



Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY - MARCH 2004

THE BANK

Should Think Of The Disabled

WHAT IS

SHELTERED WORKSHOP



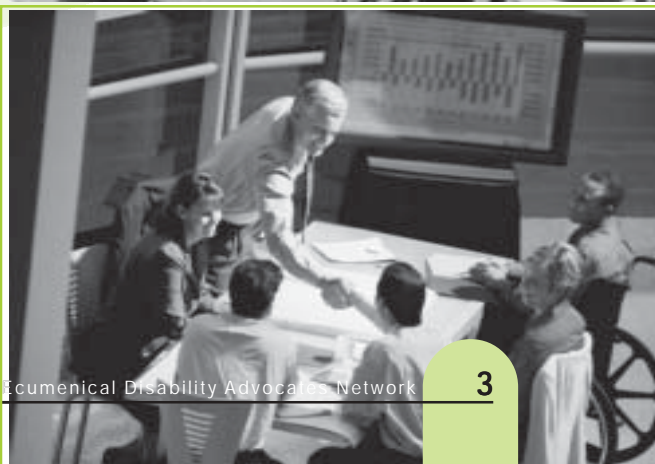
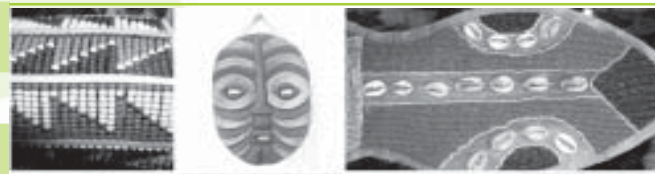
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- ▶ Churches urged to make their buildings accessible
- ▶ Creativity and Innovations a Kenyan Story
- ▶ Romanian bible complete in braille!



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Ecumenical agencies, Disability and Development

We have devoted this issue of our Newsletter on disability and development. The main focus is on concerns on the alleviation of poverty among persons with disabilities.

Although much more can and should be done in this respect, there are a lot of efforts from the secular society including governmental and intergovernmental development agencies in the recent past. One question that arises amidst all this is where the leadership and the voice of the Church and the ecumenical movement is. I have been told by a number of ecumenical development agencies that they have left disability work to the more specialized agencies in that field. We seem to be going back to the old notion that disability work is for special agencies and certain professionally trained personnel only. This is reminiscent of the early days where persons with disabilities were institutionalized in the hands of a few isolated people considered specially trained who provided them with sub-standard education and training. Such education and training relegated them into marginalization in open job market and hence made the majority of them to remain in utter poverty despite the psychological satisfaction of these service providers that they had educated and trained these people. The churches were no exception in this practice. It was so clear that the education and training that they received was sub-standard to the extent that even the agencies and churches that provided these services rarely had



Editor: Sam Kabue

anything in their establishment that their trainees could do. It was this trend that led to the recognition that persons with disabilities do not have their own world of work different from that of the rest of the society and as such, they should not be subjected to their own standards of achievement, which are different from the rest of the society.

The last EDAN global meeting in Netherlands last October noted with concern that there seem to be a notable trend for the churches and their development agencies to retrogress in their commitment to disability work. It was noted that although the church was the pioneer in organized disability work, recent developments have indicated that disability is the easiest target for financial cuts as funds get less and less. For instance, there are very few ecumenical organizations and agencies that still maintain disability desks. One would expect that this is in line with the integration and full inclusion that persons with disabilities have been advocating for but what we see is the eradication of this aspect of work with no alternative. EDAN has approached a number of the ecumenical development agencies for collaboration but a common answer is that they do not have disability as their identified priority. This raises a fundamental



question as to what disability in that context is understood to be. Persons with disabilities are first and foremost people. Their human needs of food shelter and clothing are no different from those of the rest of the society. Development is principally about these basic needs. To argue that disability is not anyone's priority is, without realizing to say that we do not care about the part of the society that live with disabilities. What we need to understand is that whether our priority is health, human rights, peace and reconciliation, socio-economic development or

EDAN's main message has been to have the church ensure quality inclusion, full participation and active involvement of persons with disabilities



democratization process, persons with disabilities are a part of the society within the environment in which these concerns are considered a priority. They are equally if not worse off in terms of how they are affected by the absence of the services provided under these priorities.

Disability as a development concern that needed consideration was raised in a recent donor consultation meeting in one of the Regional ecumenical organization where most of the agencies felt that they were caught off guard. The conclusion in the meeting was that this issue had not been factored in the various planning documents presented by the organization. Consequently, This concern would have to wait for another planning cycle before it could be given any attention. One may want to know why in the first place this concern did not feature in these planning documents and whether this will not be the case even in the next planning cycle.

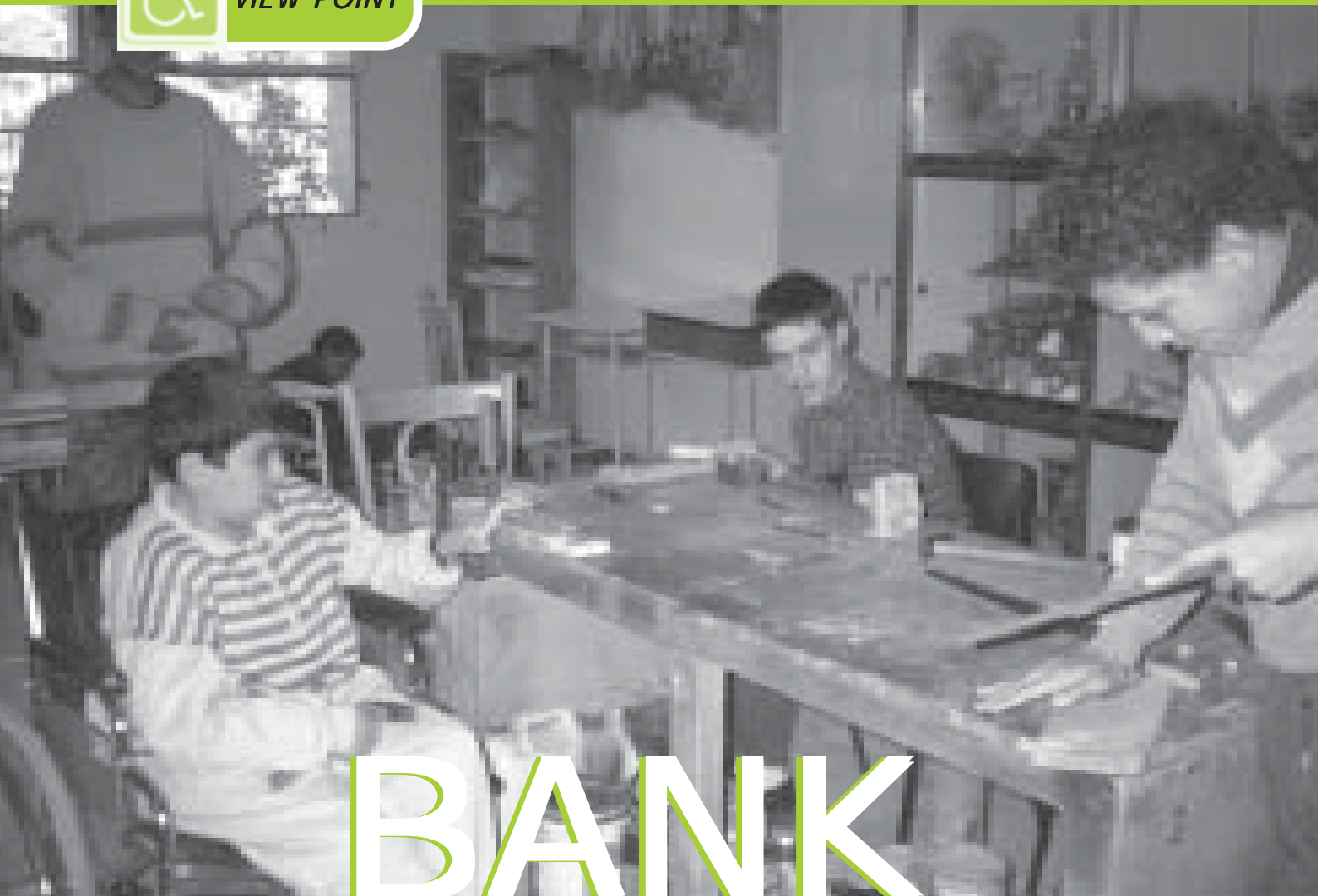
We need to go back to the basics on this seeming trend. EDAN's main message has been to have the

