

# motif

The Newsletter of the Motivation Charitable Trust Issue 27 Summer 2006



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**Editorial** Welcome to this summer's edition of Motif, which focuses on Motivation's work to economically empower people with mobility disabilities in developing countries. This area of our work is less widely known among our supporters than our work to provide appropriate low-cost wheelchairs. However, thanks to your support, we are now also able to work towards the economic empowerment of people with disabilities and to address the extreme poverty that they experience.

Estimates suggest that 15% of poor people in developing countries have a disability and that disabled people are more likely than others to be extremely poor, illiterate and unemployed. Disabled people are often unable to find work because of a lack of understanding among employers about their

potential and because of practical issues such as inaccessible work places. Having a disabled family member can also affect the productivity of the whole family because carers are unable to be in full-time employment outside the family home.

In response to the extreme poverty experienced by disabled people, Motivation has initiated a variety of programmes with local partners to specifically address their economic situation. The focus of these programmes ranges from training in garment-making in Sri Lanka to the promotion of small-scale peanut butter making businesses in Zimbabwe.

I hope you enjoy reading about our work to help disabled people become financially independent and enjoy a better quality of life.

## How your donations are helping disabled people to find employment

Motivation's Employment Placement Programme is designed to empower disabled people to earn a living.

Disabled people are prepared for their entry into the business world through a range of workshops including 'Job Seeking and Keeping Skills'; vocational training in areas such as metalwork and garment making; basic English language and computing. To ensure the programme works, Motivation also holds job fairs for trainees and potential employers.

As a result of the three job fairs that Motivation has held, 140 disabled people have found placements in reputable companies.

### **Marks & Start**

One of the most notable

achievements of Motivation's Employment Placement Programme is our work with Marks & Spencer to help deliver their international 'Marks & Start' programme.

By working with Marks & Spencer and our Sri Lankan partners, Rehab Lanka, we have developed a programme that trains disabled women in garment making, enabling them to find employment in the factories that supply Marks & Spencer. Trainees attend a two month course run by Rehab Lanka before they are selected by factories in need of skilled seamstresses.

One of the factories that produces garments for Marks & Spencer is Quantum Clothing. According to Quantum's Manager, Mr

Wijekoon, "The Marks & Start girls are very hard working; they always have fantastic attendance records".

Quantum's General Manager agrees: "We would welcome ten more, twenty more, as many as possible from the

Marks & Start programme!"

To date, 25 Marks & Start trainees have found permanent employment and a further 20 disabled people are undergoing the training. The success of the programme in Sri Lanka has meant that it is



*The pilot group of trainees from Motivation's economic empowerment programme*

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## Designed to Stand

After losing his leg in an accident 12 years ago, Mr Mahinda from Tangalle in Sri Lanka thought that he was lucky to receive an artificial leg from another organisation. However, he soon encountered problems: "The limb was heavy and uncomfortable. I had to wear 15 layers of stockings to try to make it fit, but this meant that I was always sweating and my stump was always sore."

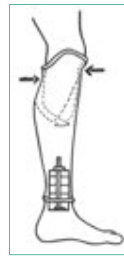
Mr Mahinda's experience is an example of how an inappropriate mobility product can lead to secondary problems such as progressive deterioration of the joints and back pain.

Being made of aluminum, these inappropriate limbs are easily mass produced, but they are too heavy to be of any practical use and have a

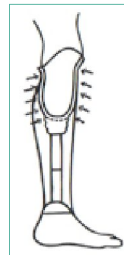
short life span in the wet paddy fields where they are most commonly used. Many disabled workers find that they either have to stop using the limb and revert to crutches, or they have to give up working in the paddy fields altogether, causing increased economic hardship.

Motivation's limbs, which are designed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, are more suitable because they are made out of light polypropylene plastic material, which minimises the user's need to expend excessive amounts of energy. They are also more durable than aluminum because they do not rust in the humid Sri Lankan climate.

As people are not all built in the same way, Motivation's limb can be adjusted according to each user's



**Inappropriate Limb**  
Limbs that have been badly fitted create pressure points on the user's residual limb, causing discomfort.



**Appropriate Limb**  
The polypropylene limbs are moulded to each user to ensure that pressure is evenly distributed over the user's residual limb.



Mr Mahinda

height, weight and stump size. In addition to this, the polypropylene limb is aligned to ensure that the user's weight is evenly distributed according to his or her natural balance.

