



2014

Impact Report



Paul Lindoewood and Eleri
Williams

Disability in Wales and Africa (DWA) started in December 2010 with an aim to raise the profile of disability within the Wales Africa sector. Since then a lot has changed. This is partly because of increased international awareness, for example the Beyond 2015 Campaign to ensure that the framework which replaces the MDGs is more inclusive of minority groups. There has also been a greater effort by many Welsh based Links to incorporate disability within their work. This report outlines DWA's contribution to this process and looks at the sector's increasing disability awareness.

At the 'public' level DWA has released three newsletters, has a web page, a Facebook presence and a Twitter forum. It has also been a regular contributor to the Wales Africa conference activities, organising and/or running six workshops on disability and inclusive development, as well as making a formal presentation at the Wales Africa Health Conference 2012 around Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR). DWA's stalls at these conferences have often been run jointly with literature from Teaching Aids at Low Cost (TALC), providing participants with access to materials concerning both health and disability issues. Finally, DWA has contributed articles and reflections posted on the WACL website.

In October 2012 DWA ran a networking and sharing event which attracted 15 participants. A speaker from Cerebral Palsy Africa (CPA) introduced the idea of Appropriate Paper-based Technology (APT) to assist disabled children. The idea is that cardboard, paper and other basic materials are easily available in Africa and can be used to make chairs, standing frames and other supportive devices. This led to Brecon Molo Community Partnership (BMCP) hosting two self-funded workshops in Brecon, open to members of the sector and beyond, to look further at the potential of APT. Most notably three Linking organisations, BMCP, The Swansea-Siavonga Partnership, based at Swansea University's Discovery, and Friends of Monze, have taken these ideas forward into Africa.

As an offshoot of the BMCP initiative to introduce APT in Molo in July 2013 a workshop is taking place, supported by DWA, looking at CBR and APT from a Kenyan perspective. The five Kenyan communities are Molo linked to Brecon, Embu and Kibwezi who are linked with

ResponsABLE Assistance, Maua linked with Diverse Cymru and Nyahururu linked with L'Arche Brecon. Through the connections with St Martin's and Nyahururu, DWA have managed to locate a Kenyan centre already involved with this style of work. BMCP have successfully secured funding to run a workshop alongside the Nyahururu partnership to provide more in depth training on APT in early 2015.

It is planned that, depending on the success of the workshop in October 2014, further funding will be searched for to enable other members of the Kenyan network to participate as well. Again, through L'Arche Brecon and BMCP, APT devices such as trays and footstools are being made to be sold in Wales, with the profits being used to support disabled children in Kenya. A final aspect of the APT impact has been the emergence of a research development group, focusing on the Kenyan network which is coming together, seeking to provide academic credibility for this alternative method of developing assistance to disabled children.

In December 2013 Rebecca Evans, Assembly Member and Co-Chair of the Cross Party Group on Disability, launched the DWA photographic display, using pictures of disabled people from both Wales and Kenya. This has resulted in DWA's presence being promoted in libraries, schools and other public buildings, not directly connected with the sector. The photographic display was also present at the 2014 National Eisteddfod of Wales, held in Llanelli. Following this success, DWA has digitised the exhibition which can now be freely accessed electronically. Some interest is being shown by Cardiff University, through ResponsABLE Assistance, to use the display as a starting point for photography students to look at intercultural work as well as disability awareness. In December 2014 it is planned to have an international internet link up between Wales and Kenya based around the five communities/Links who are involved in the CBR/APT workshop as well as developing their own photographic displays.

In July 2013 DWA hosted a networking and sharing event, in Llandrindod Wells, based on education for disabled children. This event led to a sponsored bike ride around Lake Vyrnwy which involved 25 riders from four Links, BMCP, Health Help International, Hazina and ResponsABLE Assistance. The bike ride was also attended by Mark

Williams, MP, Co-Chair of the All Parties Group for Global Education in Westminster.

During 2014 DWA has been involved in the Global Campaign for Education, which this year focused on the 26 million disabled children around the world who do not attend schools. During the Global Action Week in May, DWA visited three schools and colleges as part of this campaign. Pont has initiated meetings in Mbale concerning special needs education. Finally, discussions have been held to develop a campaign around Wales to raise awareness of disabled children's need to go to school in Africa, based around Crownbridge Special School, Cwmbran.