church ensure quality inclusion, full participation and active involvement of persons with disabilities in their spiritual, social, development and political life. If this was to happen, there will be no omission of their concerns in planning documents, as was the case in the organization cited above. There will also be no need for special HIV/AIDS programmes for persons with disabilities because their needs would be planned for within the general plans. This is important when you consider that there is no HIV/

AIDS for persons with disabilities and that of the rest of the society. Equally, persons with disabilities will be planned for in terms of poverty alleviation as we do the same for the rest of the society because poverty affects persons with disabilities in the same way as the rest of the members of the society. Inclusion will ensure that persons with disabilities are involved in peace building processes, as quite often their

disabilities are the true mark of the consequences of wars and violence. Development agencies will no longer use the excuse of leaving disability concerns to specialized agencies since these concerns are the same ones they are addressing elsewhere.

One may rightly argue that if this be the case, organizations like EDAN and other disability organizations have no place. This is not the case as yet. Our structures remain very rigid in that accommodating persons with disabilities at decision making levels still require a lot of sensitization and advocacy. Persons with disabilities themselves have been socially trodden down so long that they will need re-training to fit into these structures even if doors will be open for them to participate. Thus awareness and advocacy either way will remain necessary. Organizations like EDAN and others instituted by persons with disabilities are the best suited whistle blowers. Their structures will need to be maintained as part of the global development agenda. ■



BANK

SHOULD THINK OF THE DISABLED

By Phitalis Were Masakhwe

World-wide poverty has reached crisis proportions, says World Bank President James D Wolfensohn, in a report, Global Economic Prospects 2004.

It is estimated that about 1.1 billion people are living on less than US\$1 per day and about 2.7 billion people continue to live on less than US\$2 per day, majority of them in Africa. Wolfensohn asserts that the world cannot achieve stability and peace if the current poverty trends are not halted. He wants development partners to recommit themselves to fighting poverty and meeting the millennium development goals in 2004.

He says poverty is the underlying cause of most world crises citing the problems in the Middle East, Latin America and South Asia. Another heart breaking story that I have read is attributed to Carol Bellamy, the Executive Director of Unicef. In her new year message, she called for renewed attention to the immediate needs of children in the developing countries.

She named five top concerns for children in 2004 as child survival, the effects of HIV/Aids, children caught in war, exploitation and insufficient investment.

She said: "Together, they represent a global imperative to do more for children in 2004." Nearly 11 million children die before their fifth birthday each year and tens of millions more are left with physical and/or mental disabilities or learning impairment "solely because their caregivers lack the essentials needed for children to survive. Measles, malaria and diarrhea are three of the biggest killers, yet all are preventable or treatable. Poverty affects differently on these people.

It is amazing that while the UN and its specialised agencies like World Bank produce State of the World Reports, in various sectors, similar annual reports on State of the World Disability have not been



forthcoming. How does this help global and national reflection and planning on disability and the concerns of the disabled people? Can the World Bank set a precedent on this?

Back to the World Bank Global Partnership on Disability and Development —what is it? What does it promise? Will it make a difference or is it “just another” Bretton Woods institutions’ initiative? What are the disabled persons and organisations thinking about this?

The idea of global partnership on disability and

If there is any institution that must adopt disability as a tool of planning analysis, then that is the World Bank.



development was muted within the World Bank, with the aim of “making a real contribution to ensuring the integration of concerns of disabled people in the international development.

Its objectives include identifying good practice in policy and legislation, promoting and disseminating them; supporting the creation and maintenance of a global communication network on disability and development. The World Bank has so far appointed a disability advisor, Judy Heinemann, who is herself physically impaired and is based in Washington DC. Her work includes the co-ordination of the initiative. Ever since the initiative was made, a series of consultative meetings with stakeholders have been held. They include the Helsinki meeting in Finland, the Durban South African meeting which I attended and another in Washington. These meetings addressed some of these pertinent issues. But the World Bank must know certain bitter truths about disabled people. That in every six absolutely poor people in the world today, one has some form of disability. That the current development planning,

whether global or national, is exclusive. That the current international investment in disability or the ratio of development assistance that goes to this sector is negligible. That whether you look at the PRSPs or millennium development goals, disability and the concerns of disabled people are missing.

That it is not enough just to have a disability advisor or desk in Washington DC; that the World Bank needs to do more in the provision of resources for this sector. They need to come up with more model projects on disability and development. And that if there is any institution that must adopt disability as a tool of planning analysis, then that is the World Bank. And nowhere is the situation of the disabled wanting than in Africa.

The World Bank and other United Nations specialized agencies should have regional and country disability advisors in Africa. Disabled people are tired of sweet words. Their patience is wearing thin. The disabled

want pragmatic solutions to their ever-increasing problems.

They want to be included in meaningful development dialogue. This should be at both national and international levels. They want to participate as equal partners in world-wide wealth creation and the sharing of the same. They want to be part and parcel of the global efforts and initiatives aimed at poverty eradication, or is it alleviation?

They want their groups and organisations to be strong and robust. Strong enough to oil and lubricate their national and international advocacy and voice. Their continued worsening socio-economic status and marginalisation betrays your talk of poverty eradication. They want an end to development apartheid. Indeed, the World Bank and other development partners can, and should lead the world in reversing this situation. They can do more to bring about development parity and equity. ■

■ ***The writer is a development and disability commentator***



ARE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES A LOST COURSE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

By Samuel Kabue



The prioritization of resource allocation in developing countries remains a major challenge to disability concerns, which have rarely been considered a tool for planning.

