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Travelling together

**HOW TO INCLUDE DISABLED PEOPLE ON
THE MAIN ROAD OF DEVELOPMENT**

Sue Coe and Lorraine Wapling

ONE WAY ONLY — NO RETURN ONE WAY ONLY — NO

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Stories from the road



20 million people who need a wheelchair
don't have one

Stories from the road

THE HISTORY OF 'TRAVELLING TOGETHER' AND HOW THE COURSE HAS SPREAD FAR AND WIDE

Sue Coe, Senior Disability Programme Adviser, World Vision UK



November 2005 – I found myself tracing circles with my finger on the desk. Drawing this imaginary diagram was my hesitant attempt to break through our language barrier. I was needing to explain to an experienced Francophone African programmes director why World Vision UK wouldn't be able to support his disability project, which was clearly not based on the 'social model'.

So out of thin air I created a large circle representing 'society'. A smaller circle represented 'disabled people'. Directional arrows followed, to describe the differences between medical, charity and social models of disability. I prepared myself for his challenging feedback. But it never came.

'If that's the case,' my African colleague responded, *'we should be adopting the social model principles and the project needs complete redesign'*. I was both amazed and delighted. It was the first time I'd used these circles and directional arrows to explain the concepts. And it worked.

That was delivering the concepts in a one-to-one encounter. But what happened when such ideas were conveyed to a whole group of individuals – all experienced programme staff? We found that out when nearly 20 people convened in a meeting room in Buckinghamshire, England seven months later. It went much better than expected.

I'd been a little nervous about it. I was particularly concerned about how the Game Of Life activity would be received. It went very well, as it turned out. In fact, it left a marked impression on my programming colleagues. This pattern has been repeated on many occasions at subsequent courses, experienced by both Lorraine and myself. Feedback from participants on that first course delivered by Lorraine Wapling included:

- very accessible workshop;
- excellent trainer;
- great to learn so much without my brain hurting;
- timing of workshop couldn't have been better, individually and within World Vision partnership;
- good fun games to help think of existing attitudes;
- very practical;



Deaf children enjoying school in Botswana
photos: L.Wapling

'The training course has consistently 'hit the mark' wherever it's been delivered. It's a tool to achieve change.'

- kept things fairly simple;
- good, practical, and easily transferred activities and techniques.

So how did this concept emerge? How did a simple course come about, which highlighted a much neglected area of mainstream international development work – the inclusion of disabled people? For already it has been delivered to more than 2,500 people working in at least 28 countries.

It's a development story in its own right. But there's one consistent theme. The course has consistently 'hit the mark' wherever it's been delivered. It's a tool to achieve change. Most importantly, it addresses negative attitudinal issues most of us carry when working with disabled people.

People who've received the training spread the word in areas relevant to their own contexts. We encourage non-disabled people to co-deliver the course with disabled people, who illuminate and bring important authenticity, experience and knowledge to training delivery.

Those who've been trained claim the course is providing World Vision staff and project partners with a common, simple conceptual language of understanding about development – which should include disabled people as equal participants, not passive welfare-beneficiaries.

First steps

THE CHALLENGES THAT LAY BEFORE US



Sue and Lorraine
photo: World Vision Ethiopia

I started as Disability Adviser at World Vision UK in September 2005. I'm a development worker who's moved into disability inclusion work as a result of professional and personal experiences over 15 years. I was quickly joined by Hitomi Honda as World Vision Global Centre Disability Adviser.

Our employment represented increased investment in World Vision (championed by World Vision UK at that time) into translating a policy commitment of inclusion of disabled children and adults in all World Vision's work into practice on the ground. This commitment was building on work started by World Vision UK-based staff Jane Betts and Jonathan Flower.

In late 2005 there were 26,000 staff globally in World Vision. That figure is now over 40,000. Commitment to disability inclusion was expressed across the world by a grassroots staff network, plus senior level support from some influential quarters – including World Vision UK Chief Executive Charles Badenoch.

