

Prevention, Rehabilitation and Education of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind People

CBM Christoffel Blindenmission – Christian Blind Mission is an independent development aid organisation dedicated to serving eye patients, blind and other persons with disabilities regardless of nationality, sex or religion. Worldwide, CBM supports around 1 000 programmes in more than 100 countries. CBM has been involved in education and rehabilitation projects for deaf and hard of hearing people since 1973. CBM is also supporting programmes for the prevention of deafness, hearing impairment and deafblindness.

The World Health Organization estimated in 2001 that there are 250 million people with a disabling hearing impairment throughout the world. The majority (167 million) live in developing countries. It is estimated that only 2% have access to any form of education.

CBM is one of the very few international development aid organizations helping deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people in developing countries.

CBM supports the following Programmes throughout the world:

- Cooperation with the World Health Organisation - WHO:
 - surveys of hearing loss in key developing countries.
 - strategies for prevention against common causes, and provision of affordable hearing aids and services
 - development of a training resource on primary ear and hearing care
 - encouraging development of national programmes for deafness and hearing impairment
- Development of projects for primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in developing countries
- Early screening and identification and early intervention programmes in order to reach more children at an earlier age.
- Family Intervention / Education
- Teaching communication skills in order to develop language competence in deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind children at an early age (oral, tactile and/or signed languages).
- Provision of audiological services, appropriate fitting of hearing aids (whenever possible), training and maintenance, maximising the use of residual hearing and auditory skills. Development of local production of ear moulds and hearing aids (where practicable).
- Development of educational programmes that meet the individual needs of deaf students through the following types of educational settings: community based services/outreach programmes, home based programmes, pre-schools, day schools, residential schools, mainstreamed / integrated / inclusive programmes, units attached to regular or special schools and adult learning centres. CBM supports Oral, Total Communication and Bilingual programmes.
- Promotion of teacher training programmes
- Encouragement and support for the development, documentation and publication of national sign languages by the deaf community.
- Development of interpreting and communication services for the Deaf community in collaboration with the National Association of the Deaf and/or other existing programmes for the deaf.
- Teaching of basic communication skills to Community-based Rehabilitation workers and classroom teachers, inviting adults from the deaf community whenever possible.
- Training and inclusion of deaf CBR field workers and teachers when feasible.
- Assisting deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind students to receive appropriate vocational training which will assist them in finding meaningful employment which is compatible to their abilities in local job markets.
- Sensitizing primary school teachers to the special needs of the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind children.
- Development of instructional and promotional materials for public awareness and to advance deaf education.