The prioritization of resource allocation in developing countries remains a major challenge to disability concerns, which have rarely been considered a tool for planning. Here in Africa, wars, civil strife, hunger, epidemics, poor environmental health and limited service provision take the center stage when it comes to resource allocation. Stigma and discrimination amidst all these other woes serve to relegate persons with disabilities to marginalization and dependency.

With conditions as here above outlined, poverty is a major concern in nearly all the developing countries.


However, it is normally addressed within the perspectives of the outsiders rather than through the real experiences of the people. These outsiders as epitomized by the Brettonwood institutions have their own motives for addressing the subject, which in many cases are more capitalistic in nature rather than humanitarian. Imperialistic motives can never be ruled out of the conditionalities placed in the name of poverty reduction by these institutions. Poverty reduction is seen in terms of maximizing profitability as evident through ability to pay external debts. The poverty reduction goal widely published through the preparation of the poverty reduction strategy papers

in many of the African countries in the recent past could be viewed in this light.

Here in Kenya, the mobilization to contribute to the preparation of these blue prints reached out to persons with disabilities through their National Umbrella organization the United Disabled Persons of Kenya (UDPK). This participation through the various specially organized for a which brought persons with disabilities from all sorts of backgrounds together yielded a lot of important information which was passed on to the coordinators of the programme. A careful reading of the final papers indicated a lot of editorial on these ideas living only a mention of disability as part of a wider marginalized group. The disability movement has heard nothing about the outcome of these blue prints since the meetings that were called to ratify their contents nearly two years ago. If these blue prints have made any impact, this has not been directly experienced by persons with disabilities in this country.


Poverty reduction strategies are considered good only if they can lead to gains that can be repatriated to the foreign creditors but not necessarily to improve a people's standard of living. In this understanding, poverty reduction resources are place in the perceived best able hands. Persons with disabilities are traditionally not perceived in terms of productivity and profit maximization. Instead, they are seen in terms of charity and therefore on the receiving end. This is why the popular poverty reduction programmes have viewed persons with disabilities as liabilities as a result of which their programmes are left in to the hands of charity rather than integrating them into development programmes.

We cannot throw the towel and say all is lost, the development of strong disability lobby organizations have made some strides in influencing development partners towards integration and active participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of the social life. The European Union and the United States



agency for Development (USAID) have, for instance, due to these efforts introduced clauses in their policies to the effects that their aid recipients should not discriminate against persons with disabilities. Certainly, this is not enough. In any case, many of the people with disabilities do not know about such clauses and are therefore not able to claim their rights. Even where they are aware of these provisions, the implementers of these policies give these clauses the interpretations, which fit their understanding and ease of work. In most cases, these clauses are ignored all together.

The main solution to this problem of marginalization lies in stronger and widespread policies, which are clear and not subject to different interpretations. Such policies will need to emphasize the departure from the ethos of charity to full and active participation. Capacity building in terms of rehabilitation, education, training and skills development on the part of individual persons with disabilities is inevitable in both changing attitudes and as prerequisite to full participation. Self-reliance on the part of the developing countries will be another step in ensuring that development goals are not set externally with conditions that are profit motivated rather than the consideration of the worth of all human beings irrespective of their real or perceived ability to contribute to development. Most important, there is need for a strong disability movement capable of influencing policies at International and local levels. Such a movement should also be capable of playing the role of a watchdog to the implementation of these policies.

(This article has also been carried by the DCDD Nr 7 February 2004) 



Creativity & Innovations

– A Kenyan Story

by Hubert Selfert

There are approx. 600 million people with disabilities in the world, of whom 380 million are of working age and 80% live in developing countries, predominantly in rural areas.

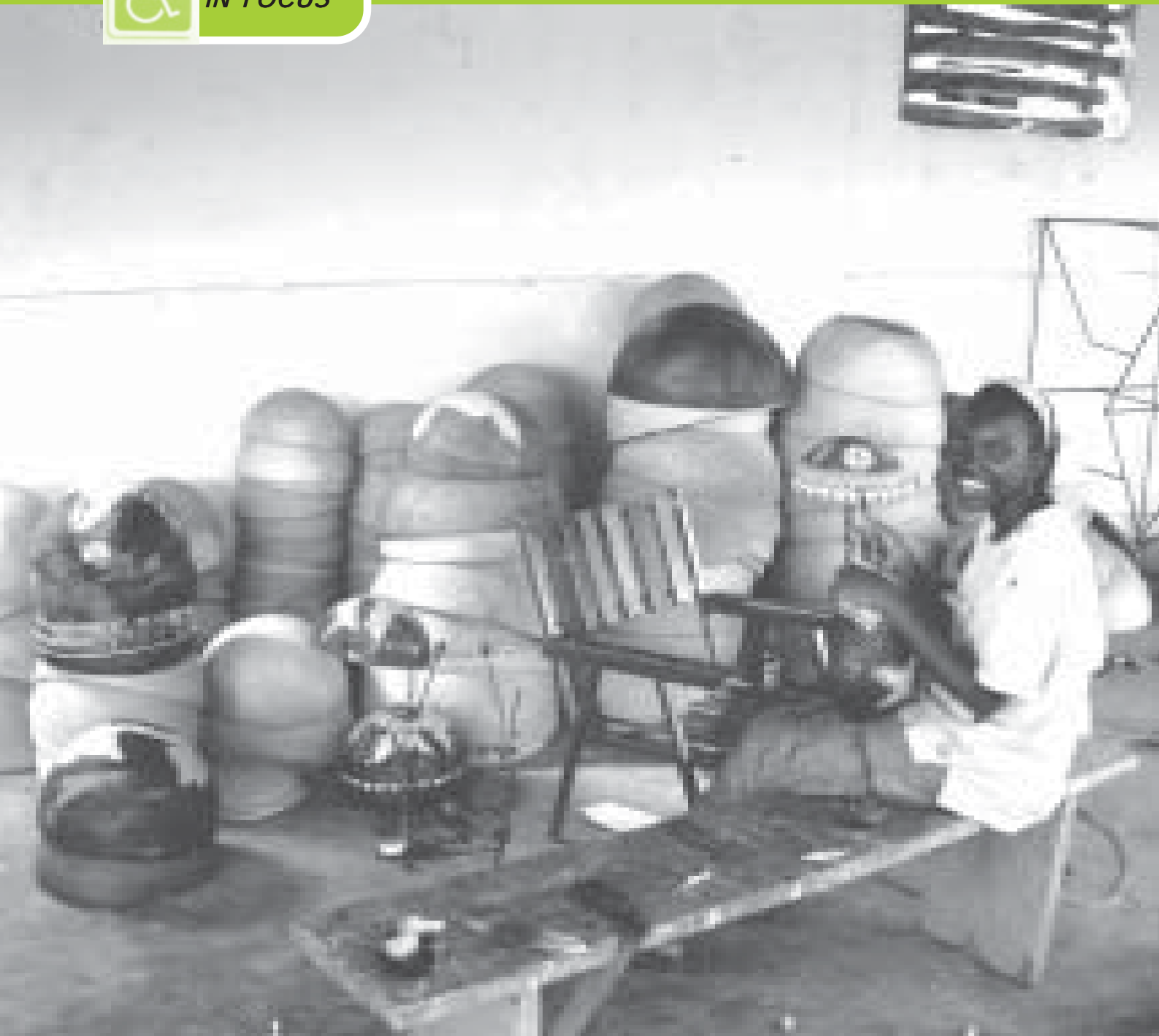
Unemployment among PWDs is significantly higher than in the workforce as a whole – at least double the rate of non-disabled persons – in some countries as high as 80%. People with disabilities are likely to be in low paid jobs and in developing countries most of them work in the informal sector.

