

## Disability in Wales and Africa Annual Report for 2013

2013 was a busy year for Disability in Wales and Africa (DWA). It was a year in which DWA developed a focus on education. It was also the year when DWA launched a photographic display, with a public event, at the Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay. DWA commissioned an intern to research how initiatives of the Wales Africa sector include disability issues, and the needs of disabled people, within their activities. Finally, DWA worked with ResponsABLE assistance, to enable it to develop links with two disabled communities in Kenya and to carry out inaugural visits.

Although the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) focus for 2013 was on “Every Child Needs a Teacher”, and DWA emphasised that this included disabled children, it also ran its own campaign – “Getting Disabled Children to School”. Education, schooling and the inclusion of disabled people, has always been a crucial feature of the campaign around disability and development.

The DWA campaign had two parts. In July there was a [shared learning event](#) at Cefnlllys Primary School, Llandrindod Wells. We were joined, via Skype, by Dr Cecilia N’yaga, an education specialist from Kenya and Hilary Williams, a retired speech and language therapist who was spending three months in Molo, also in Kenya. We were able to discuss some of the key issues, when looking at education for disabled children in Africa, with firsthand experience from Kenya.

This was followed by an “inclusive sponsored ride” in September, when twenty five cycle and powered-wheelchair riders, representing four Wales Africa Links, embarked on the 11.9 mile course around Lake Vyrnwy in North Powys. This was an important event for DWA, as it moved our activities outside the Newport, Cardiff and Swansea arena. The event raised, nearly, £1,000 for the participating Links to use to assist disabled children in Africa to get to school. Mark Williams, MP for Ceredigion and Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Global Education, also joined the event.

Continuing with the theme of prioritising the needs of disabled children, DWA built on the outcome of a presentation made at the Shared Learning Event in October 2012. Cerebral Palsy Africa ([CPA](#)) has been

promoting Appropriate Paper-based Technology ([APT](#)) as a means of producing supportive seating, standing frames, and further assistive devices for disabled children. APT was developed in Zimbabwe by [Bevill Packer](#) and uses cardboard, paper and other locally available materials to make a variety of items, including assistive devices. Such equipment can otherwise be expensive to buy or in scarce supply in rural Africa.

The Brecon Molo Community Partnership decided to run a one day taster for APT, as well as a five day in depth course. This was marketed to the rest of the sector through DWA and other organisations. A charge was made to cover costs, with the taster, in particular, proving to be of interest to many people, ranging from L'Arche Brecon to Theatre against Oppression. The Swansea Siavonga Link, through the university, also had their own APT training sessions later in the year.

2013 will probably be best remembered for the photo exhibition launch on December 3rd, the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (UNIDPD), which compared the lives of disabled people in Wales and Kenya. Held at the Pierhead building, DWA was joined by Rebecca Evans AM who sponsored and opened the event. To see a film strip of the day's event, please follow the [DWA Photographic Display](#) link, produced with thanks to the Valley and Vale Community Arts project.

The overall aim of DWA is to encourage Wales Africa initiatives to include disability and the needs of disabled people within their work. It was agreed that, as a step in this process, we need to know more about the level of disability engagement the sector presently has. DWA has, therefore, commissioned Gemma James as an intern, to do research providing a snapshot of the level to which Wales Africa currently engages with disability and establishing what the key issues are that influence people and organisations in this work. We look forward to reading the results of Gemma's work in 2014.

With the help of funding from the Wales Africa Community Links grants programme, DWA enabled ResponsABLE Assistance to carry out their first visit to Kenya. Established in response to the tsunami of 2004, and the lack of engagement by relief agencies with disabled people,

ResponsABLE Assistance had wanted to broaden their work beyond relief to development, particularly working with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs). The opportunity arose for ResponsABLE Assistance to be introduced to two Kenyan Community Based Rehabilitation initiatives that involved working with DPOs in Kibwezi and Embu. In November, the first visit by ResponsABLE assistance was made to both communities - please see the video [ResponsABLE Assistance visit to Kenya](#) for further details.

DWA produced its second newsletter in 2013 and the next one is due in early 2014. It also supported various Wales Africa initiatives, through the provision of training and awareness-raising activities. DWA has become a regular member of the Bond Disability and Development Group, accepting its place on the steering committee and, therefore, becoming involved in the UK wide campaign to raise issues of disability and development with the Westminster Government. It is hoped that the photo exhibition will enable DWA to become known by a broader audience as it travels around Wales and that this can be built on, to enhance our presence within the sector and beyond.