

DISABILITY IN WALES AND AFRICA

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

2012 was the year when Disability in Wales and Africa (DWA) started with no money. It is only from the support of Diverse Cymru, who agreed to underwrite the Coordinators and project's expenses that DWA was able to keep going. This agreement terminated at the end of March and, until DWA secured funding from the Wales Africa Community Links (WACL), costs were incurred; not knowing when or if these would be reimbursed. In June, a one-year grant of £5,000 was secured from WACL, to develop networks around disability initiatives within the Wales Africa sector. This money has allowed the coordinator to start planning activities although it is expected to expire by the end of July 2013.

This uncertainty concerning core funding resulted in a difficult year for the Steering Committee. However, we have met four times and been able to share ideas and start to plan ahead. The DWA Steering Committee is important as, although much of the work is done by the coordinator, it is through this forum that the project can gain greater sustainability.

Despite the problems being encountered, DWA has still managed to undertake activities to increase awareness of disability issues within the Wales Africa sector. It also managed to secure two pieces of smaller pots of funding to enable initiatives to go forward. The first of these came when the Gibbs/Morel Trusts agreed to fund the Pont/Mbale Link to supply sewing machines for a Disabled People's Workshop in Uganda. This money does not appear in the accounts as it went straight to Pont/Mbale. However DWA was responsible for negotiating its procurement.

This success was followed by an approach to the same trust to support a Brecon/Molo visit to Kenya by a Special Needs teacher who was starting to look at the obstacles to Inclusive Education. This is part of a bigger programme that the coordinator has been working on entitled "Getting Disabled Children to School". Indeed, there are plans to develop this programme into a Wales Africa wide Network as the issues are likely to be similar in many parts of sub Saharan Africa and yet the solutions may differ. This forms a great potential to learn from each other. DWA would like to thank the Gibbs/Morel Trusts for their ongoing support for its related activities. Their support has enabled DWA, and connected Links, to start making an impact in Africa.

The DWA training activities have largely been restricted to presentation and participation at major conferences. DWA presented at the Welsh Focus Conference in April, and then the Wales for Africa Health Links (W4AHL) in July, entitled [Including the Excluded](#). The latter was accompanied by two workshops. Whilst both the presentations were well received, the workshops proved to be more difficult to assess.

However, securing funding from WACL did enable DWA to put on a networking and sharing meeting in early October. Interestingly, the turnout for this event included a number of people who were not involved in formal Links. One outcome of the event was that Brecon/Molo has become interested in utilising Appropriate Paper based Technology (APT), using paper and cardboard to make supportive seating and other assistive devices, for disabled children as part of their programme, "Getting Disabled Children to School". This has resulted in DWA approaching the Waterloo Foundation for funding to develop this area further in Africa, starting with the Brecon/Molo Community Partnership but also with an intention to move out further into the Wales Africa Network. We are still waiting for the outcome of this application. Nevertheless, Brecon/Molo are hosting a self funded training workshop in Brecon in March 2013, covering both people who want to attend for just a day, to get a "taster", and a five day programme for those who want to go into more depth. This may be of particular interest to therapists, community nurses and teachers who are interested in working with children with cerebral palsy and other neurological conditions in Africa (but also in Wales). Please contact the DWA coordinator for more details if you are interested in possibly participating in this event.

DWA has also managed to get some recognition on the UK platform, being accepted as a part of the Bond Disability and Development Group Steering Committee. The thinking behind this strategy is to connect the, generally small, "Links" with the larger organisations involved in disability activities and investigating how they can work together. The community and organisation Linking sector can potentially develop a longer term and companion relationship. Larger organisations, on the other hand, will tend to emphasise contractual agreements and development strategies.

As a consequence of being involved with the Bond DDG, DWA is also on the Working Party to look at Disability within the Beyond 2015 era.

This involvement led to DWA hosting a lunch time session at the Welsh International Development Summit looking at some of the Beyond 2015 issues.

A major achievement of 2012 was the publication of our first Newsletter. DWA would like to thank to Philippa Williams, an undergraduate student, who worked with the coordinator during her summer holidays. Without her help the Newsletter would probably still be on the drawing board. However, we are now looking for articles for the next Newsletter which will hopefully be compiled during February/March 2013. It is important for us to keep putting out information as to what we are doing.

Disability still seems a strange subject for many in the Wales Africa Network. It is up to us to show that it is a crucial part of overall development work. Unfortunately, the survey questionnaire which was also compiled during the summer of 2012, has not managed to produce any results. We need to look at whether, and how, we take this forward.

Inevitably, a crucial part of the coordinator's activities is simply getting to know Links that are interested in working in the field of disability and the needs of disabled people. Indeed, whenever DWA has an Annual Review or a network and sharing meeting, new contacts are made and the mailing list gets longer. Perhaps the challenge for DWA is, having made the contacts, what next?

DWA remains a project under the umbrella of Diverse Cymru and, although exploratory work was carried out during 2012 regarding it becoming a charity, it is difficult to see how this can happen until we secure regular or substantial funding. Although there is still a long way to go in terms of DWA raising awareness by supporting disabled people in Africa, this does appear to be gradually increasing. It is disappointing that the Disability Arts in Wales and Africa project has not managed to develop further during 2012, as this was seen as a tool to help raise further awareness. DWA needs to be more effective with engaging with disabled people in Wales and particularly the Welsh Disability Movement. We take all these issues forward into 2013 and hope to see more progress.

Although securing substantial core funding was identified as a key aim at the last Annual Review, increasingly this looks less likely to happen. We had some interest shown by the Andrews Charitable Trust, and this resulted in a meeting with the Director in London, but the preliminary application was unsuccessful. The present climate appears to indicate a

number of small activities will be more productive than trying to go for a larger one.

Finally, a financial report for 2012 is available. Although, at first glance, it may appear to be relatively healthy, and DWA will not start 2013 with no money, this funding will run out in July and consequently the search for money goes on.