The overall result is that PWDs stay at the bottom of the income distribution in every country in the world. In developing countries they are usually condemned to live in extreme poverty, dependence and social exclusion.

Social, cultural and economic prejudices, stigmatization and discrimination against PWDs are still deeply entrenched in most African societies.

Subsequently the vast majority of challenged people have been hindered from enjoying their human rights and from fully participating as equal citizens in the life of the nation particularly on the economic front.

In most developed countries disability has been mainstreamed and included in the development strategies and policies. Many countries have legal provision for employers to fill a quota of available jobs with PWDs (Germany 6%). There are tax benefits and government support for those corporations who employ persons with disabilities, which is a considerable incentive. For those people who cannot be absorbed, there exists a variety of “Sheltered Workshops” which provide opportunities to people not considered employable due to the severity of their disability. (630 in Germany)



THE KENYAN SCENARIO

PWDs in Kenya represent the critical segment of the marginalized population which experiences particular challenges in securing quality education, vocational training, and access to institutions of higher learning, employment or other means of earning a decent livelihood.

PWDs are important to this nation as consumers, taxpayers and decision makers yet they have been

largely absent from the sphere of economic development.

Organizations representing people with disabilities in Kenya have achieved a degree of success in lobbying for human rights and the passing of respective legislation against discrimination. The recent signing of the "Persons with Disability Bill" is without doubt the most significant achievement in



the history of the disability movement in this country. It offers enormous opportunities for all stakeholders to take a giant leap ahead in achieving equality and economic empowerment of people who have lived in the shadow of society for too long. Kenya can now count itself as one of the countries with the most progressive laws for PWDs in the world and might be second only to South Africa.

The "Persons with Disability Bill" requires employers to fill 5 % of their positions with PWDs. They will also be able to deduct 25% of the salaries they pay to

Kenya also adopted the Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (1999-2009) which was adopted in February 2002 .

Let us take a minute to look at the achievements made so far in Kenya:

In the early 70^s the Kenyan Government set up 8 Vocational rehabilitation Centers – one in each province and the Industrial Rehabilitation Centre in Nairobi. Hundreds of PWDs received quality training in various trades which enabled many of them to secure jobs within Government and the private sector – my Secretary in Mombasa and two of our staff in Nairobi being among them.

An attempt by ILO in the early 90's on promotion of self-employment through training and a commercially backed loan scheme failed miserably due to poor follow up.



However during the last decade the quality of training declined due to under funding and today most of these centers have a low enrolment. Trainees no longer receive tools and have therefore limited opportunities for self-employment after graduation.

PWDs from their taxes, which is a considerable incentive. This provision should stimulate employers to offer preferential employment opportunities to PWDs.

Kenya ratified the ILO convention No. 159 concerning "Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons" of 1983 which provides a specific framework to promote training and employment opportunities for disabled persons.

This convention is built on the conviction that work is a fundamental element of personal fulfillment, social integration and recognition; and work of decent quality is the most effective means of escaping the viscous circle of marginalization, poverty and social exclusion. People with disability are frequently trapped in this vicious circle and positive action is needed in breaking out of it. Barriers which disabled people face in getting jobs and taking their place in society can and should be overcome through a variety of policy measures, regulations, programmes and services.

An attempt by ILO in the early 90^s on promotion of self-employment through training and a commercially backed loan scheme failed miserably due to poor follow up.

PWDs in Kenya particularly in rural and slum areas have largely been condemned to begging or earning a meager living through petty trades or simply depend on support from their families.

International donor interventions have focused more on medical rehabilitation, education and advocacy and have largely neglected the aspect of economic empowerment. Sporadic attempts by groups of PWDs to establish self help groups in this area have had limited success and a negligible impact considering the magnitude of the problem .

Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya as one of the main players in the field of rehabilitation of PWDs was established in 1958 and started focusing on the economics of disability and development in the early 70s.

A furniture workshop was established in 1971 in



women and men with disabilities through farming and production of handicrafts. The project was handed over to APDK in 1987 after it faced imminent collapse due to mismanagement.

After restructuring the project the number of employees grew rapidly from 26 employees in 1987 to 240 employees in 1993. This success was achieved as a result of development of attractive crafts such as jewellery, textiles, carvings and leather products, which found ready buyers overseas and on the tourist market.

Likoni, which offered vocational training and sheltered employment. Currently the Centre trains 12 PWDs in carpentry annually and employs 35 disabled carpenters in the production of high quality furniture. Due to professional management, the project has been able to penetrate the commercial market and compete successfully with private workshop. The furniture are of attractive design with excellent finish and are sold at competitive prices. Many high-class hotels and reputable companies are counted among their customers.

The high standard of the products, which are sold through a retail shop and direct marketing have greatly contributed towards the elimination of prejudices against PWDs. Customers and the general public no longer perceive PWDs as people who lack abilities but have recognized that if given opportunities, they can excel in any trade and acquire skills which are marketable. Subsequently most of the former trainees have secured employment in the private sector, informal sector or are now self-employed.

The Bombolulu Workshops for the Handicapped was established in 1969 by an independent body with the aim of providing training and employment to

The project became profitable and was able to invest in decent housing for its workers, introduced social benefits and established its own Nursery School and Clinic. A Cultural Centre was developed in 1992 with the aim of attracting more tourists.

As a result of a decline in tourism and world wide recession, the project however became a deficit operation and had to offer voluntary early retirement to 60 workers by 1998. This development gave birth to the "FAIDA Micro Financing Programme, which offers training and loans to PWDs who were interested in venturing into small scale businesses.

The Bombolulu project developed into a high profile project, which earned acclaim both locally and internationally due its success and uniqueness. The crafts and in particularly the fashion shows staged in tourist hotels and at other national events, catapulted the project into the media limelight. This generated much interest in disability issues among visitors, which included Presidents and other dignitaries. The visitors and the general public experienced first hand that products made by PWDs can successfully compete on international markets.