DWA has identified itself as an encourager and supporter of Links but does not normally get involved in their sponsorship. However, two exceptions to this have been where money was provided to initiate ResponsABLE Assistance's Link with Embu and Kibwezi as well as to develop a Link between Diverse Cymru and the Meru North Disability Community Centre. Whilst both of these Links are based around disability specific activities they do still assist in the raising of the profile generally.

At the end of 2013 DWA commissioned a piece of research to take a snapshot of how the Wales Africa sector was managing in terms of disability inclusion and engagement. This report was published in February 2014 and is being used as a base to develop further activities. Many Links indicated their interest in receiving networking and training support, regarding disability issues. Others were aware of their obligations to include disabled people within their work but identified problems regarding execution. Whilst the report was a sample of a small sector and demonstrated a number of expected preconceived ideas concerning disability in Africa, it did show that there was some effort being made by a number of more established Links.

As the Wales Africa sector has developed, so too have the levels of awareness and engagement with issues surrounding disability. It is encouraging to see that Wales Africa Community Links (WACL) has funded projects working on different aspects of disability. We are particularly proud to see that disability-related projects have not been

limited to physical disability. Instead, there have been successful funding applications which reflect the wide spectrum of disabilities experienced throughout the world. This includes a project by the Hayaat Women Trust to deliver mental health awareness training in Hargeisa Mental Hospital to staff and volunteers in Somaliland. Another project focusing on mental health is the SEWREC (South East Wales Racial Equality Council) Mental Health Leadership and Advisory Programme (MLAP) in Gambia.

One of the more recent projects which successfully gained funding was L'Arche Brecon's 'Outward Bound'. The project includes a skills exchange between L'Arche Brecon and L'Arche Kenya, encompassing APT work. This project is notable for its inclusion of individuals with learning disabilities, in both Wales and Africa.

Since the inception of the Gold Star Projects in 2007, BMCP which was one of the five 'founder community links' has been an active champion of disability-related projects. This includes the development of health services for disabled children to enable their participation and inclusion in education, in addition to the extensive work on APT initiatives.

DWA is encouraged by the fact that projects focused on disability are being designed, funded and carried out by several organisations within the Wales Africa sector. It was probable that as the Wales Africa sector itself developed, a variety of dominant project themes would also develop. Although disability is not one of the five dominant project themes (livelihoods, environment, equality, youth and health) categorised by WACL, it is instead a cross-cutting issue, underlying all dominant project themes.

In the year 2009 only 2.1% of the annual WACL grant funding went to a disability-related project. Since then, there have been increases. However, these have not been regular, sustained or consistent. In 2010, for example, there were no disability-related projects which received WACL funding.

The percentage of WACL funding to disability-related projects was at its highest in the year 2013-2014 when it reached 18.4% of the annual

WACL grants budget.¹ Between 2009 and 2014 approximately £27,000 has been awarded to disability related projects by the WACL grants panel. This equates to 11.2% of the WACL funding available over the 2009-2014 time period.²

The increase in disability-related work within the Wales Africa sector cannot be definitively attributed to the existence of DWA and its' activities. However, the awareness-raising activities, aimed at the general public as well as those within the sector, are certain to have played a key role in raising the profile of disability as an issue requiring action. Moreover, DWA has demonstrated beyond doubt to the Wales Africa sector and others that it *is* possible for small community groups, 'staffed' by volunteers, to work on disability, an issue which has typically been regarded as too specialist, too costly, or too complex.

DWA has always tried to look beyond the Wales Africa sector for its support. For example, CPA, mentioned above, is a Scottish based organisation although the people who came to Cardiff were from Hampshire. There were also plans to involve Enabling Education Network (EENET), based in Manchester University, in the education networking and sharing day in July 2013. Sadly, the speaker had to pull out at the last minute because of family reasons. In keeping with this ethos, DWA has become involved in the Bond Disability and Development Group, currently being active on its Steering Group and also participating in the Beyond 2015 activities.

There are 123 recipients on the Disability in Wales and Africa mailing list as well as a number of initiatives which have developed separately to DWA. Examples of these are Pont's engagement with the Mbale Disabled People's Association, and the SEWREC Mental Health exchange with the Gambia. Whether these and other initiatives have happened as a result of DWA's awareness raising activities is difficult to say. Nevertheless, with groups like the Sub Saharan Advisory Panel establishing their own disability forum and Wales Africa Health Links considering hosting a disability networking and sharing event of their own, the sector's climate with regards the needs of disabled people does appear to be changing.

¹ Excluding any clean energy grants rounds.

² Excluding any clean energy grants rounds.