Disability had just been designated as a cross-cutting theme in World Vision's new global monitoring and evaluation framework. All new National Office projects were urged to look at issues on disability as part of programme assessment processes.

The reality I found was different. Despite being supportive in principle, most staff across World Vision saw disability inclusion as an extra pressure. It was a burden for their already overcrowded work portfolios. They were working hard to do their best and deliver on their responsibilities. But they felt this issue was difficult, specialised, time-consuming and an additional 'sector'. It was perceived as a little overwhelming.

Many had great nervousness about approaching disability inclusion, partly for fear of doing or saying 'the wrong thing'. It also quickly became clear most didn't have a clear conceptual understanding of what was meant by 'disability inclusion'. I found significantly different viewpoints among a wide range of staff in the UK and National Offices on what this actually meant in practice.

Two specific discussions in autumn 2005 help illustrate the reasons for the course. A World Vision UK middle manager said he couldn't see how he would/should employ a disabled person, unless they could demonstrate their ability to carry out all tasks – including international travel requirements – as they stood.

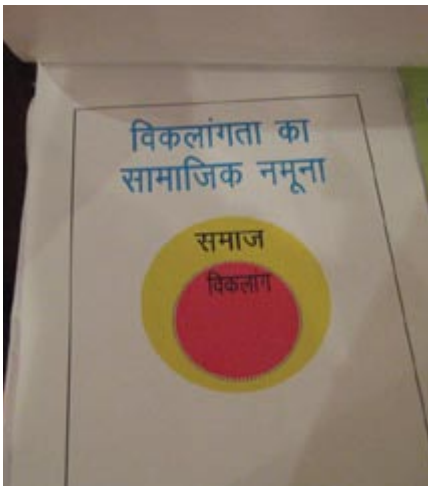
His bravery/brazenness was shocking. But it revealed a sentiment I suspected many quietly held, yet few would feel it acceptable to say out loud – partly as such discrimination is illegal under UK employment law! However, it helped uncover the need for more work in this area.

Hitomi was having similar conversations with others. The discussion with the African director – as described earlier in this section – also made me realise we did not have the capacity to have the same conversations with everyone in a partnership of nearly 30,000.

We needed to see significant change. But helping bring about meaningful transformation felt like an impossible task. I could clearly see that including disabled people was an extension of what World Vision already aspired to – inclusive development, especially for the most marginalised.

So a key challenge seemed to be to tackle staff attitudes as a prerequisite of confronting anything else. Otherwise, programming activities would have little meaningful impact. It seemed like an 'Everest-sized' mountain that we had to climb.

Then it struck me. Finding an effective way to communicate the core principles – that would equip staff to address attitudes, express principles and share them with others – could significantly help the agenda 'roll out' faster. It would be a ripple effect. The idea for a one-day training course gained momentum.



Social model diagram in Hindi
photo: H. Williams

Moving on

THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE COURSE'S DEVELOPMENT



Disability models in Swahili
photo: C. Donald

I am a non-disabled person. So for me, an important principle was that the course should be delivered by a disabled person. I decided to approach Action on Disability and Development (ADD) for support in designing the programme.

ADD had more than 20 years' experience in empowering Disabled People's Organisations across a range of development contexts in Africa and Asia. I asked Lorraine Wapling, then a Programme Co-ordinator at ADD, to design a course with me. Lorraine is an experienced development worker with a training/teaching background. She is also deaf. I produced a brief on what I wanted a one-day course to achieve:

- 'de-mystifying' people's fears about disability inclusive programming – people perceive it as difficult/specialised and, in some cases, not their job;
- a clear understanding of the three models of disability as an important foundation for realising why the social inclusion approach is important;
- fun and enjoyment – many people can feel daunted/deterred to attend training on disability issues as they perceive it to be a 'tough' subject;
- interaction, addressing the diverse range of learning 'styles' present in any training room as people have their own preferences;
- replicability – to enable participants to onward deliver the course;
- practical guidance on how to approach the effective inclusion of disability issues in development programming;
- the training room to be a disability-inclusive environment to let participants experience its benefits and so encourage them to onward deliver the course using the same principles;
- professional quality course to help push disability issues higher up World Vision's global programming agenda;
- attractive course that could be of interest and use in broader mainstream international NGO and government circles.