The greatest achievement of Bombolulu is not the



creation of training and jobs but the fact that society has changed its negative perception towards PWDs and has created local and international awareness on the potential physically challenged people have.

While these two projects might be considered as "successful" by international standards, it needs to be realized that such ventures run high risks of failure if not professionally managed. They require an innovative but commercial approach, market driven designs and product developments in line with fashion trends and aggressive marketing while

It is our hope that the Government, local authorities and the private sector will support affirmative action, which will increase the opportunities for PWDs



keeping costs at a competitive level. Such projects are exposed to the same external market forces as any private enterprise and have to compete on an increasingly demanding world market.

Sheltered workshops are no longer considered as a solution to the problem of high unemployment among PWDs and can only benefit a small number of them. With the changing trend towards Community Based Rehabilitation with a greater impact, APDK decided to establish Micro Financing Programmes in 1997.

The Coast Branch established the FAIDA programme six years ago and has so far assisted clients to venture into small-scale business with a success rate of over 80%. (More details Consileta)

While the Mombasa programme has been based on individual support, a similar programme initiated in the Mukuru slum in Nairobi in 2002, has used the group system.

Last year we initiated a programme in Kisii which has so far registered over 250 PWDs who have developed a group savings and loan scheme, which is expected to be self-financing with little external donor and management support. If this programme turns out successful in the long run it might become a model for other initiatives in the country.

A "Business Support Programme" in Nairobi in collaboration with the corporate sector has also had a considerable impact on small vendors who have been issued with so called "Business Tricycles". We have so far issued 300 such tricycles, which are equipped with a carrier, box to carry goods and an umbrella. After winning the battle with the City Council over the right for them to operate in the CBD, most of them are earning a living through small scale trading.

Recently we have signed an MOU with First Lotto in Kisumu and Nairobi to select qualified PWDs to man their

kiosks for the sale of their lottery tickets. This is initially expected to create 60 jobs in Nairobi and 20 in Kisumu with the expectations of countrywide expansion.

It is our hope that the Government, local authorities and the private sector will support affirmative action, which will increase the opportunities for PWDs to venture into self-employment and be offered employment opportunities.

It is my hope and prayer that these unique examples will contribute towards our overall objective of empowering a larger number of PWDs economically in Kenya. If this model cases become a catalyst for the Government, NGOs and donors than there is a window of opportunity for Kenya to show the world that disability truly can no longer be equated with inability.

- *The author is the National Director of Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK)*



WHAT? IS SHELTERED WORKSHOP

The purpose of the sheltered workshop is to provide skilled manpower and employment. This is the final lap of the race towards sustainability, independence and self-esteem of the handicapped persons.

By Milka Omenda

INTRODUCTION

Without going deeper into definitions diagnosis and treatment of the disabled persons and in particular the mentally changed learners, it is worth to note

A good school will ensure that the mentally challenged learners are educated in the least restrictive environment to enhance the acquisition of self-confidence



that the Education of the handicapped persons is not a waste of resources that most people would otherwise have thought.

A good school will ensure that the mentally challenged learners are educated in the least restrictive environment to enhance the acquisition of self-confidence, reliance and sustainability skills and to develop full potential in order that they may live as near normal life as possible in society.

Along with this a good school will aim at:

1. Providing high quality learning and teach environment that is secure and motivating to the learner and the teacher.
2. Encourage self-reliance and sustainability through vocational training.

3. Encouraging partnership between parents, teachers, and pupils for shared responsibility in learning process.
4. Creating awareness of the handicapped in society, prevalence, incidences, intervention and possible causes in order to reduce the cultural stigma attached to it.
5. Providing guidance and counselling to the traumatized parents, siblings and relatives due to the presence of handicapped persons in the families.

The Main Aims:

1. To create opportunities for training skills that are compatible with employment demands.
2. To provide permanent employment for those (MR) people for whom it will be improbable that work in open employment can be obtained.
3. To serve as a bridge between probable employment in the open market.
4. To establish a financially self-supporting (sustaining) project with regard to current costs and employment costs and employees wages.
5. To cater for the pre-vocational trainees and other trainable persons not in the school programmes.
6. The training should be wide and varied and wide scoped so that it can be able to attract a reasonable number of open vacancies in the job market.



WHAT IS A SHELTERED WORKSHOP

The sheltered workshop serves as an intermediate stage for people with Disability whom there is no probability of finding employment in the open employment. After it has been established, the workshop must be financially self supporting with regard to recurrent costs and employees wages.

The nature of employees the workshop is intended to cater for the needs of persons with disability. Practical considerations of employees responsibility, safety and efficiency, however, that able bodied persons need to be working alongside the disabled persons. The ratio of these people will vary according to the type and nature of work and

employee experience and ability but an average of 1.8 can be comfortable. However, efforts should be made to keep the ratio as low as possible within the bounds of viability and safety.

Work diversification: It's intended that the work done by the employees be from diverse sources and different kinds. This has desirable consequences in that firstly, the viability of the workshop as an employment place must ensure that everybody is properly engaged and has work to do and secondly that everybody has got work that he can successfully accomplish and be part of a product that can be sold in a competitive market. This means that a group of employees work on a particular component of a product upto the assembling level where the final product is finally given to the ability of the employees to concentrate on the intricate areas before a task is assigned. A small proportion of fit labour could be considered to:

- a) Provide heterogeneity of environment
- b) To perform certain operations which might be too dangerous and/or complex for handicapped persons, but which operations would

generate a range of other tasks for the other employees.

The sheltered workshop must provide a secure environment to ensure that less accidents may occur during working time. Care should be taken that there is always a supervisor with the skill to handle equipment used and only the disabled person who has acquired enough skill should be allowed to handle some of the dangerous machines. Otherwise most of the equipment used in the workshop should be a non electrical. Recommendations

Recommendations

1. Legislation should be put in place that will secure, retain and advance the persons with disabilities in suitable employment and



- therefore promote their integration and re-integration into the society.
2. Provide rehabilitation since it is a goal oriented and time limited process aimed at enabling the persons with disabilities reach optimum social functional levels, thus providing them with the tools to change their lives towards a higher level of independence. It involves measures intended to compensate for loss of function or functional limitation by provision of technical aids and appliances and imparting other training skills to facilitate participation in economic activities intended to lead to self-reliance.
3. Provide adequate facilities in terms of their enrolment, courses taught, training equipment and personnel.
4. There should be adequate policies, legislation and financial allocation by the Government to admit all forms of disabilities.
5. Persons with disabilities ought to be considered and needs category that affirmative action targeting the informal sector, which can be a possible answer in solving the unemployment problems in the country.
6. Like any other member of society persons with disabilities ought to be offered opportunities in all aspects of community life.

