



Ecumenical

# Disability

Advocates Network

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2004

A male triathlete in a wheelchair is shown in a dynamic, forward-leaning racing posture on a paved road. He is wearing a white and blue athletic singlet with the number '715' on the front, a yellow headband, and black gloves. The background is a blurred asphalt surface, suggesting motion.

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND DISABILITY

## FOR AFRICA'S DISABLED IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

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EDAN is a quarterly publication of the WCC programme on persons with disabilities within the Justice and Peace Creation Team. Issues and views in this publication are opinions held by the members and contributors and not necessarily of EDAN or WCC.

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Design & Printed by: PANN PRINTERS P.O. Box 29276, Nairobi  
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# Promotion and protection of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities



A few years ago, a Tanzanian friend of mine who is a senior official of Disabled People International and a physically disabled man on a wheel chair was traveling by himself through a Latin American City. Airlines will normally have ground staff who provides assistance to persons with disabilities traveling alone and such an Assistant was provided to take him through the immigration procedures. On presenting his passport, the officer at the desk looked at it, kept it aside and requested him to wait. The ground staff assistant was requested to leave him with a promise that the immigration department staff would take over. My friend was very suspicious as it is quite unusual for immigration departments to take over the work that is normally done by the airline. The waiting was long and he began to get agitated. He wanted to know what was happening and as he approached the man at the Immigration Desk, some uniformed policemen appeared and

without any word handcuffed him. In no time, he had been pushed and locked in a cell without either his passport or luggage. He was all alone in the cell and for the remaining part of the day; he did not see anybody who could tell him what was happening. All he knew was that he was under arrest.

It took him three agonizing days of poor feeding without a bathroom in a cold cell and of course a missed opportunity to participate in the meeting to which he was traveling before he could fully understand what was happening. He had been mistaken for a terrorist from Morocco who shared the same name with him and on whom the Interpol had been put on alert. What this incident taught me was that police surveillance could not take chance in regard to terrorists whatever the situation of their body function. In the case of my friend, a wheelchair which normally is seen as a symbol of people needing assistance, care and



tender treatment was no excuse to prevent them from shutting in my friend. Certainly, this was a very nasty experience but now that it is far behind us as part of history, I can draw some learning from it. When it came to terrorism alertness, disability was not a concern. My friend was seen as a man capable of causing harm and therefore needing to be isolated for the good of the humanity. He was treated “on equal basis” with all other terrorist suspects. It would help persons with disabilities greatly if the society could take cue from this experience and treat them on equal basis with all others in all spiritual, social, economic and political life of the society.

**He was treated “on equal basis” with all other terrorist suspects.**



During the last session of the UN Ad Hoc Committee discussing the convention on persons with disabilities, one delegate reminded the assembly that the process of drafting the convention has to constantly bear in mind that the objective is not to create new rights for persons with disabilities. Rather, it is to affirm the entitlement to persons with disabilities to the human rights already stipulated in the various UN human right instruments. He went on to emphasize that this is why the instrument under development is referred to as A Convention “on the promotion and protection of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities”. From this caution, we are meant to understand that what the new instrument is intended to achieve is the treatment of persons with disabilities on equal basis with all others provided that their circumstances and especially any perceived or real limitations that may be imposed by their

impairment is put into consideration.

This provision to recognize that persons with disabilities are disadvantaged by their impairments is what makes the difference in this instrument from all others in the past. It will help to up-lift them from marginalization, attitudinal prejudice and exclusion from such mainstream activities of the society as poverty alleviation programmes, HIV-AIDS intervention initiatives, society conflict resolution efforts and the entire governance processes.

It is very encouraging that many member states of the United Nation are taking part in the formulation of the instrument whose discussion is now at the informal negotiation stage. It is however, unfortunate that many of the member states in the South do not have adequate representation for economic reasons. It has been noted that where states are not represented by delegates from the Capitals, there is either no representation from the UN missions or it is inconsistent. We cannot blame these missions. The staff there are busy with very many other issues which the UN is dealing with but worse still, they are not conversant with disability issues. It is therefore very necessary that delegations include representatives from the capitals and that persons with disabilities be adequately represented. This may call for close liaison between the national disability movements and the relevant Government ministries in the selection of delegates as is already happening with a few countries. Persons with disabilities are still crying, “Nothing about us without us”. Let member states intensify their participation in this process and ensure that its beneficiaries, people with disabilities are adequately represented at every stage. ■



# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND DISABILITY

**“Let’s give an opportunity to 10% of the world’s populations”**

**by Rafael de Lorenzo**

**A** talk by Rafael de Lorenzo during a meeting of the Club of Rome which is a group of scientists, economists, businessmen, international high level civil servants, heads of State and former heads of State who pool their different experiences from a wide range of backgrounds to come to a deeper understanding of the political,



social, economic, technological, environmental, psychological and cultural issues- facing humanity. It does so taking a global, long term and interdisciplinary perspective aware of the increasing independence of nations and the globalisation of problems that pose predicaments beyond the capacity of individual countries.

“Before beginning my remarks, I would like to express my gratitude to the Club of Rome and its Executive Committee for having included me in this group of personalities who represent a school of thought and concerns for the development of humankind and the future of the planet, without which many of the advances we know today would not have been possible. My gratitude goes beyond

the feelings of a person who is thus honoured, an honour I hope to prove worthy of, because I interpret this appointment as a demonstration of the sensitivity the Club of Rome to the phenomenon of disability, a phenomenon that affects one in ten of the planet’s inhabitants and that erects barriers, that are often impassable, that prevent full participation in society. These barriers can become insurmountable in less advanced economics and when added to other factors of social marginalization they can condemn hundreds of millions of people to exclusion and poverty and to living on the fringe of society. I also feel gratitude because as I am one of the first persons with a disability to become a member of the Club, in my own modest achievements we recognise the efforts of many people and organisations that work to bring about integration, among them the Spanish National Organisation for the Blind, which I represent.

I would also like to thank the Club for having invited me to share a panel with such personalities as Federico Mayor who has always shown the utmost concern for the social integration I have just described. Many years ago, Mr. Mayor was instrumental in promoting the first national plan for the prevention of congenital disabilities in Spain. Another motive of gratitude is that with my intervention I have the opportunity to stress that fostering as an unequivocal human value the recognition of differences and the creative potential of diversity would not be enough to promote integration, if we do not examine in depth all of the facets of these differences. Differences between human beings, in many instances, do not emanate only in differences between cultures and creeds, or in differences in income and social position, but to other inequalities linked to personal circumstances, functional capacities and our own life experiences. Therefore, the risk we need to stern is not the risk of



human divergence, derived from different access to material resources, but the risk of discrimination that can arise from the barriers erected by productivity and social and cultural habits. We run the risk of limiting expectations and wasting the potential of people with sensorial, or mental limitations or of people whose faculties decline in the later years of life.

