Handout 5 - Individual and Community Benefits of Planning

An integral part of planning is to enable the person with the disability to participate fully in the life of the community.

For the person with a disability community participation is:

- Is a human right
- Provides the person with experiences which will enhance their growth and development
- Provides the social, economic and human capital that ensures that needs are met
- Provides opportunities for social interaction. This enables networks to be broadened and brings the person with a disability into contact with different workers and service providers. It also enables people in similar situations to relate, share support and work collectively for the achievement of their rights.
- Is necessary for independence
- Provides opportunities for the achievement of life outcomes
- May help to breaks down stereotypes about people with disabilities.

Obstacles to community participation

It is important to remember that the issues facing people with different types of disabilities are not all the same.

For some people with disabilities the obstacles include:

- Many public places are physically inaccessible
- A lack of verbal communication can prevent people forming meaningful relationships
- Limited finances
- Community stereotypes about people with disabilities For example “they are dangerous” “they have unrestrained emotions” “they are vulnerable” “they are child like”
- Poor transport options
- Poorly funded services resulting in staff client ratios that are too high for service to be effective
- The high costs associated with meeting needs eg equipment and medication
- Language, which is often inappropriate and misunderstood by the person
- Lack of training for workers in the disability and community sector in cultural awareness, communication skills and knowledge of kinship systems.
- Lack of awareness the person’s role and responsibilities in being part of a family which may impact on their needs being met.