Most of the initial discussions were how to interpret this extensive and ambitious agenda in practice. We wanted to construct a 'flow' of activities that facilitated maximum attitude change in just a day – and in a language that would effectively 'speak' to experienced and busy programming staff.



Inclusive class in Cambodia
photo: L.Wapling

'I didn't want people holding back because of a fear of what is acceptable – or not – to say. It is extremely important to have complete honesty in the training room.'

I was very happy with the activities Lorraine developed after these extensive talks. However, I recognised what would be delivered was experimental so was unsure how it might be received. Lorraine had her own perspective.

'It's hard to remember how innovative the idea was,' said Lorraine, 'since I've now delivered the training successfully to so many different groups of people. But thinking back over the whole experience, I'd probably say at the time I didn't really appreciate how powerful this series of activities would be.'

'When Sue and I talked together about what was needed, many thoughts and options came to mind. We certainly wanted to focus on changing attitudes. I strongly felt this was the single most important barrier to the lack of take-up of disability inclusive programming by mainstream development agencies.'

At the time there was no international framework. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was still not 'on the books', as Lorraine put it. 'But I felt strongly disability was essentially being ignored as an issue,' she said, 'because most development practitioners had no personal experience of it. They still regarded it largely as a medical/rehabilitation issue.'

'What I wanted as the foundation of the course was the opportunity to challenge that mindset. I wanted to lead people through a process where they would come to experience issues relating to disability in a way they could relate to.'

Lorraine felt strongly that she didn't want to 'simply lecture' – but to give people the chance to question their own thoughts and beliefs. 'It would therefore be a transformational process,' she added, 'because it was attitudes I wanted to challenge. However, I had no idea whether it would work or not!'

Course activities partly drew on what had been published in the Oxfam/ADD (2003) *Disability, Equality and Human Rights* training manual. But careful structure and new activities were needed to work for World Vision UK programming staff.

Getting on the road

THE FIRST COURSE DELIVERY



The course was first delivered to 17 World Vision UK programming staff in an unassuming venue on the outskirts of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, England.

Lorraine can still remember running that first workshop. 'It was nerve wracking,' she said. 'There were so many reasons why people might reject what I was asking them to consider – seeing disabled people as legitimate, "regular" participants of their programming rather than occasional beneficiary "targets".'

'Why should people suddenly change now? How would people react when I revealed the possibility that they had consistently excluded people because of their own prejudices and preconceptions? This wasn't going to be easy.'



'There were a number of experienced development professionals in the room. I was expecting them to take part in a whole range of interactive activities. I wasn't giving them a fact-filled PowerPoint enhanced seminar.' Lorraine realised somehow she was going to have to persuade her audience that the traditional development approach might not be the best way of doing things. 'Would I even be taken seriously?' she asked.

But things went well from the first activity. 'Guessing Game was the perfect choice for a warm-up exercise,' said Lorraine. 'Not only did it set the tone for rest of the day – that this was going to be interactive, fun and exploratory – but also it ensured people got talking.'

'I found the models activity very easy to manage. It flowed perfectly from Guessing Game. Asking people to think about words associated with disability did produce some quite disturbing answers for me as a disabled person. But the purpose had been achieved.'

'I didn't want people holding back because of a fear of what is acceptable – or not – to say. It is extremely important to have complete honesty in the training room. The placing of their words under the appropriate model heading certainly provoked strong discussion and, as I had hoped, helped me to assess how well people had grasped the concepts.'