This is not the first time that the Club reflects on these concerns. Since its creation, the Club has stressed that sustainable development is not enough, but that we must strive for human development that encompasses the capacities of each and every member of the human family and

**Overpopulation, for example, is not isolated from the scarcity of educational and material resources.**



that eradicates the factors that lead to exclusion. As Aurelio Peccei warned in his study of "Human Quality", we must fully develop all human capacities, whether already existing or latent. In this perspective it is not surprising to hear the president of the United States, in a recent address to the nation say that in times of unprecedented economic expansion, as industrialised economies are experiencing now, there are people who find no place to participate in this boom in prosperity. Among them are three out of every four Americans with severe disabilities who want to work, but who are unable to find jobs. This situation, continued the president, is not only unjust, but also a luxury that society cannot afford.

These issues go beyond the merely economic sphere, as our President, Ricardo Diez Hochleitner, remarked in his prologue to the Spanish edition of Aurelio Peccei's report on human quality. He stated that to develop human potential, it is important to take, into account our whole social context, together

with its moral and ethical connotations, and never lose sight of the values of freedom, equality and justice. These are points of reference that, as Peccei stated in his "Testimony of the Future", are key in enhancing quality and in enabling people to meet the extraordinary challenges, as well as the exceptional opportunities of our times.

### Rethinking our development model

Without ever losing sight of this human dimension, the Club has endeavoured to study the impact of unlimited growth, technological changes, the difficult governance of the ever more complex

systems of the new financial economies and the limits of social cohesion in human development. The consequences of these phenomena, heightened by the impact of the information revolution and the globalisation of our markets, have increased the risk of human dualization and ushered in new forms of exclusion. These social changes are, further, strengthening certain social patterns to the detriment of

those aspects which do not fit into the mould of economic productivity. Throughout this process, however, Mankind has become aware that it is impossible for us to maintain a relationship with nature if it does not take into account our limitations and the ultimate consequences of our actions. We are beginning to understand that the problems we face are all linked to one another. Overpopulation, for example, is not isolated from the scarcity of educational and material resources. Man has grasped that bequeathing these things to future generations can have more dire consequences than we had ever thought, and we are now beginning to protect biodiversity.

However, what Man has yet to fully fathom is that in this confusion of progress and stagnation, opulence and misery, we are not developing a system of values that will help put technical achievements at the service of all mankind. We have yet to define solidarity with others as the core of our behaviour, and to learn to "selfishly" share wealth and





opportunities. It is essential for the future, therefore, to secure those values which promote equality within diversity. This equality must permeate all areas of human life, if we want to fully develop the spiritual potential that each of us harbours, independently of our circumstances and conditions.

For these reasons, the new crossroads Humanity has reached are not reflected in plans for economic and technical development, but in plans for interpersonal relations, for discovering others and expressing will to share with each other a common destiny from the perspective of our individual differences. It is also necessary for us to rethink the

development model we want to follow. We are turning a century characterised by enormous social and technological advances, which have fostered unimaginable growth in activities and consumption. These advances have facilitated communications and contact between societies and individuals in such fast-changing terms that they are difficult to assimilate. Simultaneously, the pillars for a new world order are being laid, based on global dimensions, continuous interaction and the de-localisation of the essential factors in our traditional models of political, social and economic organisation. However, this growth has not been socially neutral, but brings with it the undesirable consequences of territorial inequality, environmental tensions, social inequality and clashes between the cultures and values of different societies and groups.

While it is true that this growth has led to unprecedented levels of well-being for many layers of society, it is no less true that the gaps between human groups are growing wider: one billion people are excluded from access to prosperity, innumerable regional and local conflicts originating in poverty and a lack of hope dampen the spirit of progress. These problems are not confined to the Third World. Fifteen percent of the industrialised world's population lives below the poverty threshold.

This is all the more paradoxical when we recall that the explicit objectives of the post-war economic and social model were to promote economic growth, harmonious social development and full employment and to eradicate social conflict through the welfare state. The philosophical grounding of this model is the search for equality and solidarity, corrugated by the State's exercise of its regulatory power through justice, equity and shared social and cultural values that would lead to integration and harmony.

The challenges we face today are globality, interdependence, diversity and uncertainty. These are not abstractions, but things that directly affect human beings, human values and the development of individuals as the subjects of just and balanced progress and growth. When we stand at the crossroads, it is only with this in mind that we will be able to choose the road of progress and solidarity.





## The opportunities before us

As we stand at the crossroads, where we are asked to positively evaluate and integrate differences, Mankind faces many difficulties and threats in discerning the right road to travel, without shutting out of History underprivileged people and nations. However, our chances of making the right choices are even greater, thanks to the knowledge and technical instruments available to us. Man has learned that the past cannot mechanically be repeated. These changes must be managed with the same rigor that we manage the risk that all

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change entails. Man possesses the methodology to make dynamic changes, although we are unsure from our current viewpoint which is the direction we want to take.

Also in our favour is the fact that progress in the fields of medicine and technology has been so great and effective that if these advances are fully applied, natural disabilities can be overcome, the effects of disease and poverty can be eliminated and peoples with the widest diversities can live in full integration. This, of course, will only be achieved if new technologies and scientific advances are conceived for the good of all. They must be designed for "general use". Otherwise this technology, far from freeing man of his fetters, will simply constitute another link in the chain that historically, has condemned the disabled to subordination and dependence.

Correctly and fully used, technical and material opportunities will help each person fulfil a meaningful role in society, contributing the best of

his knowledge and skills. In some instances people will use technical means and instruments to extend their own communication and action capacities, means and instruments without which they would otherwise be unable to contribute to society and economic life.

## Social integration requires integration in the work force

We know that employment is the primary concern of today's citizens throughout the world. Having a job means playing a meaningful role in society, enjoying recognition as the subject of rights and obligations, being in the hub of the virtuous circle of social welfare. Not having a job means living on the fringe of society, or being excluded altogether. Our society is organised around occupations and employment. Many of our most cherished values are based on how the individual relates to productive activities. Not having a job places a person at risk of social exclusion, because our social model is based on cultural patterns articulated around the work factor.

