

## **Disability in Wales and Africa Annual Report 2011**

Disability in Wales and Africa (DWA) hosted its first meeting at the Jasmine Centre on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010. This was made possible through the support of the following organisations;

1. Disability Research and Training Consultancy (DRTC)
2. Wales Africa Community Links (WACL)
3. Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People (CVCDP), now known as Diverse Cymru
4. Small and Medium International Development Organisations (SMIDOS)
5. CBM - the Overseas Disability Charity

As this report is being compiled, DWA has fifty five organisations and/or individuals on its mailing list. An ad hoc Steering Group was convened, after the first meeting, and has come together on four occasions throughout 2011, generating the initiatives:

- a. A series of training sessions throughout the Welsh international development sector at four events.
- b. A campaign resulting in ten Expressions of Interest being developed into two collective bids, and submitted to Trusts and Foundations for consideration.
- c. Research into a possible awareness campaign based around a theme of Disability Arts in Wales and Africa.

The Disability Arts in Wales and Africa programme was put on hold, due to lack of resources. The other two initiatives have taken up a great deal of time. All three initiatives have been carried forward to 2012. Their development illustrates important milestones when evaluating success.

A fourth initiative, undertaken during the autumn of 2011, was to develop a Plan Proposal from 2012 to 2014. This has resulted in the paper "[Developing DWA between 2012 and 2014](#)". It is hoped that this will clarify the purpose of DWA and how it should operate. For many people these have been unclear and have led to confusion and misunderstandings.

Starting DWA was never going to be easy, not least because Disability in Africa conjures up images of insurmountable needs to be met by inadequate resources. In Wales disability is a multi million pound industry, with specialist skills. This support is not available in Africa, leading to the disabled community's needs being ignored or not seen. However, it has been estimated that only twenty percent of disabled peoples' needs actually require specialist attention.

In 2011 the World Health Organisation estimated that over one billion people, fifteen percent of the global population, directly experience disability in some way. If we include friends and relatives, who experience disability by association, the statistics become even higher. However, if we accept that the prevalence of disability will be highest in “developing countries”, then we also need to understand how these figures are manifested. An increase in disability in Wales is often associated with individuals living longer. In Africa the association may be closer to babies, with various medical conditions, surviving through childhood and becoming adults.

Three chains of thought illustrate the message of DWA:

1. Disability is essentially a community and development issue. It concerns how society, resources, and activities are organised to accommodate disabled people.
2. The mainstreaming of disability issues is fundamental to empowering the community to accommodate the needs of disabled members. If Wales struggles to find resources to develop special schools, our African partners will be even more burdened. Specific “disability initiatives” are, at best, means to an end rather than ends in themselves.
3. DWA will have a focus on the resource needs of disabled communities in Africa. This may be funding to support projects or supporting people with specific skills to go to Africa. However, this is only part of the DWA agenda. We want disability included in Diaspora and Academic Links. It is not necessarily just about resources.

DWA would like to thank people who have supported, participated in, or shown an interest in, its activities. Without the support of SMIDOS, Wales for Africa Community Links, CBM and Diverse Cymru, DWA would not have been able to progress as it has, during 2011. I believe that DWA has the potential to go a long way, as outlined in the Project Plan document. However the most important people in this progress will be those on the ground.

The accounts below are not audited and based on approximations. They read;

Income	£	Expenditure	£
WCVA	300	Transport Costs	1,500
CBM	350	Print and Stat	150
SMIDOS	400	Other Costs	100
CVCDP	750		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,750</b>		<b>1,750</b>

SMIDOS directly paid for the printing of two sets of DWA Leaflets with a cost of £340 + £300 = £640