

motif

The Newsletter of the Motivation Charitable Trust Issue 31 Autumn 2007



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Africa Regional Director

Editorial It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this edition of Motif which celebrates the 10th anniversary of Motivation's work in Africa.

From the time that Motivation was founded in 1991 we have continually received requests for partnerships and support from organisations and individuals in Africa. I joined Motivation's co-founder Simon Gue on the first research trip to the continent in 1997 when we met with organisations across Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The aim was to learn more about the needs

of people with mobility disabilities, and to discuss how our experience and expertise gained through our work in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Central America, could be utilised in the African context.

That trip was to represent the start of a ten year journey that has seen Motivation work in partnership with more than 30 organisations across 14 African countries. It has been a journey of great challenges but also great achievements, and I hope you will enjoy reading about some of our work of the last decade in this issue.

Motivation celebrates 10 years in Africa

Motivation's 10 years in Africa has been a remarkable experience. Before Africa, Motivation had worked in Eastern Europe, Central America and Asia; and Africa proved to be a very different environment. The vast scale of the continent, the extreme and endemic poverty and the thousands of languages all make Africa a challenging but rewarding place to work.

Motivation began working with the Tanzanian Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists (TATCOT) from the beginning, 10 years ago, and now this partner is central to our ongoing projects throughout Africa.

In collaboration with TATCOT, Motivation developed the World's first ever Wheelchair Technologists Training Course (WTTTC). The

one-year course equips students with both technical and clinical aspects of wheelchair provision and prepares them to effectively manage a comprehensive wheelchair service.

The course is now internationally recognised and accredited by the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO), and promotes the need for professionals trained in this discipline. The course is now run independently and Motivation continues to support TATCOT to increase their capacity to develop the course and become a resource for the international promotion of training in wheelchair technology. Motivation's programmes support WTTTC graduates as they return to their home countries and establish wheelchair services.

Since 2000, seven

intakes of students have graduated to ten African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In areas where local wheelchair production is not suitable, wheelchair technologists are trained in assembly and production of Motivation's 'Worldmade' wheelchair

design, which is imported ready to assemble and fit to the user.

Motivation also works with the Pan Africa Wheelchair Association (PAWA) to provide technical and capacity building support to wheelchair services and to promote the professionalisation of services across the continent.



2007's intake of WTTTC students outside the Tanzanian Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists.

Designed to Seat

Motivation works with partners at every level to provide comprehensive sustainable wheelchair services. Quality service provision is a key element of this – every bit as crucial to improving quality of life as wheeled mobility products. Here Motivation’s Africa Clinical Co-ordinator, Nicky Seymour, explains how Motivation’s ongoing input helps to develop professional and effective wheelchair services.

Clinical support involves visits by Motivation’s clinical teams to monitor and upgrade skills and develop new training interventions for professional wheelchair technologists and Worldmade wheelchair partners. The support given also increases the capacity of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, community health workers and other allied professionals.

Part of the overall aim to ensure disabled people have access to professional services is to advocate for the improvement of wheelchair services on a national and global scale. Across Africa there is still a huge reliance on donated wheelchairs which are usually given out without an assessment of the user’s needs, or consideration to their environment or lifestyle. Motivation has been working

with the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO), World Health Organisation (WHO) and other agencies to advocate for professional wheelchair services. A landmark in this process was the Wheelchair Consensus Conference held in Bangalore in November 2006 (which you may remember reading about in the spring edition of Motif). During this conference, a definition of an appropriate wheelchair was agreed as:

“A wheelchair is appropriate when it is safe, durable and maintainable, meets the individual’s needs and environmental conditions, provides proper fit and postural support based on sound biomechanical principles and can be accessed and sustained at the most economical and affordable price.” – ISPO/WHO Consensus Conference



Africa Clinical Co-ordinator, Nicky Seymour, with Denu Hailemariam from Prosthetics-Orthotics Centre and a beneficiary of a Motivation wheelchair, Ethiopia.

2006.

The ISPO/WHO guidelines on wheelchair provision therefore require that personnel in wheelchair and seating services have to be appropriately trained, both technically and clinically. An international working group is therefore being formed to develop an accredited, standardised training structure and curriculum in line with these recommendations. Motivation’s partners in South Africa include seating and wheelchair manufacturers (Shonaquip), local government health services through the Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre (WCRC) and tertiary training institutions (University of Cape Town). This collaborative

work will feed into future work of the international group and ensure that recommendations are appropriate and meaningful to the African context.

In Africa, this standardised curriculum will be used to upgrade the courses currently offered at TATCOT and WCRC, as well as improving the skills of existing wheelchair partners, rehabilitation professionals and referral staff. The vision is for qualified professionals to be available in most regions in Africa, with internationally recognised knowledge and both the technical and clinical skills able to meet the considerable needs of people with mobility disabilities.



WTTTC graduates, Evans and Godknows assembling a wheelchair.

