Child Disability

Why it’s so important to address
A LOOK AT THE LIVES OF DISABLED CHILDREN

- Up to 150 million disabled children globally & rising
- Disabled children are disproportionately likely to live in poverty.
- Four times more likely to be neglected & physically abused & over 3 x more likely to be emotionally abused.
- Their lives not treated as of equal value to others
- In some countries – 90% will not survive beyond age 20
- Only 2% across developing world have access to education
- Discrimination in access to Health & other services
Q&A: Why are disabled children treated differently?

- Children with disabilities have exactly the same needs as other children, but are frequently denied these and segregated, marginalised & isolated.

- Have been subjected to physical and sexual violence with relative impunity and even right to life sometimes violated...

- Causes of this rejection lie deep in society- shame, guilt, superstition, dislike /hostility to difference –

- Discrimination against disabled children has existed in every community throughout history....

- Too often we see impairment and not the child.
Causes of Impairment amongst Children

- Malnutrition – 20%
- Accidents/trauma/war – 16%
- Infectious diseases – 11%
- Non-infectious diseases – 20%
- Congenital diseases – 20%
- Poverty related …
Affect on children of adverse situations when growing up:

- Poor development in language, social and emotional behaviour & learning.
- Malnutrition affects physical & mental abilities
- Prone to diseases & disability
CHILD ABUSE

- Can refer to physical, emotional or sexual abuse

- All children at risk but especially disabled girl child

- Without access to Education, most will continue to be exploited
‘Education for All’ is a stated Millennium goal but most children with disability are not going to school, especially girls.

‘Schools for All’ is another objective but few schools accept disabled children & almost none are inclusive.
Using Key Informants to identify children with disabilities in Bangladesh and Pakistan

New Project funded by CBM
Background

• Many children with disabilities often remain undetected in developing countries
  – Social stigma
  – Lack of awareness or access to services
• This lack of evidence affects planning
• KIM has been shown to be cost effective and successful with detecting childhood blindness.
• Now to test whether it can also be used to detect Hearing impairment /Epilepsy/ Physical impairment.

Q: Is a ‘combined’ approach to identify all of these types of impairment equally effective?
TYPES OF DISABILITIES: POLIO
What is polio?

Polio is a disease that affects the nerves that go to and from the muscles. This causes weakness or loss of strength (paralysis) through different muscle groups in the body – arms / legs / trunk.....
Signs of Polio

• Some of the person’s muscles are floppy, wasted (smaller) and either weaker or completely paralysed.

• The person usually has problems walking or moving around - the arm or leg may be ‘stuck’ in a bent position or contracted.

• The arm or leg is often shorter on one side and in severe cases the spine may be bent sideways.

• Sometimes these children move around with crutches and callipers (leg braces) Otherwise they may lean on a pole or crawl on hands and knees.
• About 30% recover totally
• Another 30% → mild weakness afterwards
• 30% → moderate or severe weakness
• 10% die if breathing muscles affected
• If any paralysis left after 6-7 months – usually permanent
Some examples of Different Types of Child Disability: Hydrocephalus
WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF HYDROCEPHALUS?

It is usually seen at birth or very soon afterwards.
The child will show most of the following:
- the head of the child is abnormally big
- the size of the head usually increases quickly
- the blood vessels (pipes) may look swollen on the top of the head
- the eyes may look downwards
- the child may be restless, or very sleepy and inactive
- the child may have fits, or vomiting
- there may be problems of vision, hearing, speech, physical and mental development
What can be done?

- **Surgery** — a tube is placed inside to drain the excess fluid off the brain
- **Advice** — positioning & daily care
- **Assistive devices** — wheelchair, special seating
- **Education** — where possible IE or special school
- **Social** — encourage inclusion & participation in family and community life
Club Foot
What is it?

- The foot / feet of a child turn inwards from birth.
- The calf muscles usually become wasted too as the child grows up.
- At birth the foot may be flexible and with the right exercises and splinting can be corrected....
- The exact cause is unknown but it may be that someone else in the family has a similar condition.
What can be done?

• Advice
• Positioning & plasters
• Surgery
• Exercises
• Chronic conditions - supportive footwear
Cerebral Palsy
Features of CP

• CP is a condition caused by damage to the developing brain, which results in problems with muscles, balance and controlling movements.