Beyond healing and caring; a Christian approach to disability

From his experience in Uganda,
Steven Harknett
challenges attitudes to disability

Disabled people can make distinctive contributions to society. A distraught mother of a boy with severe learning difficulties was surprised when her doctor chided her 'You think this child is all your own responsibility, don't you? He isn't. He is society's responsibility. Society needs handicap.'

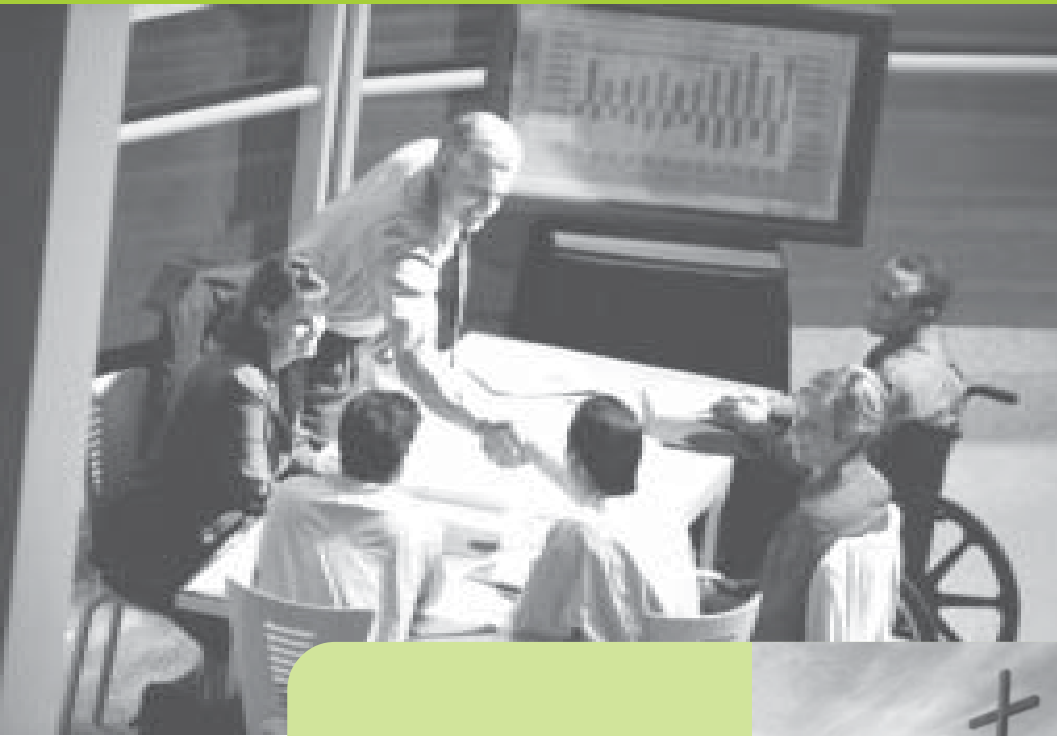
A friend at a church in Kampala asked me to take him to the local deaf school so that he could 'pray for the children's ears to be opened'. This approach was based on Jesus' healing ministry - 'the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear'. Jesus' miracles need not be interpreted as showing us that a cure is the-only way of healing-disability.-The miracles-were to -show that 'the power of God is such that God can change what humanity sees as unchangeable.

While some disabled people would no doubt prefer

not to be disabled, many more would vigorously defend their disability as part of their identity or even as a gift. Geoff Lay, a blind parish priest in the Diocese of Ely, describes how he uses his visual impairment to tell others about God's grace. God's power is manifest in weakness just as much as it is in the miraculous cure, as Paul discovered'.(5)

What should our attitude be to disabled people?

We used to see disabled people as lacking something. The solution was to 'normalise' them, usually through medical intervention. Now disabled people are arguing that it is not they but society who should be changed. They need fewer 'special' services and more inclusive services such as integrated schools and independent living schemes. In Uganda, disabled people have obtained representation at local government level and in Parliament to ensure that their voice is heard.



'community-based rehabilitation'. This should be multisectoral and include education, vocational training, income generation, housing etc, alongside healthcare. Disabled people should be active in its planning and — implementation. This way they gain in responsibility and grow in self esteem.

Throughout Uganda they have formed self help groups which run . income-generating activities such as cobbling, tailoring or rearing livestock. In Kabale, southwest Uganda, they run their own orthopaedic workshop to provide the appliances they need.

The attitude that disabled people need continual care makes,

them objects of charity. It also treats the symptoms of disability but not the causes such as poverty, war and social inequality.

Jesus began his mission with his claim to secure freedom for the oppressed in society. 'He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.(6)' Jesus called for an inclusive society which does not discriminate but offers equal opportunities to all.

The needs of the disabled are less to do with welfare and more concerned with removing the barriers in society which oppress them: inaccessible environments, 'lack of communication, prejudice and discrimination. Our response should be one of equalising opportunities rather than providing palliative care and sympathy.

Community based rehabilitation

In some developing countries disabled people are now served not by institution-based but by

Disabled people are often seen begging outside churches in Africa.



'Society needs handicap.' Disabled people are often seen begging outside churches in Africa. The church should welcome them, see what they have to offer, and support programmes such as community based rehabilitation which empower them. ■

Steven Harknett has just gained an MSc (with distinction) in Community Disability Studies in Developing Countries, partly funded by an MMA grant. He expects to return to work with the Uganda National Institute of Special Education