Continued from page 1

As the network of professional wheelchair services expands to new areas, Motivation Africa is supporting local disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) to assist their members to access an appropriate mobility product – the first step to increased mobility and being able to claim their wider rights.

Motivation also works

with DPOs to ensure that disabled people’s rights are recognised by policy makers. This is key because unless disabled people are able to influence the policies that affect them, their needs will not be met and they will continue to be marginalised within society.

So what does the future hold for Motivation Africa? Motivation hopes

to offer a wider variety of training courses including short courses on prescription, repairs and modification, as well as courses on providing supportive seating for children and adults with complex seating needs. Motivation also hopes to increase the breadth of its work to encompass more countries who request our assistance.



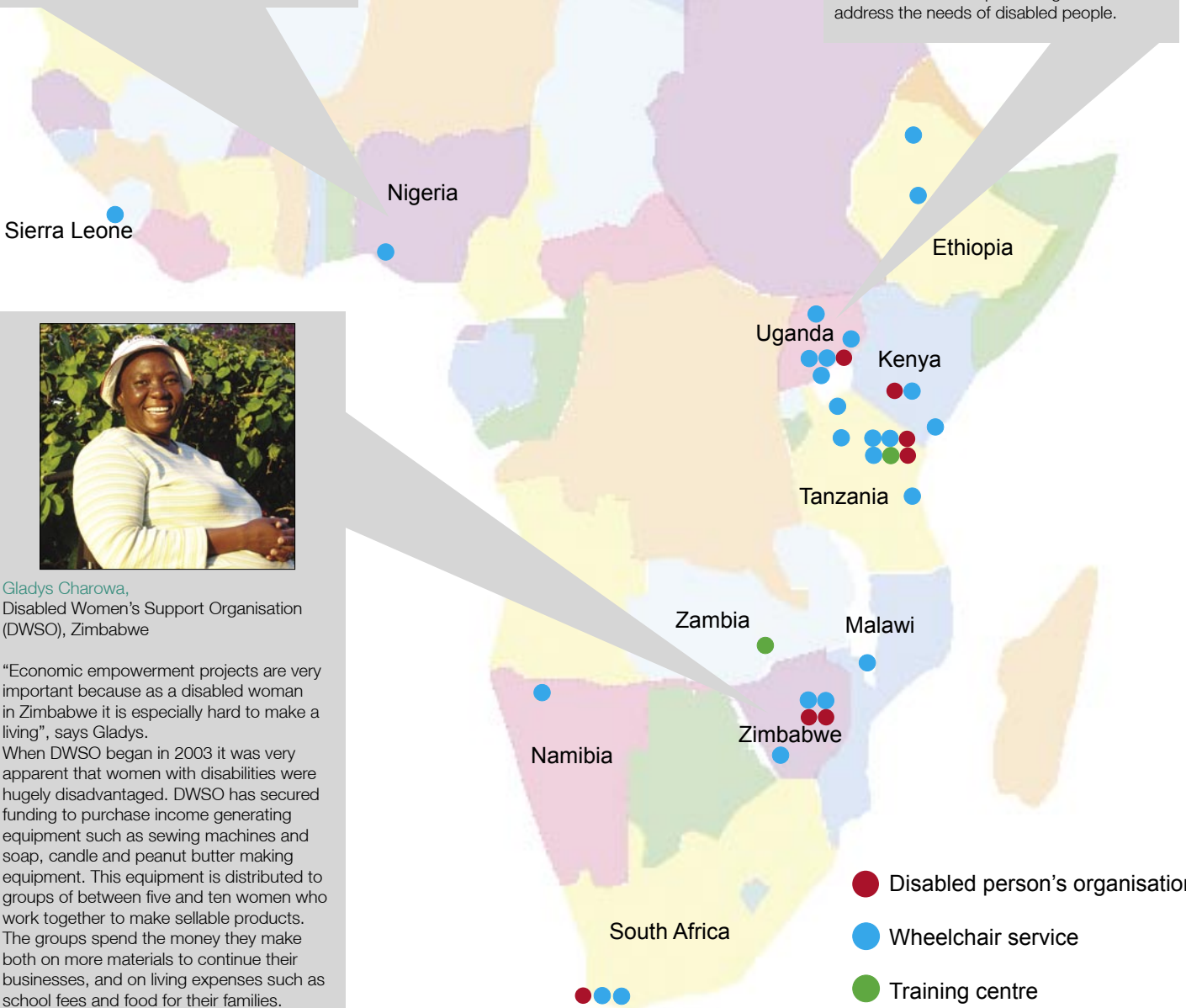
Adolphus Okeke,
O Dolf Ltd, Nigeria

Adolphus was the first West African to graduate from the WTTTC course and now runs a wheelchair service in Nigeria. "I am grateful to Motivation for the support that they have given me. I would like to improve my workshop's organisational and technical capacity so that we can meet the needs of more disabled people. I hope that one day my workshop will play a part in sensitising the Nigerian government to the needs of disabled people, and contribute to changing legislation to improve wheelchair services for people who need them in Nigeria."



