences to a national level to advocate with the Ministries of Education for the more widespread adoption of the strategies used, within the national inclusive education approaches.

Geo-politics can limit upscaling

The fact that CBC's initiatives have been in the minority English-speaking part of the country, with the government in the French speaking capital, does limit traction for upscaling. CBM's office, based in the capital, could take more opportunities to link the program with national government initiatives. It should also be noted that CBC's approach has gained recognition within the Africa region, despite the need to raise the profile of this approach more within Cameroon.

Working to strengths and recognising limitations in being able to be effective across all sectors

A common challenge in this CBID program is organisations thinking they need to engage in all sectors, without necessarily having the networks or expertise to do this effectively. In this case, the CBID program has been initiated by an NGO with primary expertise in health. They have less experience in supporting people with disability to improve their livelihoods. It is preferable for organisations facilitating CBID to link with other organisations rather than trying to "do it all". In this situation, developing links with organisations specialising in livelihoods is the obvious pathway.

Further information

CBM has developed this series of case studies in collaboration with in-country partner organisations. For further information contact programs@cbm.org.au