We need to reconstitute the value of a person's work, to personify work as the link between human beings, no matter what each person's capacity may be. Work is the vehicle that allows people to belong to a social group. All members of society must be able to take advantage of the new opportunities that economic development offers. The potential of the new technologies, particularly enhanced communication and access to information, has become a tool to wield incalculable power that can be used to prevent dualization and exclusion.

## These factors are much more decisive for people with disabilities

Dualization and exclusion are even greater threats when a person's disability conditions his or her very existence. Please allow me at this point to make explicit reference to a segment of society, people





with disability. These people have often been overlooked, and their expectations of integration in the fabric of their societies are low, independently of the degree of development in their countries of origin. I am speaking of a large segment of society, comprising approximately 10% of the world's population, that may not only be living in substandard conditions, but with the aggravation of a disability. Thirty years after the United Nations launched its rigorous program for prevention, attention, rehabilitation and integration of people with disability, it is still vital to raise our voices for fair treatment and solidarity, and to call for the adoption of laws and practices to promote integration, to prevent these people from being shut out, cut off from access to the opportunities available to the rest of Society.

There is not doubt that modern societies are more

conscience than ever of this situation, and many countries have incorporated in their Constitutions and laws ways to eradicate discrimination and promote integration. These, however, are no more than formal aspects, that do not ensure real and effective integration. The fact that public powers and social groups are unable to promote true integration is a manifestation of the inefficiencies of the social systems we use, and clear proof that we are running the risk of using one set of moral values and norms in our public discourse, but applying another in our businesses, private affairs and daily lives. We must not forget that discriminating against persons with disability, relegating them to lesser roles is not only a question of laws — which are of the utmost importance, though insufficient in and of themselves — since social exclusion is a reality that we are often unaware of. It is a vague practice, deeply rooted in all of our societies, based on stereotypes and ideas handed down for generations, and that no one can escape. The less ostensive these are, the more difficult they are to eradicate.

A society's architecture is expressed through the degree of cohesion between its members. Cohesion is based on the effective and real application of the principles of equality and solidarity as the most patent expression of the values that constitute the core of the human condition. It is not enough to garner formal respect for these principles and incorporate them into the legal framework of each of our nations. These are the principles that should inform our daily activities and our moral duties. They should foster attitudes and values that will grant people with disabilities greater access to the virtuous circles of occupations and activities, the rights and obligations that shape the lives of any other member of society.

Many people are beginning to join their voices to the denunciation lodged by the European Parliament when it stated that current treatment of people with disability violates many universal human rights. Respect for, and the promotion of human rights and human diversity have been traditional characteristics of our societies, constituting an essential part of the values common to all cultures founded on human respect. A way must be found to heighten this problem's visibility. This is a moral obligation whose pursuit will restore the most human of our attributes, solidarity and equality with our fellow man. This entitles each of us to exercise our rights, merely because we are alive and part of the community that



surrounds us. We need to stimulate the spirit of initiative and debunk the spirit of resignation, and take into account each person's limitations, be they determined by social condition, disability or old age.

The quality of life lived with solidarity, that looks to diversity to build new horizons, will be enhanced with the adoption of new values based on the freedom the individual to be himself, unique, with the ability to share with others. Bequeathing these values to future generations will be just as important as leaving them a clean environment. This legacy, which sees the spirit of fraternity as a crucial driving force throughout history, should imbibe us with a new spirit to bring about personal changes that permeate not only our daily rounds, but our attitudes as well.

### Building a life based on solidarity

To attain this objective, it is necessary to understand the reasons behind, and the extent of human diversity. It is necessary to clearly comprehend that people require different forms of learning, working and enjoying leisure time in our different societies and cultures. We must also determine what technology can do to overcome these differences, and what policies should be instrumented to fulfil the expectations of all members of society. We need to clarify how to organise social services, and define the commitments that our public administrations and private initiative will make when meeting the legitimate demands of a population whose life expectancy is much longer than foreseen in the industrial economies or the rural civilizations of the past. To do this, we must analyse the reality of the world today, identifying opportunities and threats, and their impact on assimilating a culture of differences and otherness. A culture whose only element of uniformity is the dignity of each person to choose his or her own future and way of life.

We need to strive to explore the new opportunities before us. Ever-growing technological developments place in our hands new possibilities that need to be oriented and channelled by strengthening the values that constitute our common social patrimony. We are all called on to participate and orient the process, while we must not forget that the public powers have specific responsibilities to uphold.

But success does not rest with the public powers. And I say this from the confidence that I have of having

personally seen how the efforts and constancy of many people, with and others without disability, have borne the fruits of integration. These rewards increase as we explore the possibilities offered by new technologies to accelerate integration in the active world on equal footing with the rest of society.

Hence, as I have proposed to the Executive Committee, I want to convey the great interest that many of us have in seeing the Club of Rome incorporate in its reflections a report on "Human Development and Disability". This report should give an account of all those Gordian's knots that Federico Mayor has brought to our attention in his latest book, all of them problems that have a firm grip on people's futures. These knots often wind more tightly around people with sensorial, motor or mental disabilities. However, I believe we will be able to untie these knots if we can place all of our knowledge and technical skills at the service of the new human frontier of universal integration for everyone.

However, technical skills and economic know-how will not be enough. The greatest problems we face today, as Aurelio Peccei and Daisaku Ikeda remind us in "Before it is Too Late", are still spiritual and ethical in nature. They are problems that cannot be solved by increasing material and cognitive means. They reside in our most intimate beings, and it is only by renewing our values that we will be able to take on these new challenges. We will then be aware, with serene assurance, that if we recognize ourselves in our fellow man, we will never be defeated by the threats of the future. We will be able to sever the knots of social exclusion that prevent many people with disability from leading full and active lives.

Any study, any action we undertake must be founded on the central axis of promoting the development of every person. As a re-reading of Aurelio Peccei will remind us, the quality of the protagonists will be the decisive factor in the human adventure. There can be no quality, no matter how equal opportunities are - in and of itself no mean feat - if we cannot spark a new humanism, from which no one is excluded, that will nurture a spiritual renewal in each of us, a renewal founded on a dialogue with others, different from ourselves. This renewal will be based on the integration of disability as a human resource that must not be wasted. ■

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# For Africa's disabled, it's time for action, no blah-blah

By Phitallis Were

December 3rd marks the 11th anniversary of United Nations Day for persons with disabilities. While other United Nations days of this kind are given a lot of prominence, the UN Day for the disabled passes like any other day. What does that tell us about its significance? What milestones have the disabled passed as a result of the day's declaration?

