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Promoting mental health in the world's poorest places – CBM UK and BasicNeeds UK to join forces!

Leading international disability and development organisation CBM UK, and BasicNeeds UK, the largest NGO focused on improving the lives of people with mental health problems in low resource settings, are to merge, creating a new global leader in mental health and development.

By bringing together the expertise and global infrastructure of the two organisations, both with a strong track record in providing a holistic, community-based approach to tackling mental health and psychosocial disability in marginalised communities, the merger will provide a new stronger voice to promote inclusion of people with psychosocial disabilities, and integration of mental health and wellbeing into the development agenda.

Dr Julian Eaton, Senior Mental Health Advisor for CBM, says:

"Bringing together CBM and BasicNeeds is an extremely positive move, creating a strong voice on mental health in development and enabling us to do more to support people living with psychosocial disabilities in the world's poorest communities. Together, we can be greater than the sum of our parts: our shared expertise will enable us to train and support mainstream development organisations to address mental health in their work, while our own partner programmes will become stronger and ensure the greatest possible impact for individuals and communities."

It is also hoped that the merger will enable a better exploration of the intersection between mental health and disability. Kirsty Smith, CEO of CBM UK says:

"For many people, the word disability still conjures up a picture of a person using a wheelchair or a white stick, but in fact mental health conditions are the world's leading cause of disability, affecting over 450 million people at any given time. While the UK is seeing, at long last, increasing awareness of and commitment to invest in mental health, the situation in low- and middle-income countries where 8 out of 10 people with mental disorders live, is very different. In many countries, most people have no access to mental health treatment or support. The extent of the suffering this causes, and the social and economic cost, is shocking".

"Since 2002, CBM has been working to support people with mental health conditions in the world's poorest places. This exciting merger with BasicNeeds will help us expand and develop our mental health work alongside our important programmes supporting people affected by blindness and other types of disability, to help meet this huge and neglected need."

About BasicNeeds

BasicNeeds was founded in 2000 to improve the lives of people with mental illness and epilepsy via a holistic community-based approach. Since then, over 700,000 people in 15 countries have been supported through their programmes. In 2016, BasicNeeds recognised that in order to achieve sustainability, to scale up its reach and to have the impact it wanted, it needed to seek a merger partner and approached CBM, having worked with them on a number of projects and recognising their commitment to mental health.

Adrian Sell, CEO of BasicNeeds, says;

"BasicNeeds has helped to move the world from ignoring the plight of people with mental illness to a position where, today, there is growing interest and research into how we can respond effectively to the needs of people with mental ill health in developing countries. By demonstrating that something can be done, BN has both improved people's lives and helped to persuade funders and policy makers to act."

"Building on this success BN is excited by the potential of joining with CBM to greatly increase the positive impact we can have on people with mental health problems. Through working together we can combine our expertise and resources and become a leading global voice and source of expertise on mental health in development."

www.basicneeds.org

About CBM

- CBM is an international disability and development organisation founded over 100 years ago, that works to transform the lives of disabled people in the world's poorest communities.
- In 2016, CBM helped over 30 million people across Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, treating conditions that lead to blindness or other types of disability and helping people with disabilities go to school, earn a living, access healthcare and rehabilitation and be respected in their communities.
- CBM has been actively involved in setting up and running mental health programmes since 2002, with a focus on community-based solutions. In 2015, CBM helped more than 74,000 people access and support treatment for mental health conditions.

www.cbmuk.org.uk; www.cbm.org