

## **Disability in Wales and Africa Annual Report for 2014**

Disability in Wales and Africa (DWA) started the year with the news that Nigel Streeter, the Chair of the organisation, was resigning to give him more time to focus on his Media interests. Nigel had been Chair of DWA since January 2011 and has led the organisation, in conjunction with its Coordinator, to become an active player within the Wales Africa sector. DWA wishes Nigel all the best in his new ventures and thanks him for his support over the past three years.

There were a number of important projects and agendas which DWA pursued and engaged with during 2014. These included: the publication of the DWA Survey; the development of a South to South linking initiative between disability projects in Kenya; the promotion of the Global Campaign for Education, focussed on the twenty four million disabled children who are currently out of school; the photographic display tour around Wales and its return to Kenya; the commissioning of a DWA Impact Report; and the Welsh Government review of the Wales Africa sector and its future co-ordination.

The DWA Survey of the Wales Africa sector was published and presented to audiences throughout Wales. The presentations included one to key people within the sector, at the Welsh Government Buildings, and another in the Temple of Peace, Cardiff, as part of a Wales for Africa Health Links Network Shared Learning event. The survey highlighted many issues within the sector. One which struck a particular note for DWA was an evident correlation between Links having disabled people involved at the Welsh end and their increased engagement with disability issues in Africa. To read the survey report, please go to [Disability Inclusive Development and the Wales Africa Sector](#) and to view a PowerPoint presentation click on [Establishing the level of involvement of the Wales and Africa Sector within the area of disability](#).

During the autumn of 2014, DWA commissioned research, and published a report, looking at how interest in disability work had changed since the organisation started and assessing its impact on the Wales Africa sector. The research established that in 2009, prior to the launch of DWA in December 2010, only 2.9% of Wales Africa Community Links (WACL) grant funding was being attributed to disability related projects. In the year 2013/14 this had reached 18.9%. Between 2009 and 2014 WACL awarded £27,000 to disability related initiatives, which equates to 11.2% of the grants budget. To read the report, please click on the link [DWA Impact Report 2014](#).

The DWA emphasis on education built on the momentum from its campaign of 2013. The focus of the 2014 Campaign for Global Education, and the Global Action Week (GAW) - 4th to 10th May - on disabled children's need to be included in schools, clearly made it a natural target for DWA. During the GAW the DWA Coordinator visited three educational establishments and held conversations with representatives from the British Council Connecting Classrooms initiative. DWA was particularly pleased to see Crownbridge Special School, in Cwmbran, becoming part of the Send my Friend to School initiative. A group of pupils sent letters and pictures to the Prime Minister requesting that the need for disabled children to go to school should be given higher priority, when reviewing the international development agendas.

The Wales Kenya photographic display, launched in December 2013, played a big role in publicising DWA during 2014. The display changed from one showing a number of smaller photographs, as shown in the Pierhead Building launch, to larger and printed pictures. It was to appear in schools, libraries and art centres around Wales, ending the year at the Senedd, for the UN International Day of Disabled People (IDPD) on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

2014 was also the year that DWA revisited, taking its photographic display, the Kenyan communities of Molo (linked to Brecon), Meru North (whose Disability Community Centre is developing a link with Diverse Cymru – please see below. It also has a longstanding relationship with Hands Around the World), Embu and Kibwezi (both linked with ResponsABLE assistance), to say “thank you” for allowing it to use their images. DWA left with them copies of pictures from both Wales and Kenya, to enable them to host their own displays. The idea of an internet linkup, showing photographic displays in Wales and the Kenyan communities, did not happen. We were, though, happy to receive evidence showing that the images were used by these communities, to assist in their IDPD celebrations, just as they had been used the year before in Wales.

The Kenyan network, formed around the photo displays, was to go on to be the basis for two other South to South networking initiatives. The first of these was a workshop, inviting participants to share ideas and experiences about Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR). The workshop was located in Thika and brought together the four Kenyan communities of the photo display, mentioned above, plus people from Nyahururu. DWA had encouraged L'Arche Brecon (a community home of people with learning disabilities) to link up with L'Arche Nyahururu. A further outcome of the

Thika workshop was a visit by the Vice–Chair of Diverse Cymru to the Meru North Disability Community Centre. We wait to see how this potential Link develops.

As a result of a presentation by Cerebral Palsy Africa (CPA), at the DWA Shared Learning event in 2012, there has been a growing interest, within the Wales Africa sector, in Appropriate Paper-based Technology (APT) and, particularly, in using it to make chairs, standing frames and other assistive devices for disabled children. CPA has been promoting APT within several African countries. As a result of this interest, and with the support of DWA, a Research Development Group (RDG) has been established, in Wales, to look at the benefits of using such devices in an African context. In conjunction with the members of the 5 communities who attended the CBR workshop, DWA and the RDG plan a second workshop, to be held early in 2015, to train in, and expand knowledge and use of, APT.

South to South Linking within Wales Africa is an approach that DWA want to champion. The sector frequently advocates North to North networking, via the Welsh partners of Wales Africa. It is believed that this will increase the impact of Welsh organisations in Africa. Whilst not wanting to undermine the valuable work undertaken through the North to South activities of Wales Africa Links, it is important to promote the value of enabling African communities, particularly those within the same countries, to come together and share their ideas and experiences. Ultimately, the people of Africa must establish how they are going to overcome the issues they face. The Welsh role should be to support them in this process.

DWA had become involved in the Bond Disability and Development Group (DDG) in 2011, as a means of connecting with their UK wide campaign concerning disability and development. In 2012 the DWA coordinator had become a member of the DDG steering committee, part of whose role was to monitor the response of the Department for International Development (DfID) to disability issues. 2014 saw the DDG becoming particularly active, as DfID started to discuss its response to disability, particularly in the light of the debate around replacing the Millennium Development Goals with a new set of targets, to be introduced by the United Nations after 2015. This resulted in meetings with Ivan Lewis, the Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, and Lynne Featherstone, the Minister with responsibility for International Development. The final discussions produced a useful

framework for Disability Inclusive Development but not the hoped-for formal strategy.

Another major 2014 development was the review of the Wales Africa sector by the Welsh Government. This was announced in the first half of the year and discussions took place in the second. DWA responded to the review by submitting a paper (please see [Incorporating Inclusion in the Wales Africa Sector](#)) outlining a proposed inclusion strategy for the new sector. In addition to this, DWA confirmed its purpose as a campaigning organisation, seeking to provide a catalyst for disability inclusion within Wales Africa and beyond. Despite this, DWA was disappointed not to be formally involved in the discussions, although it was indirectly included, as part of the Wales for Africa Health Links Network. What is emerging is a consortium that brings together the work of Wales Africa Community Links, the Wales for Africa Health Links Network, the Sub Saharan Advisory Panel, Fair Trade Wales and the Wales International Development Hub. The new organisation will be hosted by the Welsh Centre for International Affairs. It appears that there will be a specific remit to promote inclusion, which DWA will have to work to influence.

The end of 2014 saw DWA accepting a Training Award from the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, at the Wales Africa awards ceremony on December 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Senedd. The DWA coordinator also received an award, in recognition of his work to promote inclusion within the sector.

In addition to co-running a workshop with SSAP at the International Development Summit in March and starting to develop its communications and social media presence (with the help of the new social media intern, Eleri Williams), DWA also established its own bank account during 2014.

Previously, all banking had been done through Diverse Cymru. Whilst DWA wishes to express its thanks for the support Diverse Cymru has given it over its first few years, it realises it needs to become an independent organisation.