**BAPTIST EYE HOSPITAL LUNSAR**

**COMMUNITY BLIND REHABILITATION (CBR) UNIT**

**REPORT ON THIRD FAD-SPONSORED TRAINING FOR PERMANENTLY BLIND PERSONS CONDUCTED IN DIBIYYA, MAGBEMA CHIEFDOM, KAMBIA DISTRICT, IN THE NORTHERN PART OF SIERRA LEONE FROM SATURDAY, 30THMARCH TO FRIDAY 5TH APRIL, 2019**

**CLARIFICATION**: The first Dibiyya training was only on **Mobility and Orientation** whereas

 the second and third trainings additionally had **Agricultural**

 **Rehabilitation**.

**Overview**

The training was conducted for 30 permanently blind persons comprising 17 female and 13 male from 23 villages in Magbema chiefdom, Kambia District by the Community (Based) Blind Rehabilitation (CBR) Unit of the Baptist Eye Hospital Lunsar (BEHL)

The BEHL’s CBR Coordinator, Idrissa Tarawalie and FAD’s Foday Kalokoh conducted the training.

**TRAINING COMPONENTS**

As indicated in the clarification above, this training had two components

1. Mobility and Orientation
2. Agricultural Rehabilitation

**I. Mobility and Orientation**

* 1. **The Five Senses**

This component started with an in-depth discussion of the five senses and their importance to man. During the training, the 30 blind participants were encouraged to particularly recognize the senses of feeling and hearing, which are the two major senses that are highly helpful and therefore are mostly used by blind people in their environment as well as in Agricultural activities, should they engage on subsistence farming

* 1. **Orientation Training**

For Orientation participants were made to realize the importance of knowing the various objects and their relation in the blind’s environment in order to safely move around with less assistance from sighted people

* 1. **Introduction to the Mobility Cane**

Participants were taught that the cane is the symbol for blind people and that it helps them, if used correctly, to walk independently, thereby seriously reducing the burden on the sighted family members, more so in terms of assistance in movement from one place to another.

* 1. **Practical Session with the Mobility Cane**

During the practical period, emphasis was laid on the importance of the Mobility cane for the daily movement of the blind persons. The participants were then taught about its qualities, its standard measurement (length) and size. They were also taught how to protect the cane (especially in the midst of children), and that it should not be used to show direction or kill snakes.

* 1. **Language of the Mobility Cane**

“Do you believe that the mobility cane speaks?” asked the Rehabilitation Facilitator, who continued, ‘’Listen to the language of the cane and its command’’. With demonstration, he went on to teach participants the language of the cane:

‘’Kpa’’ means centre of the path/road

‘’Beff’’ means out of track.

‘’Tchor’’ means the blind is walking on a sandy area.

He emphasized that while walking, the blind must use the sense of hearing to listen to the language of the cane and follow its command for safe travelling to the desired destination.

**II. Agricultural Rehabilitation**

The Agricultural session comprised of both theory and practical. The 30 participants were taught how to handle the hoe for digging and how to plough the soil. They were also taught how to handle the cutlass and brush. In a participatory manner, participants learnt about the agricultural processes of rice planting, cassava planting, potatoes planting, etc. They were also taught how to weed their crops, harvest and process their produce before storage.

Emphasis was laid during the training on the blind to always start their Agricultural work earlier than the sighted farmers because of two major reasons;

1. The sighted would be more inclined to assist the blind if they (the sighted) have not started their own work
2. An early/timely start often offers the advantage of a good yield and sometimes results in a bumper harvest.

During the practical session, the participants were strongly advised to always test their seeds before planting so as to ensure their viability and avoid poor harvest.

They were also advised to always ask their family members to visit their farms and check for any possible damage caused by pests and/or erosion.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

1. All the 30 blind participants attended the training and participated well with high co-operation. They went home with happiness saying that the training had helped them to be able to walk independently and to be considered as important members of their respective communities.
2. Approval of my last training recommendation about conducting future CBR training during the dry season resulted in a very successful training with no disturbance by rain. I hope that subsequent training will continue to be conducted during the dry season.
3. The blind recipients were very grateful to the FAD-Netherlands team for the gift of used clothing, which were received with much appreciation and happiness.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I wish to personally thank both Friends of the African Dream (FAD) for their financial support and advice and Baptist Eye Hospital Lunsar (BEHL) for their supervision, which enabled 30 new blind persons in Dibiyya and its environs to receive this training that will help to improve their living standard in the future.

Submitted by:…………………………………………

 Idrissa Tarawalie

 **CBR Coordinator**