First training course – June 2006
photos: S. Coe

'The most dramatic turning point... was the impact of the Game of Life.'

Probably the most dramatic turning point for Lorraine was the impact of the Game Of Life. 'I had no idea this would prove to be such a popular and powerful activity,' she said. 'I was nervous about asking people to volunteer as "role models" and wasn't sure the group would fully engage with this activity.'

'I felt quite strongly the message it was designed to show was a really important one. I was just unsure whether this was the right medium for delivering something so serious. Once again, though, my fears were dispelled. Almost immediately people began to engage with the scenario.'

'People were more than happy to volunteer. The ensuing "arguments" and discussions proved to be hugely important. The shock among participants at the end of the exercise was palpable. People genuinely began to take a long hard look at how development contributes to exclusion. I have seen this reaction hundreds of times since in response to this activity.'

That first workshop gave her a great deal of confidence. 'Experienced development professionals were willing to engage in an interactive workshop and question what they'd been doing,' said Lorraine. 'It was possible to bring about a change in attitudes in just one day.'

'It was possible to bring about a change in attitudes in just one day.'

'It was never designed as a workshop on how to completely mainstream disability. That's a much bigger issue. It was mainly to challenge how people perceived disability in development. It worked. That then enables them to start reinterpreting their work, but with a new understanding and inclusive attitude towards disabled people.' Lorraine found the activities and timings were just right, and has varied things little since. 'It still works as it did on that first delivery,' she concluded.

Fellow travellers

HOW 'TRAVELLING TOGETHER' HAS BEEN ADOPTED AND APPLIED



Self-help group meeting in Cambodia

The most immediate change I noticed was the discussions I subsequently had with the people who had attended – all programming staff. Those talks were more productive and creative. We moved forward faster on thinking about how to promote disability inclusion to our link World Vision National Offices.

I suddenly felt I had allies rather than 'lobby targets'. I no longer needed to explain or justify the social model approach. Programme Officers took the initiative and started to deliver parts – or all – of the course on their visits overseas.



Lorraine with Maasai men in Tanzania
photos: L.Wapling

Sometimes they only even 'checked in' with me on what happened after the event! The training fitted well with World Vision's decision to make disability one of six key 'cross-cutting' themes. Feedback said the training course had been practical and useful. Most importantly, we heard it was being replicated by programmes staff.

It also came out well in a survey of World Vision UK programme staff in December 2006. Of 25 training courses delivered during 2005/6, ours had been the most equally enjoyed – with two others – and had been top ranked for 'being the most used course'. Most people had used the course or contents since attending.

So how has *Travelling together* been used in different contexts? There are quite a few stories to share about that. Some are told here. For the sake of not making this part of the book a lengthy novel in itself, I'm happy to share others on request.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is the second largest National Office in the World Vision Global Partnership, and the largest in Africa. Huge work was invested by the advocacy staff in Ethiopia to ensure all participants – 102 from Ethiopia and 12 from 6 other countries, all in significant positions of responsibility – made it to the training organised in three different groups. In such a large and diverse country, this was an achievement in itself. Once the course started, the significance was the high retention rate. All people returned from their breaks on time – and didn't disappear from the training room during the day (I was informed this was not generally the case!).



Ethiopia training



the group discuss "what is disability"

"You have shown us what we ourselves have neglected, thank you all"
participant in Ethiopia



the group participate in the "Game of Life" activity

"The Game of Life was a wake up call for all of us to see the reality on the ground for disabled people and it left a mark on everybody's mind"

"The method forced us to look into ourselves and look for the solution in ourselves."

Lydia Mesfin, World Vision Ethiopia Advocacy Manager

The course was subsequently onward delivered to over 700 more people in Ethiopia – World Vision staff, partners, disabled people and government staff across all regions of operation. The course was also delivered to 55 Members of Parliament as part of a three-day inclusion effort, and 84 trainees as a pre-cursor to WATSAN inclusion training. All Ethiopian courses have been delivered with disabled people from their national disability movement.