The day was intended to remind us that disability is very much with us; if not today, tomorrow; if not tomorrow, the day after. That disability is not the preserve of any particular group. That disability is the only phenomenon that can generously strike any person, any time, anywhere. That it respects no gender, no creed, no race, no tribe, and no class. That awareness should galvanize us into responding to the needs of those with disabilities, working to build a world in which those who succumb to disability can still find fulfillment and meaning in their lives.

Working towards the elimination of all manner of obstacles that impede disability and empowering those with disabilities should be the cardinal goal of the United Nations and its member governments. It would be dishonest to say that the United Nations has done nothing about disabled people. But it would be equally incorrect to say that the United Nations has done the best it can to make a positive difference to disabled people. The United Nations has been long on rhetoric, but short on practical actions. I am referring to numerous declarations and statements of intent about equalization and opportunities for disabled people. When it comes to marshalling resources and developing the necessary institutional frameworks for effective implementation of those dreams, the UN has been found terribly wanting. Nothing much to write home about! And it's a pity. One would have thought that international awareness of disability and an appreciation of diversity would have improved by the 21st century. The time for action is here. Why, for instance, is disability missing from such United Nations initiatives as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

On a positive note, the United Nations has worked very hard to ensure that disabled people get a convention that will protect their rights and privileges. Probably, in the next two-three years, this convention will be in place. It is a step in the right direction. Other praiseworthy efforts include the mobilization of





many countries to ratify the Ottawa convention banning the production, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel mines. These efforts should be intensified, particularly in Africa.

What does the United Nations day for disabled people mean for Africa? This continent has the dubious distinction of treating disabled people worse than wild animals. Most of the over 80 million Africans with disabilities live worse off than monkeys and wild beasts. With no food, shelter, education, assisting devices or rehabilitation programs, they are often hidden away from the public eye. One does not have to physically die to be termed dead. The gross deprivation of all the basics of life, combined with a

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denial of dignity, is tantamount to death! Many African countries have plenty of money when it comes to buying weapons but have very little to invest in the empowerment of disabled people. While many governments devote a huge junk of their GDP to relocating endangered elephants, very few mention the word "disabled people" in their budgets, leave alone allocating resources for training and rehabilitation.

While in many other parts of the globe disability is now viewed as part of humanity's rich diversity, in Africa it is regarded as intolerable, a bad omen. This is unacceptable!

While African governments, through the African Union (AU), committed themselves to an African Decade of Persons with Disabilities five years ago, many have done little about it. Those, like Kenya, that have actually developed national action plans have not moved a step closer to mobilizing adequate

resources for implementation. They have also not put in place the institutional mechanisms to spearhead and monitor effective delivery of the action plan. The AU also stands accused of not doing much in terms of representation of disabled persons in its key decision-making organs. The African parliament, Economic and Social Council and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to mention but a few, are all dismally short of disabled members.

Of course, we have yet to see efforts towards development of an African charter on the rights of disabled people. The African Rehabilitation Institute (ART), based in Zimbabwe, which is supposedly the African Union's specialized Agency on disability and rehabilitation, is on its deathbed. This tells a million about how disabled people rank with the African leadership. Why, for instance, hasn't the African Union appointed a goodwill ambassador for disability during this African Decade of Persons with disabilities 1999-2009?

On the home front, a number of milestones have been

achieved. However, it would be wrong to assume Kenyans are out of the woods. The process towards getting a new Disability Policy has been too slow. The never-ending constitutional review has denied disabled Kenyans constitutional protection. The current constitution does not outlaw discrimination on the grounds of disability.

Kenyans with disabilities, like other marginalized Kenyans, put in so much to deliver the Bomas Draft Constitution. In the Bomas Draft Constitution and specifically Article 42 under the Bill of Rights, persons with disabilities are exclusively recognized and their Constitutional Rights confirmed.

It is our earnest desire that this part of the Bomas Draft will not constitute the so-called "contentious" clauses. Parliament should vote for disabled people to be part of the new dispensation. This is our serious and humble appeal, for we believe that a country that does not embrace all is guilty of exclusion, a recipe for



eventual disintegration. The government did enact the Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 last December. In June this year, the Government gazetted many of the Act's articles and in October, it gazetted the establishment of National Council for Persons with Disabilities. But in terms of resources, the government needs to do more to ensure the Council has the wherewithal to ensure effective delivery of services.

It would be a terrible mistake to have "just another council." As we commemorate the 3rd of December let us re-dedicate ourselves to the cause of disability. The world at large



has more to benefit from embracing all , than from excluding some.

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# Disability:

