

motif

The Newsletter of the Motivation Charitable Trust Issue 30 Summer 2007



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Editorial It is my pleasure to welcome you to this edition of Motif, which focuses on the final of the four areas of Motivation's work: products and services. In the three previous issues we have focused on the other main areas of our work: economic empowerment, capacity building and rights.

Mobility for disabled people is an issue of rights and it starts with receiving and being trained in how to use an appropriate mobility product. Unfortunately up to 60% of wheelchair users reject their wheelchairs due to unsuitability or discomfort¹. All too often there are negative consequences from the distribution of inappropriate mobility devices in low-income countries: pressure sores, accelerated postural problems, lack of mobility skills, dependence on family, lack of earning potential and low self-esteem, to name a few.

Over the past six years I have had the privilege of working alongside a great team of dedicated clinical and technical staff who are committed to addressing this issue

through the design and service provision of appropriate mobility products. This might be a wheelchair, tricycle, supportive seat, orthosis (splint) or prosthesis (artificial limb). All are adjustable for the users, suitable for the environments that users live in, durable to withstand the often very tough living conditions and affordable. By supporting our partner organisations to be able to run services ensures that local staff have the right training and skills to be able to assess, prescribe, fit and train users in how to use their mobility product.

I hope you enjoy reading about how your support is allowing Motivation to push forward the agenda for international standards in mobility products and services on a global scale, as well as seeing the impact that products and services have on the quality of life of disabled people across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Asia Pacific.

¹Mukherjee & Samantha; *Disability & Rehabilitation*; 2005

Motivation Collaborates with the International Committee of the Red Cross

In 2006 Motivation received a request to develop and deliver a high-level training course in wheelchairs and postural support to 80 qualified physiotherapists and prosthetist orthotists from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Part of the ICRC's humanitarian work is a physical rehabilitation programme which includes the provision of prosthetics, orthotics and wheelchairs.

The main aims of the training course are to supplement the ICRC's existing knowledge and improve their skills in

wheelchair prescription, assembly, modifications, and training, and relay this to their staff in countries worldwide.

The development of this course started in early 2006; an experienced training team consisting of a Motivation therapist, designer, training coordinator, technician and peer trainer, all contributed to the design of the training materials and course structure. The pilot course was run in January 2007 with the ICRC at the Ian Gardener Training Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The pilot course ensured that

the content level was right, methodology suitable and materials appropriate. The result is an eight day course

which combines technical and clinical wheelchair and seating principles. Trainees now have the skills to go on



The ICRC team with some of the Motivation staff

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Designed to Travel

Motivation is most well known for designing wheelchairs. However Motivation can offer other solutions if wheelchairs are not practical.

Motivation designs hand tricycles which are used by people with mobility disabilities to cover long distances, which can be impractical in a wheelchair. The gearing on a tricycle enables the user to move further and faster, using the same energy that it would take to push along in a wheelchair.

The increased mobility offered by a hand tricycle, and the inherent carrying space, mean that tricycles provide potential for disabled people to generate an income by enabling them to travel and carry goods and tools to their place of business. Tricycles also encourage social integration by enabling users to travel to community gatherings, such as places of worship, markets and schools, more efficiently than in a wheelchair.

As many people will sit in their tricycles for long periods, it is important to

design the tricycle with as much postural support as would be given by a Motivation wheelchair. Clinical staff are involved in assessment and fitting for a hand tricycle, and adjustments are built into the tricycle to match those found in a wheelchair. It is also vital that if needed, pressure relief cushions are prescribed with hand tricycles to avoid pressure sores and other secondary complications.

Hand tricycles are not suitable for all situations. For example one disadvantage of a hand powered tricycle is its size, which inhibits movement in small areas, making it unsuitable for use in small shops or the home. It is important that hand tricycles are never prescribed as a primary mobility aid, and Motivation makes sure that its hand tricycles are never provided in place of wheelchairs or prosthetic limbs.



William using his hand tricycle to help him collect water

William Sinyanga lives near Lusaka in Zambia, and is one of the recipients of a Motivation hand tricycle. By enabling William to travel long distances, the tricycle has given him the ability to earn a living. William explains how the tricycle has helped him: “The hand tricycle helps me to draw water for brick making, which I take to the market to sell. I manage to sell 1,000 bricks a month on average, which amounts to 300,000 Zambian Kwacha (US\$72). The market is about 10 kilometres away from home, so I was unable to do this before I had my hand tricycle.”



Motivation seating specialist Jamie Noon training ICRC staff about pressure relief cushions

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and deliver further training to their national staff.

To date, representatives from physical rehabilitation programmes in India, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola and Georgia have attended.

This course represents an exciting collaboration between Motivation and the ICRC; it raises the profile for professional

wheelchair services internationally and in doing so advocates the needs of wheelchair users on a global scale. It also opens up further opportunities for upgrading or initiating new wheelchair services in many new regions. This is a significant step in furthering Motivation’s overall aim to enhance the quality of life of people with disabilities.

Motivation's Products and Services Change Lives



Lalitha being fitted with a new prosthetic limb

Lalitha is 48 years old and lives with her husband and son in a coastal village in Sri Lanka. Lalitha used to contribute to the family income by making quilts, which she sold to tourists. Lalitha and her family were badly affected by the tsunami when it hit their village in 2004. Whilst trying to escape from the tsunami Lalitha's bicycle collided with a car. She was seriously injured in the accident and her right leg had to

be amputated. Her house was also damaged by the tsunami, and after leaving hospital Lalitha and her family moved into a shared temporary shelter.