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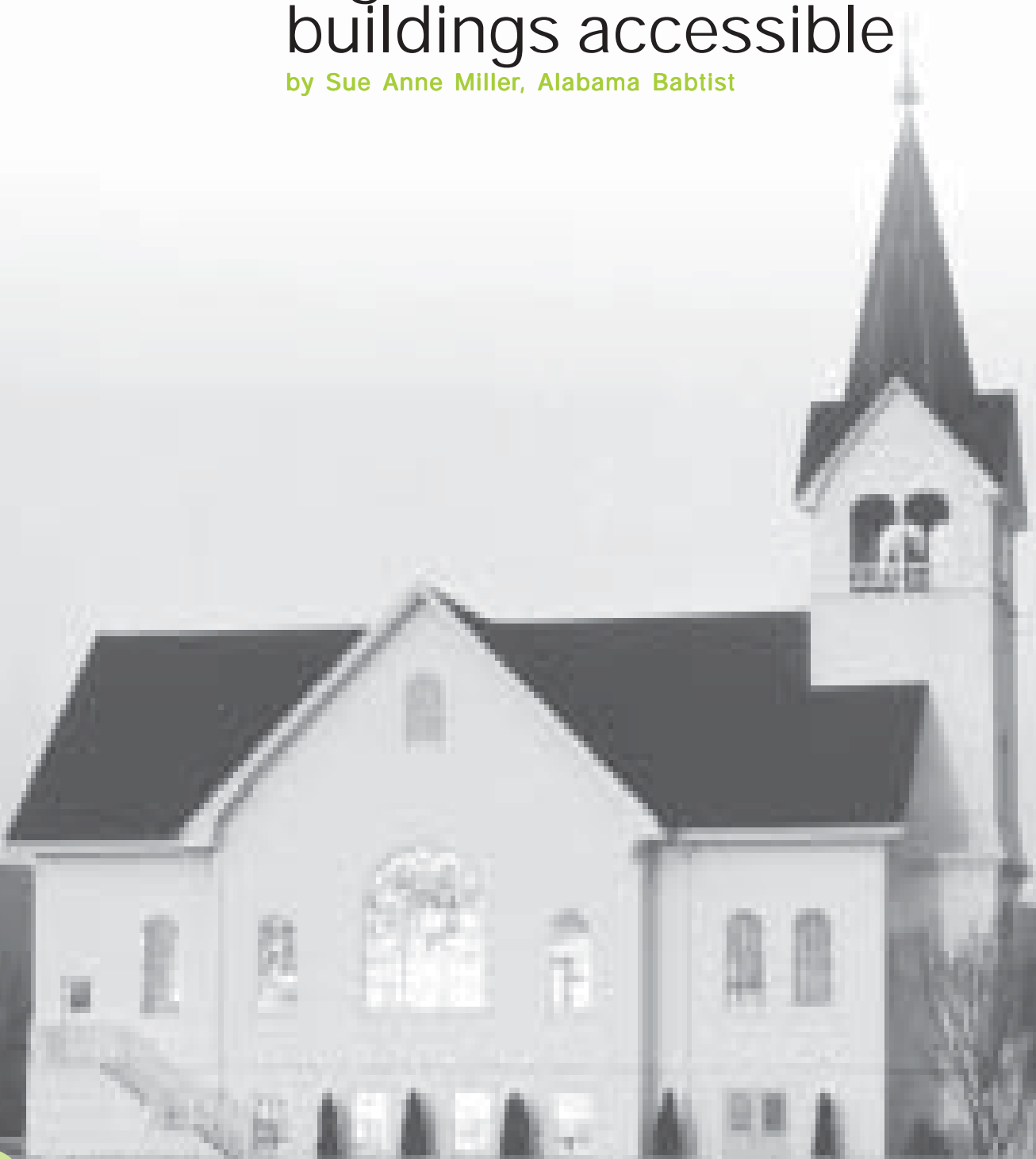
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CHURCHES

urged to make their
buildings accessible

by Sue Anne Miller, Alabama Baptist





BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—Removing barriers in church environments—both figuratively and literally—is a crusade Bob Anderson eagerly looks forward to on a daily basis.

Article downloaded from: www.baptiststandard.com

It's the focus of his work as director of the religion and disability program at Birmingham's Lakeshore Foundation. The non-profit organization, which has been operating since 1984, centers its services on issues dealing with individuals with physical disabilities.

by the childhood memory of his wheelchair-bound cousin raising money door-to-door for a ramp so he could enter his church without the indignity of being carried.

As part of Anderson's job, he visits churches interested in learning how to better include people

with disabilities or make sure their facilities are compatible to the needs of the disabled.

"A growing number of churches are increasing their ability to welcome and include people with disabilities and their families. People need access not only to buildings but to the programs and activities of the church as well," said Anderson, a member of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church in Birmingham.

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



"Our mission is to provide opportunities for people with physical disabilities to live healthy, active lifestyles and participate fully in their community," Anderson said. As the former chaplain of Lakeshore Rehabilitation Hospital, Anderson became acutely aware of the many challenges that individuals with physical disabilities face in the able-bodied world. He was especially in tune to the limited accessibility people with physical disabilities face when attempting to find a place of worship where they can easily maneuver their adaptive devices such as a wheelchair, scooter or walker.

When Anderson approached the foundation's board of directors in 1995 about creating a program to assist the church community in this area, they agreed. The Lakeshore Foundation Religion and Disability Program was born, with Anderson being the driving force behind it.

Anderson knows firsthand the struggles a person with a disability must overcome to attend a church service, let alone participate in one. He is inspired

Making way for people with disabilities will be a wave of the future, Anderson predicted, noting that 63 percent of older adults have some type of disability. The number of older adults in America is growing rapidly, due to the aging of baby boomers and the lengthening of life spans.

"Now is the time for churches to start preparing for this," he said. The changes churches need to make go beyond structural issues, Anderson explained. "Even something as simple as the wording in your church bulletin can make difference. It's just as easy to say, 'The congregation may sit or stand' as it is to say, 'Will the congregation please stand.'" "Many people assume that they have no church members with disabilities because they do not see them," Anderson said. "That's just not the case." The No. 1 reason people with disabilities don't return to church is not having access to restrooms, he explained. "I once had a man tell me that it was easier for him to get his wheelchair into a bar than into a church. We've got to change that." ■



ROMANIAN

bible Complete in braille!

complete Braille Romanian Bibles. We decided that the best place to print was Romania. George Jordan was established as president of Pro-Lumina, a sister Romanian organization to Torch. He gathered a committed team and purchased a press building in Tergoviste. The printing plates were prepared in the UK and we shipped out a large Heidelberg press. The work was so vast that they wore one press out and are now on the second.

George and his team sent the Bibles to blind individuals, schools, blind centres and homes throughout Romania and the neighbouring country of Moldova.

At one of our Romanian Bible conferences, I was speaking to a fluent English speaker. He told me how excited he was about receiving his Romanian Bible volumes. I pointed out that his English was so good that he didn't need them. His reply will always stay with me: "When I read the Bible in English, I feel I am at God's University. When I read in Romanian Braille, I know I am part of God's family!"

The Bible is in 44 Braille Volumes and when stacked, they form a 5-foot pile. Praise God for this fruitful collaboration: UBS, Pro-Lumina Torch! 🙏



By Mike Townsend
adopted from the Torch Family News
of Spring 2004

The courtyard of the school in Arad, West Romania was packed with over 700 blind girls. We had driven across Europe to give these girls needles; no, not for drugs but to make mattresses to sleep on and for sale to pay for education. I told of the love of the Lord Jesus and the hands just reached out for Bible portions that they could read.

Outside the church in Bucharest we were surrounded by blind people. They were very poor and clearly wanted something. I was overwhelmed to discover that they were desperate for the Bible. This was all in 1992. We faced up to this challenging plea. Computers, a Braille printer and special programmes were sent. But, making Braille Bibles is very expensive. I presented the need to Dr Loebel of the German Bible Society and he agreed that the United Bible Society (UBS) would fund 1000



LETTERS

Amnambra State Handicapped
I.C.S. Ltd
20 Ezenwegbu Road
P.O. Box 37 Nnewi
NIGERIA

Beloved,

I need a pen friend from East African Countries and South African and other parts of the world.

I am INNOCENT AMAOBI INUSA MEGWA, I am 47 years of age, married with children. I am the Secretary of the above mentioned Association which is a group of disabled people that do not believe in their disability but can transform our disability into ability.