## Consequence of Poverty and Cause of Rural Hunger

By Nuria Felipe Soria

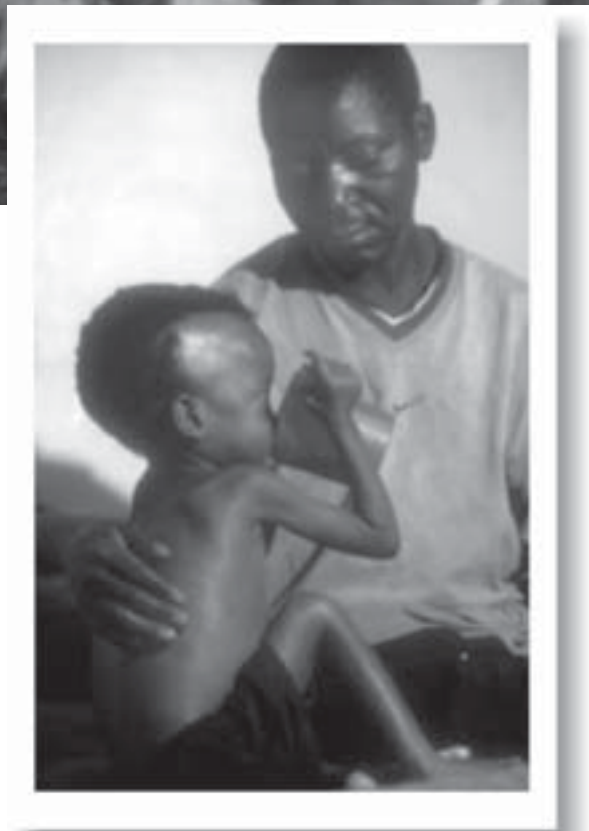
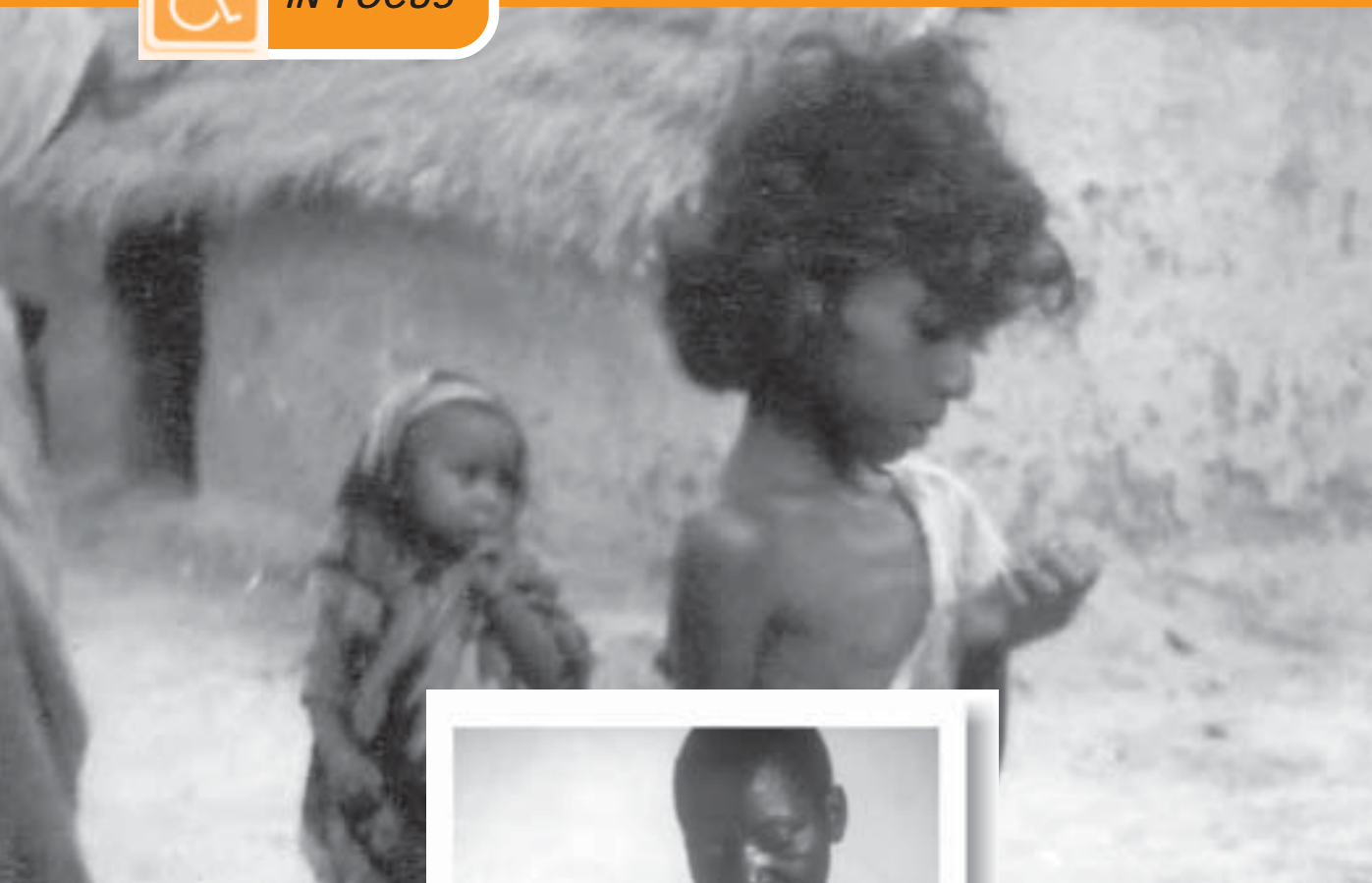
**H**unger, malnutrition and poverty breed disabilities. Between 250,000 and 500,000 children go blind every year from Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD). There are over 16 million mentally handicapped and nearly 49.5 million people with lesser degrees of brain damage due to Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD). More than half of all pregnant women in the world are anemic, of whom 90% live in developing countries.

But disability is also cause of poverty and hunger, especially in rural areas, where people are far from services and have very limited economic opportunities. "Disabled people are marginalized, they are not considered economically active and this leads them very often into the hunger trap," explains Lawrence Jacobson, FAO Focal Point for

Disability Matters.

Reducing the current figure of 600 million people with disabilities worldwide can be achieved by boosting food production, improving nutrition and integrating disabled people into sustainable rural development programs. Two pilot projects implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Thailand and Cambodia demonstrate how this can be done. Thailand has an estimated 1.1 million disabled people, representing around 1.8% of the population. Most of them live in the Northeast, the poorest part of the country. To enhance the skills of disabled farmers, and make them successful entrepreneurs with income-generating activities, the FAO Regional Office in Bangkok developed an innovative training





program based on mushroom cultivation. Mushrooms are part of the daily diet of Thai people and thus offer good market opportunities, and their cultivation can be started at a very low cost while generating income within a short time.


"Mushroom cultivation has restored their self confidence," explains Mr. Jacobson. "These people have acquired the skills and means to lead better and more productive lives. They can stand on their own and, most important, they can teach other people within their community. This acquired ability to lead and to teach other people is an important aspect of the success of this project."

In Cambodia, the war and landmines have left more than 2% of the population handicapped and marginalized. The per-capita rate of disability is one of the highest in the world. A joint program between Handicapped International and the FAO Integrated Pest Management Program is giving them additional skills to integrate into their

communities, to improve incomes, to manage their crops better and to regain their self-esteem.

"The project focuses not just on treating marginalized or disabled farmers as special," explains Robert Nugent, FAO Integrated Pest Management Country Officer. "There is no point developing special programs just for disabled farmers. You have to look at the farming community as a whole and how networks of farmers can come together as trainers, as organizers, as scientists. This model is replicable anywhere where there is a need to place farmers at the centre of the

learning rather than production and technical delivery."

Lawrence Jacobson comments: "Fighting hunger in the world means fighting to feed all hungry people. The rural disabled in developing countries are a particularly vulnerable group who are all too often invisible. It is essential that development programs take account of their special needs." 