Polypropylene's soft and porous qualities also ensure that no damage is caused to the user's residual limb. All these features enable the user to walk with more ease.

For Mr Mahinda, walking with his Motivation prosthetic limb is a totally different experience: "It feels so much better than my old leg. When I first tried it on, I went to get my crutches so that I could try it out. But the prosthetist who was fitting it to me told me that I would never need crutches again. I couldn't believe it. I felt like a little child. It was wonderfully strange to actually walk again after so many years."

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being replicated with our partner organisations in Bangladesh and India.

In recognition of their outstanding contribution to helping disabled people find work both in the UK and around the world, Marks & Spencer was recently awarded the Employability Award at the Business in the Community's annual Awards for Excellence.

### Eresha

Eresha is 21 years old. Born with leg impairments, she attended school for a few years but had to leave before taking her 'O' levels because of financial constraints. Eresha explains that life has changed for her since hearing about the Marks & Start programme from a friend.



Eresha hard a work at the Quantum factory

"I successfully underwent the two month training course, which was very useful because it taught me all the skills that I need for my job at Quantum. I have been working here for six months and I am very happy. The pay and working hours are good. I have managed to save some money for myself and I also send 10%

of my wages back to my family in our hometown of Agalawatte."

### Sandamali

28 year old Sandamali has multiple disabilities. Life became very tough for Sandamali after she left school. "I tried to earn money for my family by selling goods from door to door in the



Sandamali making underwear for Marks & Spencer

community, but this was extremely hard work because my disability restricted my ability to get about. I was desperate to receive formal training and to have the security of a full-time job."

For Sandamali, being successfully selected for the Marks & Start training has been life changing. She is now a full-time employee at Siimline, one of the leading garment manufacturers in Sri Lanka that supplies Marks & Spencer.

"In my performance report I always exceed the quality requirements of the factory. I am now the breadwinner of the family. Our future is now looking a lot brighter."



# Women's work in Africa



*Halima using her solar cooker to make cakes to sell*

## TANZANIA

Members of the Women's Committee of the Kilimanjaro Association of Spinally Injured, a disabled people's organisation in Tanzania, are using solar cookers in an innovative and environmentally-friendly income generation scheme.

Instead of using fuel, the cookers retain energy from the sun and can be moved around to catch the best rays. Not only is this beneficial for the environment, it also

means that disabled women in Tanzania are saving the money that they would otherwise need to spend on charcoal or kerosene. The stoves are proving just as effective as fuel burning stoves when it comes to producing food to sell.

Halima Ramadhan is one of the entrepreneurs who has been using a solar cooker for six months. Halima uses it to cook for her family and to produce small cakes to sell at a kiosk in the local

community. The solar cooker is helping her to be independent and contribute to the family's income. Halima is very proud to be featured in Motif so people can see that she is doing something. "I think income generation projects are very important, particularly for women, so we can be in control of our lives," she says. "I attend every meeting. I am an activist. I will do anything for disabled women at any time."



*Sharifa making upholstery for a MADE wheelchair*

## UGANDA

Mobility Appliances by Disabled Women Entrepreneurs (MADE) is a Ugandan organisation that works with Motivation and Whirlwind Women International to provide high quality wheelchairs to the estimated two million people in Uganda who need one.

MADE's Co-Founder Sharifa Mirembe (a wheelchair user as a result of polio) is also a wheelchair technician. Before getting involved with MADE, Sharifa's income was limited to a small business

selling handicrafts. Even though there was no significant market for handicrafts, this was the only area of work in which she had relevant skills.

The training Sharifa received by working with MADE means that she can now manage the organisation's stock control, make upholstery for the wheelchairs and fit and prescribe them.

"I now have enough money to send my two daughters to school", she explains, "this simply was not possible from

the money I got from handicrafts. Having a good job makes me feel respected by the community because I am supporting myself and my family. Many disabled women in Uganda are not able to work because they are not recognised by the community as useful citizens. I like the way my job works to change this. One of the greatest rewards of working here is when beneficiaries of MADE's work say they see me as a role model for young disabled women in Uganda. I never dreamed that would happen."



*Sarudzai making buns to sell with her peanut butter*

## ZIMBABWE

The Disabled Women Support Organisation is run by women with disabilities, most of whom are wheelchair users. The organisation aims to empower women and girls with disabilities to achieve physical and economic independence.