Presently we are producing Auto Parts, my hobby is reading, letter writing, traveling and Bible Study, I need friends of both sexes, my contact address is: INNOCENT AMAOBI INUSA MEGWA
P.O. Box 37, Nnewi
NIGERIA.

Thanks,

Yours Servant

Innocent Amaobi Megwa
Secretary Anambra State Handicapped
Association. 📧

Ephatha Mission
6/13/2 Union Bank Colony,
Second Street, Vilangudi
MADURAI – 625018
S.INDIA

Dear Sir,

Loving greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have received a copy of EDAN from one of my friends at Inter Church Service Association, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. I would like to have a link with EDAN for prayer support and to get necessary information in supporting the Mission for welfare of the handicapped in South India.

I myself a visually impaired person managed to overcome my problem of disability and have been a pastor in Church of South India. I am the founder and General Secretary of Ephphatha Mission which is directed towards the welfare of the handicapped. We are taking the Gospel to the handicapped and integrating them with the Church and Society. We are also catering the needs of the handicapped through education, training and rehabilitation. We are publishing a magazine in Tamil by the title Ephphatha to give awareness about handicapped children, adult families and old age. We are running Hostels for young people and giving food and accommodation and sending them to normal schools and colleges.

I request you to support us through prayers more over please help us to become partners in Mission work and get necessary funds from funding agencies who are interested to support our social and spiritual Mission for the handicapped in South India. Expecting your reply.

Yours in Christ

Rev Dr. Moharaj K.
Peter
MA., BD., PhD., 📧





Graduate Theological Education and the Human Experience of Disability

Edited by Robert C. Anderson, MDiv
President, The Center for Religion and Disability, Birmingham, Alabama

About The Book:

Create pathways in theological education and congregational practice for people with disabilities!

Graduate Theological Education and the Human Experience of Disability examines graduate schools of theology and their limited familiarity with the study of disability—and the presence of people with disabilities in particular—on their campuses. Dubbed a “missing note” by one theologian, this text offers critical research and illuminates new pathways for *theologia* and practice in the community of faith. Reviews of previous literature, theology, and practices illuminate how people with disabilities have historically been marginalized by the religious community. Theologians, people with disabilities, and researchers offer suggestions for incorporating disability studies into theological education and religious life.

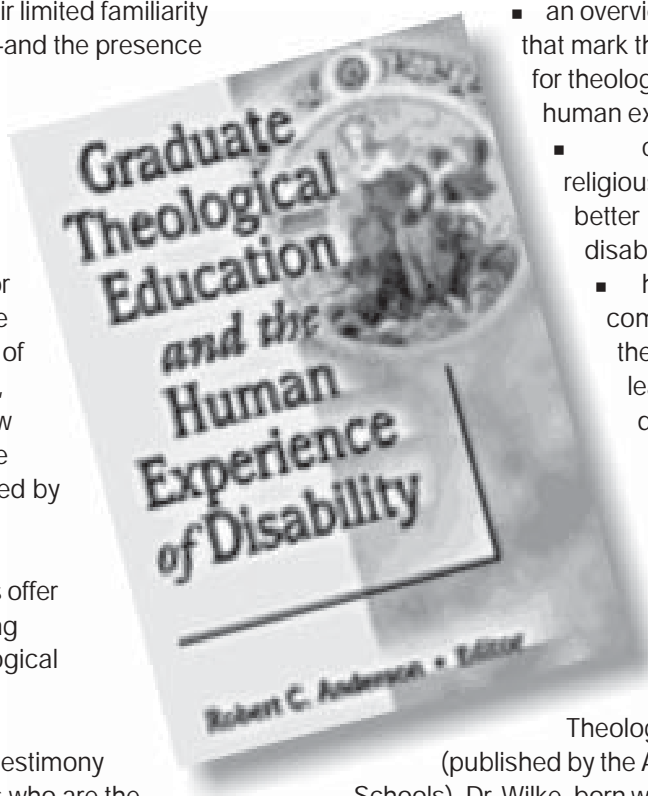
This text contains firsthand testimony from people with disabilities who are the necessary sources of wisdom for overcoming barriers. By infusing education into existing theological curriculum, seminaries may better prepare their students for leadership and ministry in their congregations. People with disabilities number 18% of the population, yet represent only 5-7% of congregational membership.

This book explores aspects of theology and disability such as:

- the challenges faced by theological schools that desire to improve both theological

curriculum and facilities

- a review of literature that connects theology and disability—from sources such as scripture, history, faith traditions, and social theory
- the various ideologies that shape the way the human body is understood—redefining “normal” in theological education
- an overview of critical boundaries that mark the limits and possibilities for theological inquiry about the human experience of disability
- creative concepts that religious communities may use to better include people with disabilities and their families
- how the religious community may benefit from the gifts, talents, and leadership of people with disabilities



Graduate Theological Education and the Human Experience of Disability contains a reprint of Dr. Harold Wilke’s landmark 1978 article from

Theological Education

(published by the Association of Theological Schools). Dr. Wilke, born without arms, was the theologian, minister and scholar who first articulated the need to address the human experience of disability in both theological education and congregational life. With extensive biographies and inclusive liturgies, this innovative text is a valuable resource for seminary professors and leaders, clergy, and disability advocates.

Reviews:

“A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW of theological education and disability. . . Concise and well written. . . Offers rich theological insights and



abundant practical advice. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THIS VOLUME as a key introduction to this important emerging topic in theological education."

Rev. John W. Crossin, PhD, OSFS, Executive Director, Washington Theological Consortium

"POWERFUL AND ENLIGHTENING. . . . This book will be REVOLUTIONARY FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION. It will inspire curriculum designers, Chief Academic Officers, and professors to take another look at the kinds of programs they offer as well as force them to confront the need to be more inclusive in their offerings. WELL WRITTEN. . . AN INVALUABLE ASSET to theological education, offering clear, balanced, and comprehensive information that, if followed, will save the physically challenged a lot of pain and spare the leaders of theological education a lot of grief. I wholeheartedly endorse this book and recommend it as A MUST-READ for all in theological education."

Bertram L. Melbourne, PhD, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Howard University School of Divinity

Contents:

- Introduction: A Look Down the Road (Robert C. Anderson)
- Access to Professional Education (Harold H. Wilke)
- Integrating Welcome into the Seminary Curriculum (Bruce C. Birch)
- In Search of the Disabled Human Body in Theological Education: Critical Perspectives on the Construction of Normalcy—An Overview (Robert C. Anderson)
- Toward a Theology That Includes the Human Experience of Disability (Deborah Creamer)
- Christian Theology and Human Disability: A Literature Review (W. Daniel Blair)
- Healing and Hospitality in Jesus' Ministry (Bruce G. Epperly)
- Inclusiveness as Hospitality in Worship Settings (Laurence Hull Stookey)
- Each Made in God's Image, Each a Unit of God's Grace (Lu Leone with Ginny Thornburgh)
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- Reference Notes Included

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