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# The JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION on Disability and Globalization

**T**wenty two (22) participants from 11 African countries and the Caribbean gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa from 2 to 6 November 2004 at a consultation on Disability and Globalization jointly organized by the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) and the Economic Justice program of the Justice, Peace and Creation Team of the World Council of Churches. By way of paper presentations, plenary and group discussions participants deliberated on how to mitigate the negative impact of Economic Globalization on the PWDs. Participants present the Johannesburg Declaration to the All Africa Conference of Churches, EDAN, the WCC, the African Union and the United Nations.

Recognizing the fundamental values and principles of the African Union and the United Nations Charters that all human beings are equal in rights and dignity and equally entitled to civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights;

Observing the limitations of Economic Globalization and its negative impact on People with Disabilities (PWDs) especially on women and youth and the obstacles it creates to full and effective participation of PWDs resulting in persistent poverty, social exclusion and marginalization which impede the exercise of fundamental rights;

Noting that Structural Adjustment Programs and concomitant cuts in social spending particularly on education, rehabilitation and health in various countries have had most severe effects on PWDs to the extent of limiting opportunities for employment, exacerbated by structural, environmental and attitudinal factors;

Bearing in mind that the lowering of legislative control on social and Environmental Standards Impact on PWDs, further noting that the NEPAD and the Millennium Development Goals are uncharacteristically silent on the plight and concerns of PWDs and further considering the increased disadvantage to PWD of persisting conflicts and wars and;

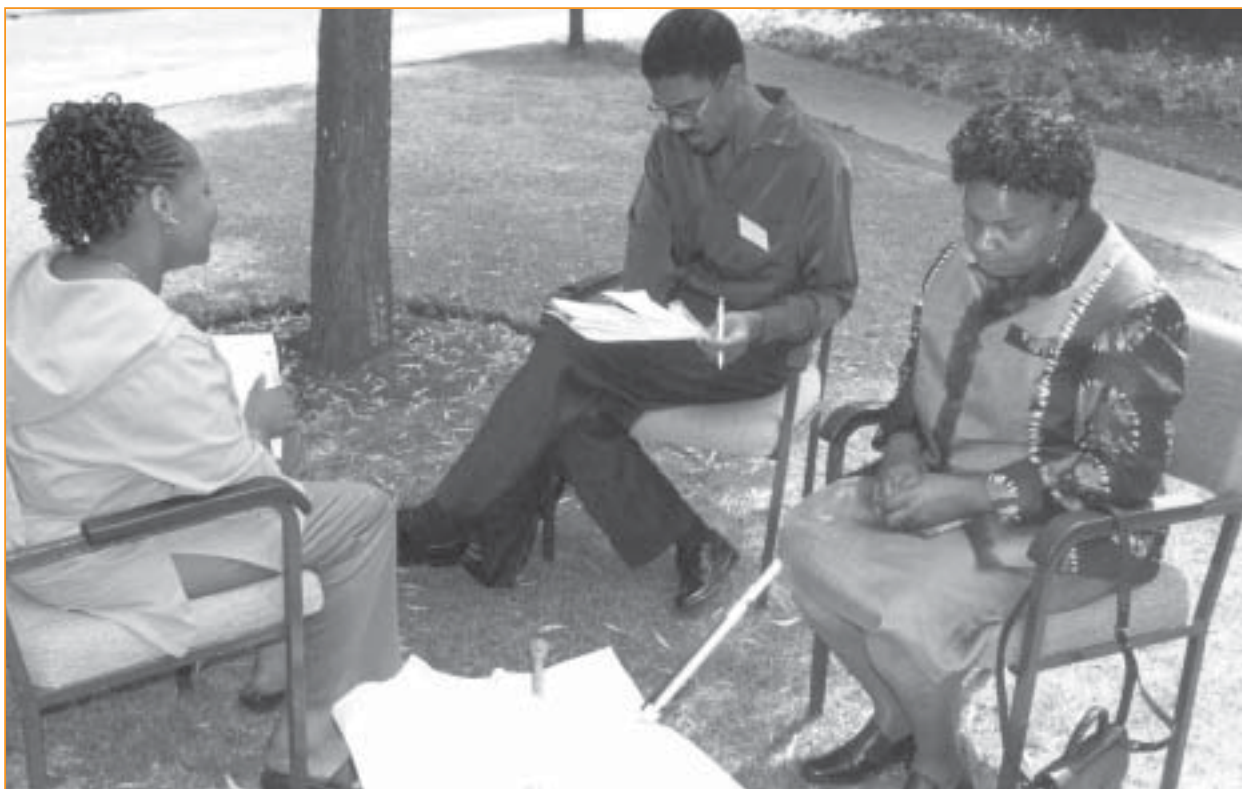
Recognizing the global revolution in Information Technology and the many opportunities for PWDs in networking, capacity building, solidarity, employment and independent living though possessing the potential to marginalize the poor especially PWDs, in particular women, youth and intellectually challenged. Noting that the digital divide including inaccessibility to infrastructure of ICT, Internet and the ICT skills is acute for PWDs and that the multi media environment creates barriers for PWDs



## ECUMENICAL DISABILITY ADVOCATES NETWORK (EDAN)

Reaffirms its commitment to engage churches in the process of awareness building and sensitization on the issue of disability and further commits itself to

- Initiating inter-faith dialogue on disability issues
- Establish closer working relationships with Disabled Peoples Organizations at national and international levels to enhance opportunities for capacity building support and sharing.
- Collaborate with academic institutions and research organizations in the promotion of research studies into disability issues.
- Approach transnational ICT corporations and their foundations with a view to soliciting support for ICT initiatives for Persons with Disabilities.
- Establishing a data base for the coordination and dissemination of qualitative and quantitative data on persons with disabilities and their competences, research issues, statistics and model projects,
- Explore links with the Secretariat of African Decade for Persons with Disability.
- Continue monitoring and support of the process towards the promulgation of the UN Convention on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Dignity of People with Disabilities worldwide.