"Life was very difficult for us before we joined the Disabled Women Support Organisation", explains Sarudzai Trinda. "We had little income and it was impossible to plan ahead for the future.

Then, in April 2004, the group clubbed together to buy a peanut butter making machine."

Members of the group devote two days per week to making peanut butter which is sold to the local community.

"The peanut butter has proved to be so popular that we have recently begun an adjoined bread and bun making project. We invest our profits and share them at the end of the year. With this money, some members have been able to buy essential household goods, and others

have even managed to send their children to school.

Even though Zimbabwe is going through harsh economic times, we are managing to continue developing our peanut butter making project. One day we hope to reinvest our profits into buying a machine that can produce five times as much peanut butter as our present one. The project has made a real difference to our lives and has given us skills that will last long into the future."

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## Home

- **Motivated to Achieve.** We are delighted to announce that Jack Russell will be speaking at the Royal Geographical Society in London to raise money for Motivation. Jack, an inspirational public speaker whose accomplishments include skiing to the North Pole and cycling over 12,000 miles in different countries, will talk about how he motivates himself to achieve the 'unachievable'. To find out more about Jack's array of achievements, please visit his website at [www.pdcinspiration.com](http://www.pdcinspiration.com).

The lecture will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday 26th September 2006. Tickets cost £12. Please contact the Motivation office.

- Motivation would like to thank Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland for their kind hospitality at their 81st Annual Conference in Belfast last April. Motivation was invited to hold a stand in the House of Friendship over the weekend. A great time was had by all and we were very encouraged by the interest and support that Rotarians continue to show for our work. If any Rotarians would like to find out more about how they can help promote Motivation within their club or district, please contact Francesca on 01275 461 946.

- Congratulations to Motivation employee Nina Boswell-Brown and her husband Andrew, who gave birth to Jack, weighing 7lbs 2oz, on 27th June in Bristol.

- Good luck to Faith Champion, previously our UK Manager and Charity Secretary, who has relocated to Motivation's Asia Regional Office in Sri Lanka to take on the new and exciting role of Deputy Director for our work in the Asia region.

Up Close &

## Personal

*When **Niroshan Weerathunga** was just eleven years old he lost his arm in a near fatal accident. Even though Niroshan continued with his studies, the lack of understanding among employers in Sri Lanka about the potential of disabled employees meant that he repeatedly experienced unfair rejection from job applications. That was until he took part in Motivation's Employment Placement Programme and found full time work.*

"From the moment of my accident my life seemed to come to a sudden halt. I felt ostracised from society, and even though I had been educated I was unable to get decent work. Then, eleven years after my accident, I was fortunate to hear about Motivation's Employment Placement Programme and I decided to take part.

I was taught basic English language and joined the 'Job Seeking and Keeping Skills' part of the programme. Later that year I participated in Motivation's first Job Fair, where potential employers and employees are brought together and matched up. Thanks to the opportunities

that Motivation made available to me through the Job Fair, I soon secured full-time employment in a local bank.

After spending some months at the bank I began to feel under-utilised because I believed that there was a lot more that I could be doing to help other young disabled people who are seeking employment. I approached Motivation and they gave me a three month internship working on their economic empowerment projects. After the internship I was recruited by Motivation as Coordinator for the Employment Placement Programme.

I am delighted to be both working in a mainstream



*Niroshan at work in Motivation Sri Lanka's office*

context and to be helping other disabled youths to rebuild their lives by re-integrating into society. With the help of my colleagues, Ruwani and Sharmini, we have taken Motivation's Employment Placement Programme to regional level and we are now training our local partner organisations to adopt the programme.

It is my ambition to expand the programme further so that it can reach even more disabled people - for despite all our achievements over the past year, there is still a long way to go before people with disabilities are fully included in mainstream employment in Sri Lanka."

## Shorts

Congratulations to David Constantine, Motivation's Co-Founder and Executive Officer, who has won the national Marks & Spencer Sieff Award. The award, which recognises individuals who have best collaborated with businesses to benefit society, was presented to David by HRH The Prince of Wales, at the Business in the Community Awards for Excellence 2006 Gala in July.

Motivation is delighted to be working with the International Committee of the Red Cross to develop a training course for their expatriate physiotherapists and occupational therapists, who will go on to train national staff in 36 countries in how to deliver professional wheelchair services. The partnership has the potential to have a significant impact on the quality of wheelchair provision all over the world.