• The nerve connections from the brain to other parts of the body have been damaged permanently.

• This causes different problems and the extent and pattern of impairments are different for each child with CP……….
What are the Causes of CP?

- The brain is damaged before, during or shortly after birth or early childhood.

- Lack of oxygen jaundice, premature, low birth weight, disease, viral infections, meningitis, encephalitis.

- Poor nutrition & ante-natal care

- Often cause is not known
Athetoid Cerebral Palsy
What areas can be affected by CP?

- movement
- bowel functions
- muscle tone
- cognitive
- speech
- hearing
- perception
- eyesight
- nervous system
- emotional/behavioural
- learning difficulties
Priorities of living

- Social Interaction
- Communication
- Activities of Daily Living
- Mobility – one good hand
- Walking
Cleft Lip & Palate
A child may be born with one or both of these. Cleft lip is a gap in the upper lip and cleft palate is a hole in the roof of the mouth. It means that the mouth and nose are connected.
• Difficulties with sucking, eating and drinking - they choke and gag on food that gets into their nose.

• Also problems in making some sounds and so difficulties with speaking.

• Most children become self conscious about the reaction of other children and this causes difficulties with mixing socially.

• Surgery is need to correct this condition with the best age at 3-6 months for the lip and 12-18 months for the palate.
Spinal Cord Injury
What is a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)?

- Weakness / paralysis affecting the spinal cord
Signs of the SCI

- Their limbs can be floppy but often they feel tight
- The limbs may be totally or partially paralysed depending on the extent of the injury.
  (all 4 limbs = quadriplegia & only the legs = paraplegia)
- The person cannot use their legs — sometimes also their arms cannot move if the spinal cord damage was high.
- Loss of feeling in affected areas
- Pressure sores
- Loss of bladder/ bowel control
- Contractures — stiff joints
Head Injury
What is a head injury?

Head or brain injury is the name given to an injury or a damage to the head, which in turn damages the brain inside it.
What cause it?

A head injury is usually caused by an accident (fall, road).
What are the signs of head injury?

Depending on the amount of damage. The kind of problem depends on the part of the head that is injured.

- **Mild injury:**
  First, when a head injury has happened, the person may be unconscious for some time (few seconds or minutes).
  The person may be dizzy, have a headache, and be confused and forgetful. They may have problems for a few days and then be fine again.

Sometimes it looks like a mild problem but there can be bleeding inside the head after a few hours.
• **Severe injury**: the person may be unconscious for days or weeks.

They are likely to have problem in the future, like:

**Physical**: paralysis of part of the body, difficulties to order the movements....

**Thinking, remembering and understanding**: forget things, may be very confused, loss of memory, problem with paying attention or concentrating.

**Change in personality and behaviour**, often by frustration at lack of ability.

**Problem with communication**: not remembering words or names, or try to speak and the words coming out wrong.

**Sudden changes in emotions**: cry easily or get very angry for no reason.

**May develop epilepsy.**
Muscular Dystrophy
What is muscular dystrophy?

- Muscles gradually get weaker – may look normal at birth until early childhood – Then notice the child is clumsier, falls down
What are the signs of muscular dystrophy?

- Syndrome will be seen with 3-5 years of age
- Boys are affected more
- Fall-down at the time of walking in primary stage
- Can walk depend on foot
- Different type of walking and running style: walks up on his toes, with a 'waddling', wide-based pattern and arched back..........
- The calf muscles look strangely fatter as if they are strong, but it is just degenerated muscle tissue.
- Body is like sculpture
- Most of the children lose ability to walk
- Gradually muscles get weaker & joints stiffer - by 10 years may no longer be able to walk or use his arms very well for functional tasks.
Burns
What are the signs of a burn?

- The skin is thick and very tight in the burned area.
- The joints nearby will not move properly.
- The skin may be stuck together, so that part of the body cannot move at all.
- The person will sometime get chronic pain.
Deaf children at school
How would we recognise a child had a hearing problem?

- Not responding when called or loud noise
- Delayed speech
- Isolated from friends
- Difficulties at school
- Emotional/behavioural problems
Small story

Of an 11 year old girl with Polio playing with a little boy.

"Are you disabled he asked. “No I’m Fatima” she replied and they went on playing."