Lalitha was given a temporary crutch that was made by a local carpenter, but she still found practical tasks difficult, such as visiting the bathroom which was 500 metres away from the shelter. Lalitha started to believe that she would no longer be able to live a normal life and became depressed. She then met a technician who worked at one of our partner organisations in Sri Lanka, the Southern Centre for the Disabled (SCD).

Lalitha was assessed by a prosthetist and physiotherapist at SCD. She was taught to do some initial exercises to strengthen her legs before being fitted with

a prosthetic limb, which was specially moulded to fit her body.

After having her prosthetic limb fitted Lalitha received regular follow-up sessions to make sure that she was getting on well with it. Her confidence grew and she became determined to get her life back on track. However, she was unable to work in her previous job making quilts, as her sewing machine was lost in the tsunami.

SCD referred Lalitha to Rehab Lanka, a partner organisation of SCD and Motivation, that provides mobility aids and vocational training for disabled people. Rehab Lanka were able to provide Lalitha with a new sewing machine. In a follow-up session six months later, Motivation visited her at home. During the visit they found that Lalitha's

life was back on track; she was stitching quilts and contributing to the family's income once again.

Lalitha's story shows not only the importance of a good mobility product, but also the value of receiving a vital prescription, fitting, and after-care service.



Lalitha stitching quilts with her new sewing machine



Peter doing a wheelie in his Motivation three-wheeled wheelchair

Peter is 36 years old. He sustained a spinal cord injury in 2000 when a tree fell on him near his home in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania.

Peter spent nine months rehabilitating in hospital after

his accident and feared losing his independence.

Peter's environment and lifestyle both mean that a standard four-wheeled wheelchair would not be suitable for his needs. The Motivation three-wheeled wheelchair that Peter received helped him to regain his independence after his accident, as well as giving him the means to earn a living, something which proved very difficult before he had a suitable wheelchair.

"I have learnt to be independent again", he smiles. "I live alone and make my own decisions. I am a useful person in the village because I repair umbrellas, clocks and other

things; this is how I earn money."

Not only did Peter receive a much-needed wheelchair, he was also taught how to care for his body and wheelchair effectively. He was taught how to transfer in and out of his wheelchair and other mobility skills, which enabled Peter to navigate his environment. Peter also receives follow-up sessions to make sure his wheelchair still fits him properly and that he is healthy. He is an extremely active wheelchair user and the mobility skills he has learned have been very useful since receiving his three-wheeled wheelchair in 2001. "I can reach wherever

I want on the mountain in the wheelchair, no problem. I am fit and I am healthy."

Peter now assists other disabled people who are being fitted with locally made wheelchairs at the Kilimanjaro Association of the Spinally Injured, by teaching them wheelchair skills.

Home

Over 360 people attended our lecture, 'Motivated to Explore' at the Royal Geographical Society in April. Benedict Allen gave an inspiring talk about his adventures and travels around the globe. Thank you to all those who attended for making it such an enjoyable evening. A fantastic £6000 was raised from the event. We are holding another lecture on 25th October which will be given by the renowned broadcaster and writer, Sandy Gall. For more information, please contact Rosie on 01275 464012 or events@motivation.org.uk

Motivation supporters have donated very generously to our Wheelchair Fund, enabling us to purchase more than 262 wheelchairs for people with mobility disabilities. A big thank you to all of our supporters who have contributed!

Motivation bids a fond farewell to Faith Champion and Thomas Keolker who have worked at Motivation for a combined total of 17 years. Faith worked for nine years in the UK office before moving to Sri Lanka to become Deputy Director of Motivation Sri Lanka. Thomas worked as Director of Motivation Sri Lanka. Congratulations to Vinod Krishnan and Sharmini Constantinescu who have replaced Faith and Thomas in their respective roles.

Up Close & Personal

30 year old *Teddy Njau* lives in *Mwasi Kaskanzi*, a rural village in Tanzania, with her six brothers and sisters. In 1994 Teddy contracted malaria and due to an infection in her spine she is now quadriplegic. Here Teddy explains how having a suitable wheelchair and guidance on how to look after herself has changed her life.



Teddy Njau, member of Kilimanjaro Association for the Spinally Injured

After her illness Teddy stayed in hospital for a year. "They told me that I would walk, but after a year in hospital and another year at home, I realised that I would never walk. At first it felt terrible, but I had a lot of friends who helped me.

"When I was discharged from hospital they gave me a wheelchair, but it was a 'scrapper' – only for sitting in; I couldn't go anywhere. I was given another second-hand wheelchair, but that broke because it was not made for African environments. Then a good samaritan donated another wheelchair to me, but I live in a very rough environment and I felt that it could break

at any time."

Motivation provided Teddy with a new three-wheeled wheelchair. "This new three-wheeler is very strong and the cushion is comfortable. I am also proud that I made a financial contribution to my wheelchair, because I do not want charity."

Having the right wheelchair is the first step for people with spinal cord injuries to regain mobility and self-esteem. However, disabled people are often the poorest members of the community and need support to earn an income, particularly in terms of set-up costs, training, and advice. Teddy and her family buy beer wholesale and sell it

in the village, and they also keep chickens.

Teddy is an active member of one of our partner organisations in Tanzania, the Kilimanjaro Association of the Spinally Injured (KASI), and particularly enjoys her involvement with the women's committee. "When I joined KASI I was so happy to meet other people with disabilities. It helps me so much to get out and meet people. To know about my body and disability in general helps me to stay healthy and to look to the future. You know," she says proudly, "I have never had a pressure sore because I know how to look after myself."

Shorts ★ Motivation has recently successfully completed two major projects. The first, a three year project which was funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), sought to increase the capacity of four disabled peoples organisations in Africa. The second was the Disability Support Program, which was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and focused on mobility product provision, capacity, employment, and rights initiatives in Sri Lanka.