We urge,

### THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

- to impress its member churches to offer scholarships for PWDs for higher education, restructure their traditional institutions for PWDs to include innovative empowering programs for PWDs, such as organizational development of PWDs and Advocating Skills.
- to urge its churches to include PWDs in all decision-making levels of churches and related agencies.
- to call upon its member churches to put pressure on their governments to support the process towards the UN Convention on





- disability.
- to continue its efforts towards identifying alternative approaches to current trends in economic globalization, which reflect an appreciation for the dignity and rights of all human beings including persons with disabilities (AGAPE) and to urgently seek mechanisms for their implementation.
- To commend to its member churches the strides achieved in the AGAPE dialogue since its 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly and maintain the focus on globalization issues through its 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly and beyond
- to impress upon its member churches to encourage governments to devise programs to mitigate the negative effects of economic globalization on PWDs.
- to support EDAN in the establishment of teams of experts and researchers to audit major policy formulations to ensure that disability issues are mainstreamed.
- to encourage the multilateral funding organizations including IFIs and development partners to include PWDs especially women and youth in poverty reductions strategy programs.
- to include disability issues in its on going dialogues with development partners.
- To encourage development agencies and multilateral development organizations to include disability issues in all policies and establish desks for persons with disabilities in their organizations.
- to urge that disability issues be mainstreamed in all HIVAIDS programs.
- to urge governments to keep accurate census and survey data and devise disability friendly methodologies of gathering data on PWDs.



**And urge,**

## THE ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

- through its dialogue with the African Union to encourage it to create an African Charter on disability and mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of related policies.
- revise and resource African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI) to effectively and efficiently address disability issues.
- encourage member countries to incorporate the principle of universal design to facilitate accessibility for all persons with disability.
- ensure that enabling policy and legislation become part of the demand for good governance in APRM under NEPAD.
- persuade member countries to adopt the principles of international cooperation in development of the UN Convention.

Participants expressed the hope that these recommendations would find resonance in all the channels in which this declaration is communicated and that its recipients would act

urgently to safeguards the rights of disabled persons with disabilities the world over who for too long have suffered the disadvantages of the disabling social environment in which they find themselves.



## CELEBRATING

# UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

This year the theme is “Nothing About Us Without Us”. It focuses on the active involvement of disabled people in the planning of strategies and policies that affect their lives.

### Disability research

Healthlink Worldwide is currently managing the communications of the Disability Knowledge and Research Programme (Disability KaR), a programme funded by the Department for International Development (DFID). The programme includes three regional roundtable meetings, in Malawi, India, and Cambodia. The meetings provide an opportunity for face-to-face interaction between a wide range of people involved with disability issues from developing and developed countries.

### Statement

Participants at the first roundtable which took place in Malawi, from November 2 to 4 2004, produced a statement for the International Day of Disabled Persons which voiced the importance of taking a rights-based approach towards disability and development.

The group called for measures to be taken to facilitate in-depth, participatory research on issues identified at the roundtable, including transport, HIV/AIDS, education, and conflict situations, in order to contribute to lasting change.

The 3rd of December sees developing and developed countries of the world, the UN and its specialised agencies, people with disabilities and their organisations, the international community and other development agencies commemorating the world disability day, officially known as the UN International Day of Disabled Persons.

This is an important day on our calendar whose theme this year is ‘Nothing About Us Without Us.’ It is

a day when we review and acknowledge the plight, achievements, contributions, commitments and aspirations of millions of people with disabilities in the world; a day when we take stock of the performance of our governments, development partners, civil society organisations and other relevant players in terms of their contribution towards disability and development.

Historically, people with disabilities have been the most disadvantaged group and they continue to be viewed as such in many countries. Thus as a result of negative attitudes, inaccessible environments and insensible policies and practices, the situation of people with disabilities is commonly associated with poverty, lack of education, lack of employment, lack of independent living and lack of empowerment. It is a history characterised by marginalisation and oppression.

During the last 20 years people with disabilities have, through their own organisations, strived to make their voices heard in many countries by advocating for their rights and ensuring that disability issues become a priority and part of the disability agenda.

Through lobbying and advocacy, a new paradigm has emerged that recognises that people with disabilities have the same rights as non-disabled people. The human rights model, as it is called, does not expect children with Cerebral Palsy to learn to walk in order to have the right to be educated. It does not expect blind people to regain their sight in order to work; and deaf people need not talk in order to be heard.



However, recognition of rights alone is not enough to improve the living conditions of people with disabilities. It is not just a question of prohibiting discrimination and expecting their situation to improve the following morning.

A rights-based approach to disability and development is about levelling the playing field so that people with disabilities can access jobs, education, health and other services. A rights-based approach is about the removal of physical and social barriers; it is about attitude adjustments for policy makers, employers, teachers, health care professionals and even family members.

A rights-based approach is about ensuring universal design, accessible technology, and coordinated public programmes and services. The approach

requires governments to provide the resources necessary to implement these goals and to enforce penalties for those who refuse to cooperate.

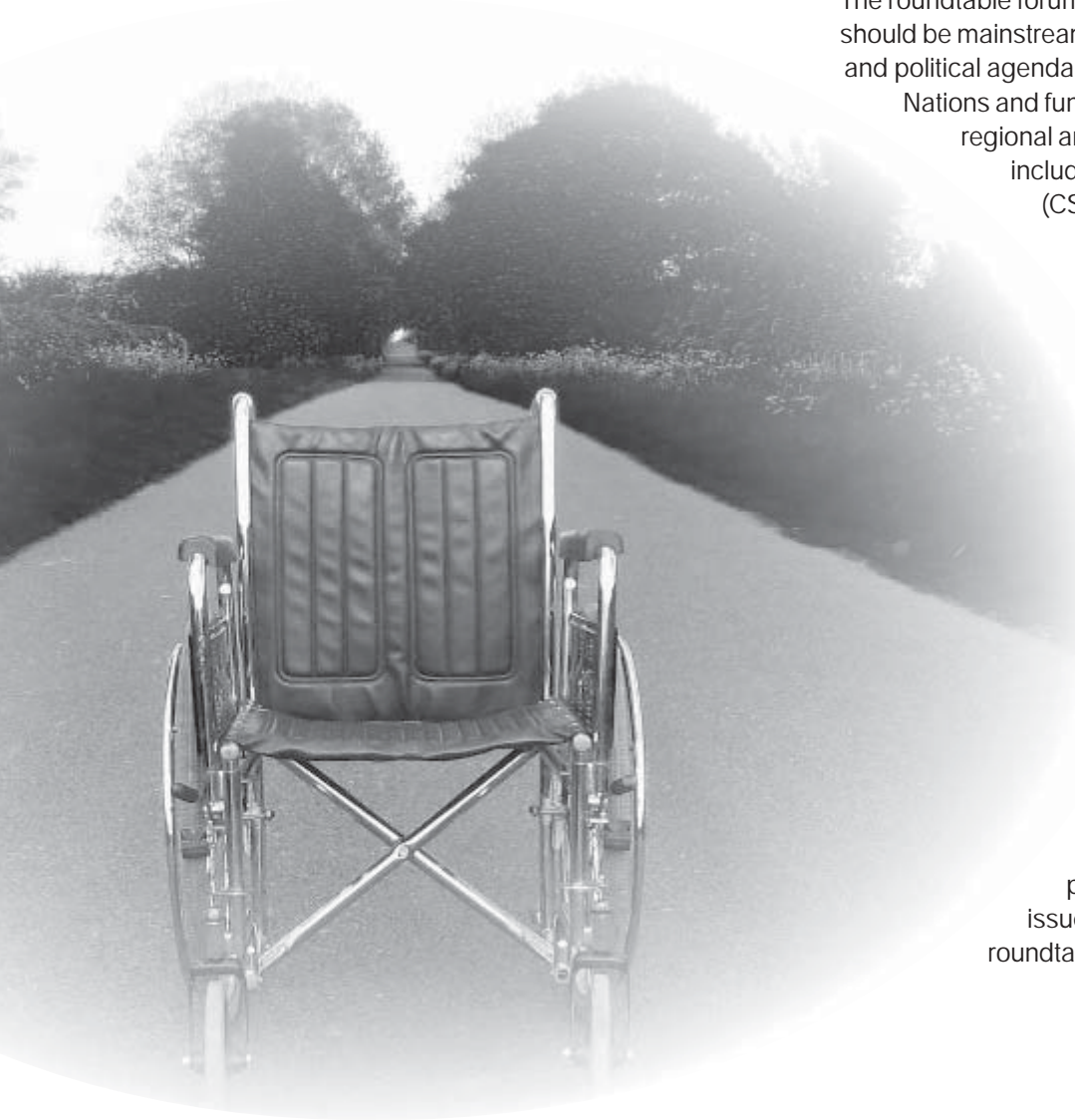
At a roundtable forum organised in Malawi by Healthlink Worldwide, UK, and the Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi, from 2 to 4 November 2004, participants from Africa, Europe and South East Asia deliberated on a range of issues that are of concern to people with disabilities.

