Excuses excuses

THE INCLUSIVE BUS COMPANY   THE INCLUSIVE BUS CO

DESTINATION

WHY DEVELOPMENT
AGENCIES STILL EXCLUDE

ONE WAY ONLY — NO RETURN   ONE WAY ONLY — NO

TIME
60 Minutes

MATERIALS
- **Handout 4**
on disability (or
make a display of
disability statistics);

- **Handout 5**
on common myths
around disability
inclusion;

- **Handout 6**
about disability
organisations
and DPOs;

- prepared questions
(given in step 1)
written on
flip chart paper;

- flip chart paper
and marker pens
for each group.

Why are disabled people excluded from most mainstream programmes? That's the core question. And it's tackled head-on in this session.

Even though agencies may focus on different areas – from child-centred development to micro-finance – many of the reasons given for not considering disabled people's needs are remarkably similar. These statements are issued by organisations that could easily be including disabled people.

Encourage the group to confront these issues in as non-threatening a way as possible. Try to keep discussions as fun as you can to avoid people becoming defensive. You're not judging the work that's happened. But you do want to help the group understand why disabled people have been excluded for so long.

METHOD

1   Ask the whole group the following questions:
   - do you actively include disabled people (or measure their participation) in your development programmes?
   - If not, why don't you actively include disabled people in your development programmes?

The key part of these questions is the word **'actively'**. This should be stressed when you pose the questions. Encourage people to be honest about their answers – this will give them the best opportunity to analyse the issue.

2   Assuming the group does not actively include disabled people, list down all the reasons people give onto flip chart paper. Possible answers will include – it's expensive; time-consuming; we don't have the experience; we don't know how to; why should we, this is one more marginal group amid many others; it's not practical in our type of work; etc.

3   Explain the most likely common misconceptions – and their responses – given overleaf (see **Handout 5 – Common myths about inclusion** for further analysis):

you will need groups to record their reasons for excluding disabled people and how they can be addressed on flip charts

'We need to sort out the problems of "normal" people first'.

'It's not cost effective'.

'There aren't many disabled people here, so it's not an issue'.

'We don't "do" disability'.

'We don't have the skills'.

'Let's create a special programme'.

4 **Divide participants into groups of four to six.** Give each group a selection of the excuses they've come up with. Ask them either to turn them into positive statements about how the organisation is working with disabled people – or develop a reply refuting the statement. They need to imagine they're facing people who are coming up with all these reasons why they're not going to include disabled people. Their job is to reassure them that inclusion is good development practice – and this will improve the effectiveness of the programme as a whole.

5 **Ask the groups to present a selection of their favourite responses to the rest of the participants.** They can do this in whatever format they choose. Some groups might like to illustrate their ideas with pictures, perform a short dialogue highlighting the debate or simply describe their ideas.

MOTIVE

Uncovering barriers as to why disabled people are not routinely included is the first most important step to getting over their exclusion. They're not included because there are mechanisms preventing that. Identifying what those mechanisms are is central to developing a more inclusive programme.

By asking people to defend excuses in a light-hearted way, you'll be providing them with insights into their own perceptions – and helping prepare them for how others might react to their plans for disability inclusion.