Can be achieved by empowering communities in strengthening the Prevention of Disability services to people affected by leprosy

- Empowering school children and other members of the community in early identification of new cases
- Early treatment where people affected by leprosy can be cured without disability and hence, live a life to their fullest potential in the community
LEPROSY SITUATION - TANZANIA

- Though the country has been declared to reach the WHO prevalence rate of 1:10,000 there are still pockets with high rates (27 out of 169 districts. Rates ranging from 1.0 to 10.0 per 10,000 population)
- Leprosy is not a priority / very limited government resources
- Most of undetected cases are hidden
- Sigma towards leprosy is still existing
- There are new cases which are not detected early hence having new patients with disability grade 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>New cases</th>
<th>Disability Grade 2</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2349</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2361</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2395</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LEPROSY SITUATION - TANZANIA

• Inability of the government to tackle the problem due to limited resources
  ✓ Shortage of health workers
  ✓ Financial limitations
  ✓ Lack of leprosy knowledge to existing health workers

Role of School Children
• Spreading the message “leprosy is curable” and treatment is free to parents and other members of the community
• To suspect the leprosy signs
• Sensitizing other children in leprosy signs via leprosy clubs
• Sensitizing the suspects for early self reporting to health facilities
• Fighting discrimination towards leprosy
School Children Empowerment
It is a combined efforts of people with disabilities their families and the government through CBR principles (Participation, inclusion, empowerment and sustainability)

• **Methodology**
  ✓ Lecture sessions by POD committee
  ✓ Social marketing – drama groups
  ✓ Peer education – school clubs
  ✓ Distribution of leaflets and posters

POD Committees
People involved
✓ People affected by leprosy
✓ Local government leaders
✓ Leprosy experts – DTLCs
✓ Social workers
✓ Teachers
✓ Religious leaders
Every person involved works and are expected to continue working on voluntary basis
FLOW OF ACTIVITIES

Identification of POD Committee

Training of POD Committee

School sensitization

School clubs

Identification of suspects

Parents/Community members

Referral to health facilities

Leprosy diagnosis/ confirmation / start treatment
Project Implemented in 6 districts with high percentage of disability grade 2 among the new cases. 3 for 1 and half year – (Kilombero, Shinyanga and Rorya) and 3 for 6 months (Mvomero, Ruangwa and Biharamulo) among the new leprosy cases.
IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOME

• self reporting of suspects
• 15 self care groups of members ranging from 6 to 10 were formed
• People affected by leprosy has shown a positive response in the proper use of footwear
• Increased leprosy knowledge to school children and community members
• Stigma reduction
• Identification of hidden cases
• Suspecting leprosy cases and referring them to teachers
• Keeping leprosy in the agenda – Discussion/ Debates
CHALLENGES

• Low leprosy knowledge among POD Committee members
• Lack of Commitment on leprosy experts
• Lack of leprosy in school syllabus
• Leprosy is still neglected
• Bigger geographical coverage area
CONCLUSION

As more and more people become knowledgeable in leprosy,
✓ Case finding scales up
✓ Self reporting of suspects increases
✓ Human and financial limitation in leprosy control is no longer a major obstacle
✓ Sigma towards leprosy is reduced

“By involving school children, we can move more easily in the elimination of leprosy disease”

Thank You