They noted with great concern that the process of developing poverty alleviation strategies in developing countries, for example, and genuine progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have not included the full participation of Persons with Disabilities.

The roundtable forum strongly felt that disability should be mainstreamed into the social, economic and political agenda of governments, the United Nations and funding agencies at national, regional and international levels, including civil society organisations (CSOs).

The forum observed that despite considerable work that has been done by DPOs, governmental and non-governmental organisations, including development agencies, on disability, meaningful tangible results and lasting change have yet to be achieved.

In view of the above, the forum called for urgent measures to be taken to facilitate in-depth and participatory research on key issues identified during this first roundtable forum. ■







# CHURCHES

UP AND IN.....

Providing ramped access at your church





**M**any churches have steps to their main entrances and these can present considerable barriers to people with impaired mobility – especially those who use wheelchairs. The Disability Discrimination Act requires that a church (as with other organizations) must look at any barriers to disabled people and take reasonable steps to remove them or to create an alternative.

The provision of a temporary ramp appears, at first,

**“Our mission is to provide opportunities for people with physical disabilities to live healthy, active lifestyles and participate fully in their community,”**



to be a good solution to overcoming the barrier that is presented by a flight of steps – but is it such a good idea? Often, temporary ramps are made of wood, are heavy and become slippery and worn with age. Sometimes the ramp has a very steep gradient and rarely will have handrails. Thus, it is difficult to move, unsafe and provides minimal support to a user, not a good idea and quite likely illegal. A ramp should be in place at all times that a building is open; it is discriminatory to expect people to wait whilst the ramp is put in place.


A far better idea is to build a permanent ramp, even if this is to a side door. If a secondary entrance is used for the ramp it should either be in sight of the main door or clearly signposted as an easier access route for disabled people; the side door should be open whenever the building is in use. The specification for a ramp is quite complex and should be adhered to closely. To construct a ramp that is too steep or that does not have handrails is placing disabled people in danger.

Providing a ramp to help people to get into a

building is not the end of the story; if your building has to have fire exits, these too must be suitable for wheelchair use. It cannot be assumed that a single ramped access will be available in an emergency. Fire exits do not have to be constructed to the same standards as entry ramps as they are intended only for emergency downwards use. However, all fire exits should have no steps and a barrier free route to a safety zone. If it is not possible to create a safe ramped fire exit it is vital that a refuge area be created in order that, in an emergency, someone

who is unable to use steps can remain in a secure environment until a rescue is made. A refuge may be an area protected by a fire door, or it may be an external platform (say, at the top of the steps) on which a wheelchair user can wait. It is vital that any refuge area does not, when occupied, block an escape route for other people. Refuges and the routes to them should be clearly signposted and the staff of the building should be familiar

with their use. The local fire officer should be consulted when making emergency escape provision.

The provision of a ramp can make a great difference to the mission of a church; when people can get in and out of the building with ease and without embarrassment they will feel welcomed and valued, they will want to come and worship God and will be able to play their full part in the life of the church. 

*Taken from Church Action on Disability Newsletter “All People” October issue*



# People with Dementia and the Local Church – In a Strange Land

By Malcolm Goldsmith

About one person in twenty over the age of sixty live and about one in five over the age of eighty has dementia. These people will have spouses, partners, children, relatives and friends. It is likely therefore that just about every church congregation and community will have a number of people affected, directly or indirectly by dementia.

How do clergy and lay leaders, members of the congregation and others understand, relate and support these people?

What happens to the faith of people with dementia? How do their carers cope with faith issues?

What happens when people move into residential, nursing homes or hospital? What forms of ministry are appropriate?

This book, written by someone who has spent many years as a parish priest is full of reflections and suggestions. It is an attempt to guide and encourage people in this important but often neglected area of ministry.

## CONTENTS

### PART ONE: Setting the scene

1. An opportunity offered and a challenge set.

### PART TWO: Towards an understanding of care for people with dementia

2. Getting our heads around dementia
3. Some conditions relating to dementia
4. The experiences of dementia
5. Negative experiences of dementia

6. Communication and dementia
7. Family carers

### PART THREE: The response of the local church

8. Questions that are frequently asked
9. Spirituality & Dementia
10. Don't talk of love – show me!

This book, written by someone who has spent many years as a parish priest is full of reflections and suggestions.



11. Worship – problems and possibilities

### PART FOUR: Theological Reflection

12. Engage the mind, touch the heart, feed the soul
- Epilogue



Malcolm Goldsmith





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A Publication of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Programme on  
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