Group work



Lorraine and Sue explaining models

"The material developed is really helpful, practical and relevant to the situation of Ethiopia. I appreciate the content and the people who worked on it."

Mr Sahilu Kassahun, President, Ethiopian Federation of National Associations of Persons with Disabilities



India training - the wall

photos: H. Williams

"Our eyes were opened to being sensitive regarding issues related to disability"
participant in Chennai, India

"I'll start to talk about disability in all my activity with community people"
participant in Delhi workshop

INDIA

Having heard of what happened in Ethiopia, the National Director of India, Jayakumar Christian, invited Lorraine to bring the course to his country. India is the largest National Office in the World Vision family, so this was a very significant invitation. The course was delivered to 16 senior staff at the Head office in Chennai, and 50 project staff working across a range of projects in the country. The training was positively received with such comments as:

- liked the Game of Life very much;
- the social model was excellent;
- all the sessions were very lively;
- sessions were simple and powerful;
- the course covered disability very simply and effectively;
- we never felt tired;
- disability is all about our attitude – I will change in this area.

Since the course was delivered, plans and activities have developed both in the Chennai Head Office and across programming work in the northern part of India. Other partners have been invited to train, and the course extended for WV India's needs, with staff feeling confident to approach and select local partners that work on social model principles.



Game of Life - Chennai senior management team

UGANDA

World Vision Uganda had already started the process of working on disability inclusion guidelines when two staff from their advocacy department attended the training in Ethiopia. It significantly helped their understanding of the core issues and in moving forward on the inclusion guidelines. They formed a committee with a range of Disabled People's Organisations to help that journey.

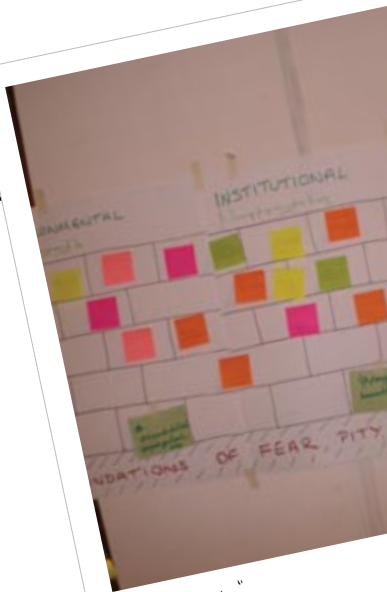
The one-day training course formed part of the publication, along with a range of information on the situation in Uganda provided by different committee members. More than 60 people attended the launch event – including Government, media, DPO representatives and NGOs.

Subsequently, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development have used the training and guidelines for their own purposes at field level. The next stage is to develop a network of trainers among the DPO committee to deliver the course to a range of agencies in Uganda.



A copy of the WV Uganda training manual presented by Hon Ndeeki Alex (right) - Member of Parliament and of UNAD (Uganda National Association of the Deaf)

Photo: WV Uganda



'the wall'



Suren

photo: S. Coe

ARMENIA

Suren Maghakyan is a disabled man who runs an NGO in Stepanavan, northern Armenia. He has been delivering disability awareness

training for a number of years. He took part in the course when it was delivered to programming staff at World Vision Armenia's offices at Yerevan. The trainer had initially learned about the course when it was delivered the previous year in Angola, by a trainer who attended the first training course in the UK (demonstrating itself the 'onward training' methodology built into its design!). *Travelling together* had an impact on Suren in two ways:

- his perception of himself as a disabled person – he found the training very empowering and realised the social model of disability reflected and expressed his own situation;
- the delivery of his own training – he translated all the handouts into Armenian, and abandoned his course in favour of this one. He has now delivered the course in a range of contexts, including bilateral government donor staff and school children – currently to over 200 people.

