

Ensuring Access to Appropriate Services for Persons Living with Disabilities

The objective of the Tanzanian German Programme to Support Health (TGPSH) is to support the Tanzanian health authorities in improving the general health status of the population, with special attention to vulnerable groups. One of the focal areas is Capacity Development and Human Resources which focuses on improved staffing, in terms of both quality and quantity, at public and private health facilities in the programme regions.

The German contribution is implemented through a multi-level approach (national, regional and district) with the complementary instruments of technical and financial cooperation (GIZ and KfW).

Background:

In Tanzania, more than three million women, men and children, or approximately 9% of the population, live with a disability, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. In the rural areas the prevalence being higher than the urban.

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are often affected by marginalization, stigmatization and discrimination. They are faced with serious social and economic disadvantages and are at a higher risk of health problems aggravated by existing cultural beliefs and practices.

In April 2010, Tanzania enacted the Persons with Disability Act. Section 26 (1) enshrines that

"...every person with a disability shall have the right to enjoy the attainable standard of health care services without any discrimination".

Approach

The TGPSH has adopted a Human Rights Based Approach in all its components. The programmes advocates for the effective implementation of the Act, the participation and of PWDs and their organisations in planning, delivering, and monitoring health and rehabilitation services.

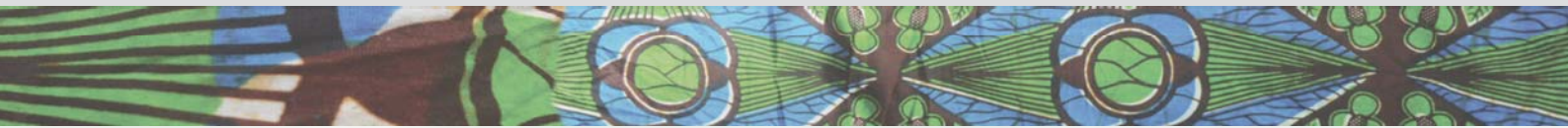
Hence, GTZ (now GIZ) assisted in the foundation of The Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technology (TATCOT) in 1981 and supported its activities.



It focuses on strengthening the capacity of NGOs to render services to PWDs and executes programmes such as preventing disabilities through awareness raising. TATCOT provides the means for the optimal physical rehabilitation of disabled people and improves their overall well being through research, education and trainings.

Strategies used by TATCOT include;

- Improvement of sustainable high quality education, training and research in prosthetics, orthotics, wheelchairs and supportive seating.
- Development of design and production methods of appropriate orthopaedic devices. TATCOT is affiliated to a faith-based medical college and integrated in the national health system under the Directorate of Human Resource Development of the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW).



Results

With the support of GIZ, TATCOT has contributed to sustainably improving the situation of PWDs in Tanzania. Thus, achievements in the following areas have been made:

Human Resource Development

- TATCOT recruited and qualified around 715 national and international recognised professionals from 1981 to 2010. PWDs are employed as peer group instructors for the training in the use and repair of wheelchairs.
- TATCOT expanded training opportunities and developed new courses in rehabilitation technology.
- PWDs are integrated into different training programmes as teachers with a part time employment.
- The private sector employs PWDs
- From 1981 to date there has been an increase of rehabilitation facilities by 85%.
- A Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach has been established in at least 14 of the 20 centres. In each centre a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a surgeon, orthopaedic technologists, social workers, and PWDs work together to create more awareness about early detection and intervention of disabilities and referral services.



- Lobbying and networking, including facilitation of international and national fora e.g. the 6th FATO Congress in Arusha September 2011 with the theme of the meeting “Right to Quality Care for PWDs”.

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