Angela Balaba,
Director of Spinal Injuries Association (SIAU)
of Uganda

"I believe that everyone should have rights, and this should not be any different because I am disabled", explains Angela. Angela has worked for the disabled people's organisation SIAU for five years. Through her lobbying and awareness campaigns, SIAU has become a strong organisation advocating for the rights of disabled people in Uganda. In particular SIAU have lobbied the Ministry of Health in Uganda to provide a new Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) unit and new operating theatre in the hospital in Kampala. Angela's work shows how important rights work is to address the needs of disabled people.



Gladys Charowa,
Disabled Women's Support Organisation
(DWSO), Zimbabwe

"Economic empowerment projects are very important because as a disabled woman in Zimbabwe it is especially hard to make a living", says Gladys. When DWSO began in 2003 it was very apparent that women with disabilities were hugely disadvantaged. DWSO has secured funding to purchase income generating equipment such as sewing machines and soap, candle and peanut butter making equipment. This equipment is distributed to groups of between five and ten women who work together to make sellable products. The groups spend the money they make both on more materials to continue their businesses, and on living expenses such as school fees and food for their families.

Motivation would like to thank all the volunteers who have helped us to carry out our work over the past year. Volunteers are fundamental to Motivation's success and we would not be where we are today without them. In particular, Motivation would like to thank Ted Graham, Anthony Barnard, Pam Holmes, John and Jane Sleigh, Mick and Jane Howey, Dr Elizabeth White, Shaun McCallion, Claire Williams, and Lucy Frost.

Motivation was very sad to hear the news of the death of Anita Roddick in September. Anita who was the founder of The Body Shop, was a quiet but generous supporter of Motivation. She will be sadly missed.

Motivation's co-founder and Executive Officer, Richard Frost has received an Honorary Doctorate (Hon DUniv) from Oxford Brookes University. It was while studying at Oxford Brookes (formerly Oxford Polytechnic) that Richard met fellow co-founder David Constantine and together they went on to establish Motivation with Simon Gue. The accolade was also given to David last year, and was awarded in recognition of their achievements with Motivation.

Up Close & Personal

When we last interviewed WTTTC graduate Abdullah Munish for Up Close and Personal in Spring 2003, he said that with his training, he could "live a normal life as those who are not disabled". Four years later, we caught up with him again and discovered that this globe-trotting advocate is living anything but a 'normal' life...

"Assistive devices are not a gift to disabled people, they are a right," says 29 year old Abdullah Munish firmly. Since sustaining a spinal cord injury in a car accident in 1999, Abdullah has become a key player in the development of professional wheelchair services in Africa, and a committed disability rights activist.

Abdullah runs the wheelchair service at KCMC hospital in Moshi, Tanzania, and now has another wheelchair technologist and two technicians to help him fulfil orders. The service produces three-wheeled, four-wheeled and children's wheelchairs. Since the service began they have made over 300 wheelchairs, which are mostly used in the Moshi and Arusha regions in Tanzania. "I still want more training though," Abdullah explains. "We adapt the children's wheelchair to meet children's specific needs, but I have seen children's supportive seats that are

made from scratch and I think there are children here with cerebral palsy who would greatly benefit from such a wheelchair."

Abdullah is also extremely active in his local disabled people's organisation, Kilimanjaro Association of the Spinally Injured (KASI). "I helped set up the Wheelchair Financing Committee which ensures that people in Kilimanjaro who need an appropriate wheelchair are not denied one because they are too poor. I am proud of the Committee, it works very well."

Abdullah is also in great demand globally. He has travelled to Afghanistan, India, Kenya, Switzerland, Uganda, UK and the USA to deliver the message that disabled people need appropriate wheelchairs and that local producers should be supported to meet the needs of their communities. Motivation relies on people like Abdullah who can share



Abdullah training wheelchair technicians in Afghanistan to build appropriate wheelchairs.

his experiences and skills with others.

And as for Abdullah? "Motivation is like my mother - without Motivation I would not be here. They have done a tremendous job in Africa, especially in Tanzania. They made me believe in myself and that I can change things in my country."

Abdullah and his wife Fatuma are expecting the arrival of their first child in October 2007. Good luck and best wishes from everyone at Motivation!

If you would like to support a wheelchair workshop like Abdullah's or make a donation to the Wheelchair Financing Committee, please contact Motivation on 01275 464012 or email bernard@motivation.org.uk. Alternatively, just mark your donation for the 'Africa Wheelchair Fund.'
 Thank you.

Shorts ★ TATCOT celebrates its 25th Anniversary in November. Motivation is proud to have worked with TATCOT for 10 years, and would like to wish everyone who works at TATCOT a very happy anniversary. ★ In the next edition of Motif we will bring you more information about our new regional office which is being set up in Australia.