photos: S. Kambarami



Participants in Armenia training

'We identified ways of inclusion of disabled persons into programming and therefore into society'
trainee in Armenia

'We became familiar with community stereotypes and new opportunities of collaboration with disabled people'
Training participants - Programme managers and disabled people

UK DFID GOVERNMENT STAFF

Travelling together has also been delivered in full to two overseas DFID offices – Nigeria and Malawi. Parts of the course have been used during seminars and discussions with DFID UK advisers on a number of different occasions. Having the support and participation of office chiefs and senior staff alongside more junior ones made quite an impact. It enabled everyone to discuss disability using the same concepts, but also brought all the staff together in ways not commonly experienced by DFID.

It enabled the cross-cutting nature of the discussions to come through, and helped locally appointed staff to talk more about some key cultural issues affecting development. Since the training, some evidence of disability-sensitive programming has begun to emerge – and interest is growing from other countries where DFID has in-country presence.



Participants in Malawi DFID office training

photo: L. Wapling



BOND DDG event, Game of Life.



BOND DDG group speakers, all disabled people except Charles Badenoch.

photos: BOND Disability and Development Group

SENIOR STAFF FROM THE UK'S BIGGEST INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

On 3rd December 2007, on the International Day of Disabled Persons, the UK inter-agency BOND Disability and Development Group organised an event targeted at senior management in UK international NGOs and funders. More than 50 people attended. The event featured platform speeches from disabled people, an MP, DFID representative and World Vision UK's Chief Executive Charles Badenoch.

Part of the event was a training session comprising of Guessing Game and Game Of Life. Although unusual to deliver training activities in a plenary speech-led event, the 'taster' sessions had impact and reinforced the points made in the speeches. One international NGO Operations Director used the information immediately to review the annual planning process of his organisation.

As a direct result of the BOND DDG event, an invitation came to present a slot on disability inclusion to UK Disaster Emergency Committee trustees meeting several months later. The significance of this invitation was that the DEC trustees mainly comprise the Chief Executives of the 12 member agencies – who largely represent the biggest international development organisations in the UK. At the end of the session the trustees acknowledged its impact, with two of them pledging immediately to examine the implications of disability inclusion for their organisations.

TANZANIA – MAASAI COMMUNITY

Lorraine led some basic disability awareness training as part of a general community needs assessment process with a Maasai community of approximately 200 people in the Tanga region of Tanzania. 'During our initial village visits,' she said, 'we noticed a number of disabled people and wondered how to encourage the community to include them more in decision-making forums.'

'I chose to run Game Of Life – largely because we were deep in the bush and had no access at all to any paper or pens. But I also picked that activity because it's such a quick and visually powerful way of reminding groups of people about how excluded disabled people can be. As always, it proved to be a lot of fun.'

'It was particularly interesting and encouraging to see both the men and the women fully engaged and participating together. In all other discussions we had only ever encountered groups of men or women. It enabled us to talk openly about disability and highlighted some of the inequalities disabled people face. It was certainly a talking point long after we left!'



Maasai community training

photos: B. Downie

Road ahead

WILL YOU JOIN US ON THE JOURNEY?



Sue Coe and Lorraine Wapling

We celebrate all of these successes. But however happy people have been about *Travelling together*, it's not a 'miracle' fix-all. Once it's been delivered, disability inclusion won't 'magically' happen. Policy development, office champions, senior level commitment – all of these things are needed.

What this course aims to do is tackle attitudinal barriers in a direct but non-threatening way – so people can draw on their own professional and personal experiences and understand why disability inclusion is a key development issue. Essentially it's an extension of what they already are – or should be – doing.

It's simple. Most estimates place disabled people as 10-20 per cent of any population group. How can such a large number of people be ignored by any development agency – including World Vision – if we're taking our agendas seriously? For we all need to travel together on the main road of development.

If you use this training course in your work, Lorraine and I very much encourage you to share your experiences with us – we'd be delighted to hear about them, both good and challenging.